

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON XI.

March 12, 1882.] [Mark 5: 1-20.

POWER OVER EVIL SPIRITS.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 18-20.

- 1. And they came over into the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3. Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. 6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. 9. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. 10. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand) and were choked in the sea. 14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. 18. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."—1 JOHN 3: 8.

TOPIC.—Christ Ruling Demons. LESSON PLAN.—1. THE WORK OF DEMONS. 2. THE DEMONS CAST OUT. 3. THE DEMONIAIC SAVED.

Time.—Autumn, A. D. 23, the morning after the storm. Place.—The country of the Gadarenes, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee.

HELPS TO STUDY.

I. THE WORK OF DEMONS.—(1-5.) V. 1. GADARENES—Matthew calls it the country of the Gergesenes. Matt. 8: 28. Recent authorities locate the place here meant near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, over against Capernaum. The modern Chersa or Gersa answers to all the conditions of the narrative. V. 2. TOMBS—caves in the rocks, sometimes natural, but often artificial, were used as tombs. A MAN—Matthew speaks of two. Matt. 8: 28. Why Mark and Luke speak of only one we know not. Perhaps only one was healed and the other fled away. Vs. 3-5. The man was very violent, and persons passing that way were in danger from his attacks. Matt. 8: 28. Night after night his cries were heard as he ran about cutting himself with stones.

II. THE DEMONS CAST OUT.—(6-14.) V. 6. WORSHIPPED HIM—these demons knew and acknowledged his power. V. 7. THOU SON OF THE MOST HIGH GOD—"the devils also believe and tremble." I ADJURE THEE—the language of the demon. "We implore thee to deal with us as God himself does, and not yet bring upon us our final doom." V. 9. LEGION—the name of a body of Roman troops from three to six thousand in number. V. 10. BESOUGHT HIM—they wished to make the best terms they could. V. 11. SWINE—It is the nature of evil spirits to work injury somewhere. If they must leave the man they want to curse the swine. V. 13. JESUS GAVE THEM LEAVE—perhaps to punish the owner for engaging in an unlawful traffic. (See Lev. 11: 7.)

III. THE DEMONIAIC SAVED.—(15-20.) V. 15. SITTING... RIGHT MIND—there could be no doubt about the miracle. The man was well known; he had been an object of terror. Now they saw him peaceful and quiet. The word of Jesus can bring peace to the most sinful and wretched. V. 17. BEGAN TO PRAY HIM—they cared more for the loss of the swine than for the cure of the man. He went, and, so far as we know, never returned. So now people often ask Jesus to leave them. They do not say the word, but their hearts ask it. When he goes he may never return. V. 18. PRAYED HIM—every one who has been delivered from the bondage of Satan wants to be with Jesus. This man would gladly have gone with his deliverer, but Jesus had other work for him to do. He was to tell of the Saviour in the region where he was known and had been dreaded. V. 20. DECAPOLIS—a district south and east of the Sea of Galilee, including ten cities, as the name means.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. The malice, craft and power of evil spirits often hold men in cruel bondage. 2. The work of evil spirits is always ruinous. 3. Christ by his authority over the powers of evil can drive them out of the heart of man and leave him safe. 4. He can save us from our bad habits. 5. He can strengthen us to resist temptations to evil. 6. It is a dangerous thing to send Christ away; he may never return. 7. It is foolish to think more of money than of your soul.

REMEMBER that if we yield to evil habits they will make slaves of us in the end. What an awful thing it is to be the slave of the devil! Remember that no one but Jesus frees us from sin's power, but he can break the strongest chains.

LESSON XII.

March 19, 1882.] [Mark 5: 21-43.

POWER OVER DISEASE AND DEATH.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 21-23.

- 21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea. 22. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet. 23. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. 24. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26. And had suffered many things of physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. 30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? 31. And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. 35. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? 36. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And he suffered no man to follow him; save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with great astonishment. 43. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be not afraid, only believe."—MARK 5: 36.

TOPIC.—Christ Ruling Sickness and Death. LESSON PLAN.—1. A FATHER'S PRAYER. 2. A TIMID TOUCH. 3. A BOWING MESSAGE. 4. A WONDERFUL MIRACLE.

Time.—Autumn, A. D. 23, shortly after the last lesson. Place.—Capernaum.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—After healing the demoniac our Lord returned to Capernaum. Matthew invited him to a feast at his house. There he conversed with some Pharisees, and afterward with some of John's disciples. While he was speaking with them, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came asking him to heal his daughter. Then followed the miracles of this lesson.

I. A FATHER'S PRAYER.—V. 22. THERE COMETH—to the house of Matthew. See Matt. 9: 18. RULERS—men in charge of the synagogues, like our church officers: elders and trustees. FELL AT HIS FEET—bowed very low, after the Eastern custom. V. 23. MY LITTLE DAUGHTER—twelve years old (v. 42), and his only daughter. Luke 8: 42. SHE SHALL LIVE—he came with full faith that even if she were dead, Jesus could restore her to life. V. 24. JESUS WENT WITH HIM—ready, as ever, to answer the cry of distress.

II. A TIMID TOUCH.—V. 25. A CERTAIN WOMAN—her faith was so great and her humility so deep that she desired only to touch the fringe of Christ's outer robe. V. 30. VIRTUE—healing power. Jesus knew that timid touch of faith even amid the throng. V. 33. FEARING—perhaps she thought that Jesus would be offended, but she told him all the truth. So we should tell Jesus all our sins and all our needs, assured that he will never turn us away. Then he will say to us also, Go in peace.

III. A BOWING MESSAGE.—V. 35. THY DAUGHTER IS DEAD—what he feared had taken place. WHY TROUBLEST THOU—how little they know Jesus who think that the prayers of the needy trouble him! V. 36. ONLY BELIEVE—Jesus could raise the dead as easily as heal the sick. All things are possible to him now as then.

IV. A WONDERFUL MIRACLE.—V. 37. PETER, JAMES AND JOHN—the three who were afterward with him on the Mount of Transfiguration (ch. 9: 2) and in Gethsemane, ch. 14: 33. V. 38. TUMULT—it was usual then, as now, in Eastern countries, to hire mourners who made noisy demonstrations of grief. V. 39. NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH—she would soon rise up from the dead like one who wakes from sleep. I. Thess. 4: 13-16. V. 42. STRAIGHTWAY—though dead, she heard the voice of the Lord and obeyed. Jesus only needed to speak the one word, Arise, and the dead lived again. V. 43. SOMETHING TO EAT—He who could raise the dead with a word thoughtfully cares for the wants of a child. Her eating proved also her cure.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. Jesus is divine—God as well as man. 2. He has power over disease, death and the grave. 3. He sympathizes with the suffering and the distressed. 4. His word gives comfort to the mourner. 5. He will never rebuke or repulse those who seek his help. 6. Fear should never keep us from telling the truth. 7. We may trust Christ in the darkest hour. 8. Great faith is pleasing to him, and finds great reward. 9. The time is coming when all the dead shall hear his voice.

REMEMBER that all of us have spiritual diseases, that no human power can heal them, but that Jesus can and will if we come to him with them.

MEMORY AND LONGEVITY OF PARROTS.

We had two of our parrots for many years. One died at twenty-five years old, the other after being forty-seven years in the possession of our family in England. He was supposed to be a young bird when purchased at Valparaiso, but that we could not be certain about, as he looked sprightly, handsome, and in full plumage to the day of his death, and is now one of the stuffed occupants of a glass case. A young lady friend used to tease this bird by poking her umbrella or any other article she could lay hold of close to the bars of his cage. Tom, as we called him, would make frantic efforts to reach her, and his eyes almost seemed to flash fire when she came near. The girl left school, and for three years had no opportunity of teasing the parrot. At the end of that time being on a visit in the neighborhood, she called at our house. The moment Tom heard her voice in the hall, and before she entered the room, he became greatly excited, and when she approached the cage was in a perfect fury of passion. "What, Tom," said she, "is it possible you remember my old tricks and cannot forgive me yet?" At the moment she foolishly put her fingers near the wires, and Tom promptly revenged himself by a cruel bite, which gave her a practical lesson as to the inexpediency of teasing a captive bird with such a memory and such a powerful beak. The same bird recognized my voice after an absence of ten years, and would not be satisfied until I took him on my finger and petted and caressed him, as I had been accustomed to do when he and I dwelt under the same roof.

THE COVETOUS ROMAN, Crassus the Triumvir, lived for gold, and sought it through politics, and traffic and war. Wealth brought place and power, and these were used to give more gold. For gold more than for ambition, he projected his campaign in Mesopotamia against the Parthian power. On this mad scheme he pushed, in spite of all cautions, until betrayed and beheaded, he lay among the slaughtered Romans who had followed him. His head was sent to the Parthian king, and this remorseless conqueror poured melted gold into his mouth saying, in supreme vengeance and satire, Now be satisfied with what thou covetedst all thy life!" So the world rewards the greedy man's avarice. It lures him on, and fills him with riches till they choke and scorch his soul.

PRIZES.

This year we have published none of our prizes in the MESSENGER thinking it better far to give our readers the benefit of the space and send the prize list on a separate sheet to those who desire to see what they are. The list this year is said to be the best yet issued from this office. A copy will be sent to all who send for it. Send your name and address on a post card:

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The WEEKLY MESSENGER has already shown that it was needed by the cordial reception it has received. Already, although the only notice of it has been in the NORTHERN MESSENGER and in the sample copies sent out, it has obtained nearly five hundred subscribers in three weeks, which is most satisfactory. It is unlike any newspaper that we know of. It is small and is printed in large and beautiful type, yet contains a summary of the principal news of the world right up to date, written in a simple style so as to be understood by everybody. In addition it has everything in the NORTHERN MESSENGER except the story, instead of which "Firebrands" appears in the WEEKLY MESSENGER. The price is fifty cents a year, and subscribers to the NORTHERN MESSENGER who have paid their subscription for a year can have the WEEKLY MESSENGER instead by paying twenty cents extra. Some few of our subscribers have misunderstood this announcement and have sent the additional twenty cents and asked for both the papers, for the fifty cents.

PICTURE STORIES.

The competition for the Picture Stories has been ended. We have received nearly a thousand letters which shows the amount of literary talent amongst the readers of this paper. We hope to be able to announce the prize winners in the next number; but if we do not the great labor of reading and comparing the great number of stories must be our excuse.

WORKING FOR THE MESSENGER.

Many of our friends, old and young, are working for the MESSENGER and doing good work too. We thank them heartily for it, and wish them every success.

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