

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

A FIERCE DEMONIAK HEALED.

(By Rev. J. W. McMillan, M.A.)

Unclean spirit, v. 2. What an ugly word is that "unclean"! Which do you think would be the saddest visit, if a man found his brother in a hospital, an insane asylum, or a prison? Surely the last, because guilt is there. However great the pain or pitiable the wretchedness of the sick and the insane, the shame of the felon is worse. Misfortune is never so lamentable as crime. Pity is made deeper and disgust more complete by condemnation. The nasty and ugly factor in the criminal's case is, that he has brought his woes upon himself by his sin. Sin is the only finally dirty thing. Anything else may be, as the farmers say of good soil, "clean dirt." But all knavery, trickery, lying and stealing are dirty beyond excuse.

Neither could any man tame him, v. 4. But Jesus could. An African Christian long ago, it is said, was once met by a lion, who, instead of attacking him, held out a paw which was festering with a huge thorn in it. The man extracted the thorn, saved the wound, and the lion went away. Years afterwards the man was arrested in Rome, and sentenced, because a Christian, to be thrown as a prey to the wild beasts. In the midst of an immense host of people, as he knelt praying in the sands, a huge and hungry lion was loosed roaring from his cage. It chanced to be the lion whose hurt the man had healed, and in a moment the savage brute was purring with joy about his intended victim. So the loving might of Jesus tamed this savage demon, when every other means had failed.

Ran and worshipped him, v. 6. The great temperance orator, Gough, used to tell of a lady who had dropped a diamond ring in the muddy street. Without a moment's hesitation she plunged her gloved hand deep into the mire to recover the precious jewel. So, down among the evil spirits in the bosom of the demoniac, almost strangled by them, was the man's own spirit that longed for purity and peace. And Jesus separated the spirit that looked up to heaven from those which were dragging the man down to hell. This is what He will do for us, deliver us from all that would make us like the beasts, and develop all that is godlike in our nature.

Legion, v. 9. It was tabled in ancient times, that on one side of the straits separating Sicily from Italy there was a great whirlpool, and on the other a monster dragon, so that those who sought to escape the one peril, were likely to be devoured by the other. That is a picture of how temptations throng us on every side. On the one hand is meanness, on the other wastefulness. We are tempted to be dishonest like the publican, or self-righteous like the Pharisee, to lie or to be brutally outspoken, to groseer sins or to formality in religion. But we need not despair. We have a Pilot who can bring us safely through.

Send us into the swine, v. 12. Like to like. And such is the universal law: each sort seeks its fellow. The pure seek the pure, the vile gravitate towards the vile. It is a law which may serve also as an index. A man is known by the company he keeps. Use it as an inward monitor. Do you find yourself more at home in the company of the careless and godless, than in that of those

who are earnestly seeking to follow Christ? Beware.

Clothed, and in his right mind, v. 15. Valentine Burke was a St. Louis burglar, who, while reading a newspaper in prison, saw the headline, "How the jailer in Philippi was caught." He had a grudge against that man, for he had passed time in Philippi, Illinois, and started in to read. It was a sermon of Moody's, and he puzzled over it, until the light broke over him and he was converted. Twenty-five years afterwards Moody found him a deputy sheriff, and in his charge was a bag of diamonds given into his care by the court: he was of proved honor and trustworthiness. Such cases prove that Christ is still the Power of God unto salvation.

To depart, v. 17. If a drowning man should throw from him a life-preserver, if a poisoned man should pour upon the ground the antidote, if a wounded man should tear his bandages away, it would not be more foolish than the action of these Gadarenes. Nothing in reason can explain such conduct. It must have been because the excitement of fever or terror or guilt of the occasion had bereft them of their senses. They were morally insane. The forbidden pork trade seemed more important to them than their eternal salvation.

Friends, tell them, v. 19. A man's friends are often the hardest people to tell of such a thing. It is easier to open one's heart upon sacred themes in any other way and to any other person, than to tell a familiar friend face to face. It is easier to write of a spiritual change we have experienced, than to talk of it, easier to talk about it to a crowd, than to one person, easier to tell to strangers, than to friends. Nevertheless, it has more convincing power when told familiarly to a friend, than when spoken of in any other fashion. The friend will know that it is true, and appreciate the courage of the confession. The most fertile and responsive seed for one's Christian endeavor lies amidst one's comrades.

Begin to publish, v. 20. The Evangelization of the World in this Generation, is the inspiring motto of the Student Volunteer Movement. It is not a visionary programme, but a perfectly possible one. For, at least one-third of the world's population are nominal Christians. Imagine each one of these, the actual possessor of salvation himself, telling his unsaved brother or neighbor of Christ, and, further, through some one of the numerous missionary organizations, help to spread the gospel throughout the world. It would not, in such a case, be long before every human being had heard of the Saviour.

How great things Jesus had done for him, v. 20. The senses are delighted by the exquisite tints of the coloring agents used in dyeing, or the delicate scent of the finest perfumes. Who could have supposed that these were produced by the chemist from the disgusting tar refuse of the gas factory? And yet this is no wonder at all, compared to the transformation wrought when Christ takes the vilest of men and makes him meet for a home in heaven in the company of the holy angels, giving him a beauty of character far beyond his power to imagine.

Who could believe that from that unpromising bulb would spring the gorgeous flower enveloped in its sheltering leaves? Yet such shall be our body then compared with our body now.—E. H. Bickerseth.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

(By Rev. James Ross, D.D.)

Gadarae—Matthew in the parallel passage has Gergesenes. Now Gergesa has been identified with Kersa, a ruined site with thick walls around it, about a mile from the east shore of the Sea of Galilee. The plain in front of it ends in a very steep slope, only a few yards from the sea. The high mountain which rises behind the ruins is full of rock-hewn tombs. Gadara is ten miles to the south of this, and seven or eight miles from the lake. If the swine had started from this place, they would have had to run for an hour down the steep slope, cross the deep gorge of the Yarmuk, and swim the river, which is often nearly the volume of the Jordan, and then race for several miles across the plain before they could reach the sea.

In Tombs—Demented people and other unfortunates are still allowed to run wild in all primitive countries. In the early days of this Dominion, lunatics often lived a lifetime, half naked, in huts in the bush, like wild beasts, not often seen by other people, and had their food carried to them by their friends and left in some place where they could get it.

THE HOPELESSNESS OF MAJORITIES.

Whenver progress is made, it is because some man has rejected the known opinion of all other men. Men have been accustomed to doing a certain thing one way; some man grows discontented with the accepted method, and invents a better process. Men have always held a certain opinion: one man repudiates this opinion, declares that it is not true, and drives the world unwillingly on to a higher plane of knowledge. The few are so often right against the multitude that it is easy to understand Christ's warning against the multitude's unanimity: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." But a Western preacher sets forth a different doctrine when he declares: "The ultimate appeal as to what is truth must be the opinion of the race. If opinion of all men could be ascertained, to the truth or falsity of any proposition, that would be a final determination. . . . If it were possible to extend this natural instinct to the limits of humanity, and upon any question of grave import the opinion of all men could be ascertained, then that expression would be as nearly truth as it is possible for us men to arrive at." This is a strange interpretation of Christ's teaching; yet it is such a common mistake that it is worth warning against. Truth would have a sorry time if left to majority votes. Most of the people in the world see no harm in polygamy. A universal consultation on the truth of the cross of Christ would not issue in the triumph of the truth. God, not man, is the ultimate appeal as to the truth, and God will always reveal the absolute truth to one who seeks Him.—S. S. Times.

GOOD BOOKS.

If our homes were furnished with more character-building books, and less bric-a-brac and costly furniture, our children would get a much better start in life. To bring a child up in an atmosphere of books, to surround him with works of great minds from his infancy, and lead him gradually to the appreciation of the works of the intellectual giants of the race, is equal to a liberal education.—Success.

The voices of earth become dominant when we are deaf to the voices from heaven.

S. S. Lesson, May 13, 1906. Mark 5:1-20. Commit to memory v. 15. Read a Matthew 8:26-30. Golden Text—Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.—Mark 5:19.