

misery. And there was something more: He had saved him from an awful ending. When the rescued one saw those swine which had been quietly feeding suddenly start off, regardless of the efforts of their keeper to retain them, and dash down the steep bank into the lake, there perishing in the waters, he saw what his own future, his own end, might have been. With what adoring thankfulness must he have published throughout Decapolis the "great things" Jesus had done for him!

The Lesson Council.

Question 11. *Was it right, and why, to permit the devils to enter into the swine?*

Better that the swine should be possessed than a man. Our Lord's present purpose was to deliver a fellow being from the power of Satan, and probably also to show the destructive power of fallen spirits upon the lowest creatures. No one of his miracles, unless we except the raising of Lazarus, made a deeper impression upon all classes. In no other way could he so effectually have shown the actuality of the man's deliverance from the unseen but powerful forces which had demonized him, and the continued existence of those forces as evidenced by the havoc they wrought among the unclean brutes. It was a twofold illustration of the power of Jesus to save, and of the power of Satan to destroy.—*J. H. Potts, D.D.*

Yes, or the permission would have been withheld. Christ's granting the request is not open to criticism upon its ethical side. It is not difficult to determine why it was right. God's economy, as to this world, is an economy of grace, and constantly works toward the salvation of men. To this all nature, with her multifarious laws and effects, must be held subordinate. With all the disharmonies which prevail, the end sought in all God's arrangements is our spiritual harmony and life. Demoniacal possession stood in the way of the success of Christ's mission, through whom alone these ends could be gained. Christ's power over the kingdom of darkness must be made evident. His casting out the devils made it evident.—*A. Wheeler, D.D.*

It was right: 1. On the broad ground that all things belong to their Creator. "All things were made by him." God permits pestilences, floods, and lightning to destroy animals and men, and we do not question his right. He even allows bad men to torture and murder good men. 2. It is possible that the man was by this permission saved the terrible paroxysms which sometimes accompanied the departure of demons. (See Mark 9. 26.) There is a natural tendency to value possessions too highly and to undervalue the spiritual interests of an individual man. This teaches the opposite lesson emphatically and for all time. "How much better, then, is a man than a sheep," or even than two thousand hogs? 3. The supposition of some that the owners were Jews and kept the swine unlawfully is precarious, but the occurrence at least aroused the whole country. Temporary hostility to religion is better than dull indifference.—*Prof. Charles F. Bradley.*

12. *Why was not the restored demoniac suffered to go with Jesus, who invited others to follow him?*

Christ must give certain proof of his Messiahship in order to establish his claim as being the one who was to come. Conspicuous in the line of these proofs were the persons upon whom he wrought miracles. May it not be that the base degradation wrought in this man

by the demoniacal possession, now ended, had induced an incapacity, not removed by the miracle, which disqualified him for the conspicuity attendant upon a public following of Jesus? His mission was a more retired one and confined to his own house.—*A. Wheeler, D.D.*

The demoniac had his own mission to fulfill. He could do more good by publishing abroad his own wonderful healing than by simply clinging to Christ. He was a living epistle, known and read of all men, of the divine compassion of the Nazarene.—*Dr. Potts.*

Jesus knew that his cure was permanent and his faith steadfast. In great mercy to the people who besought the Master to depart, he left this disciple as a gospel messenger and witness. To this man it was a cross to stay and preach to friends and neighbors; a cross to be borne from love to Jesus. To others it was a cross to leave home and follow Christ, but when this course opened the wider door of usefulness it was required. Both home and foreign missionaries are needed and divinely called.—*Prof. Charles F. Bradley.*

Cambridge Notes.

(Mark 5. 1-20—Matt. 8. 28-34; Luke 8. 26-39.)

See introduction for Jan. 13. Mark's account surpasses even his usual vividness of detail. The event gains the most telling force from its surroundings. Utter weariness had compelled the Saviour to snatch some rest from the importunity of the multitude. In a state of physical prostration he spoke the word that stilled the storm, and now encounters a more terrible tempest in the moral world, which owns his sway as instantly as the material world had done. VER. 1. *Gerasenes.* There are considerable differences of text in the three accounts; but there is no real doubt that the R. V. is right, though the evidence for *Gergesa* in Luke is fairly strong. The latter name is still preserved at a spot on the lake which exactly fits the narrative (especially in verse 13), and it was probably inserted in the text for that reason. *Gadara* (Matt.) is seven miles from the lower end of the lake, while *Gerasa* (Mark and Luke) is fifty miles south-east, and almost in Arabia. Both towns, however, were important enough to give a name to the whole district. VER. 2. Luke says the man came from "the city," that is, a town near, perhaps Gergesa. The cave-tombs, natural and artificial, which still abound in the neighborhood, were haunted, it was believed, by the spirits of the wicked dead. Matthew, as in the case of Bartimeus, mentions *two* men. Weiss, followed by Bruce, thinks that this was due to a misunderstanding of an older document speaking of one demoniac but many demons. Such a mistake, obviously of no importance in itself, involves us in no real difficulty. But the apostle Matthew could hardly have thus written, and it seems more probable that he was the author not only of the original "oracles" which Papias ascribes to him, but also of our first gospel. It is easy to suppose that the demoniac whose cure is here described had a companion as fierce as himself, healed about the same time but with circumstances not recorded. Note that Matt. 8. 28 and 33, alone require two men, for "they" in verse 29 may be the demons. VER. 3. This elaborate description is almost entirely Mark's own. Phenomenal strength is often a feature of maniacs, and here the cause of the mania made it exceptionally terrible. *Any more.* His frenzy had thus steadily grown worse. VER. 4. *Fellers* for the feet, *chains* being a general word. VER. 5. Desert places and lonely mountains were always considered the haunts of demons: so Azazel (Lev. 16. 8