

gracious compassion for all, shown in his treatment of the multitude of sufferers who thronged around his door after sunset.

Does this revelation of the character and habits of Jesus affect ourselves and our classes? Since he is the One "with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4. 13), it aff ects us very closely.

For such as he then was he is now—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." He is the great Teacher from whom we can learn just those things we most need to know, and just those things which none else can teach us (comp. ver. 22). He has almighty power, a power which may be either exercised for us or against which we shall struggle in vain. He is close at hand for all his friends; they have but to tell him their needs and he cares for them. He is still to be "ministered to"—as to earthly needs (such as Peter's mother-in-law cared for on that Sabbath) in the persons of the sufferers and the poor—as to spiritual needs in the persons of the ignorant and the erring. And he is still at home to all who are willing to bring their needs to him, like the suffering ones who gathered round that door in Capernaum.

With which of these habits, if I may so call them, of our Lord have we made practical acquaintance? In the garden where I have been sitting to-day that spot is brightest and gayest on which the sun shines most uninterruptedly. That life will be the brightest and most fruitful which is affected and influenced by all that shines out of this "Sabbath in the life of Jesus."

The Lesson Council.

Question 3. What is meant by the possession of unclean spirits?

It is impossible to explain the many statements of the New Testament, or the words and acts of our Lord with reference to this class of cases, except by the theory that evil spirits or demons actually gained control of certain persons, and tormented them in various ways. The theory of insanity or disease from natural causes, although it might account, in many of the cases, for the form of bodily or mental disorder manifested, will not explain the fact that Christ distinctly recognized the presence and agency of evil spirits, spoke to them, commanded them to "Come out," and discoursed somewhat at length with his disciples on their nature and habits of these "unclean spirits." Our Lord was neither deceived nor a deceiver, hence there must have been actual possession by wicked and malicious spirits.—*Rev. H. G. Jackson.*

That evil spirits from without did take possession of persons in Christ's time is not unreasonable. Each bad man is possessed by his own bad spirit, which engenders disease and insanity in his body. Why is it incredible that other evil spirits should take hold of our bodily organs and work similar mischief? Do we know enough of spirit life to affirm that they cannot? Our ignorance of the unseen world ought to make us cautious how we dogmatize in the face of Jesus.—*Rev. D. C. Knowles, D.D.*

More than twenty times in the New Testament reference is made to this fact of demoniacal possession. It is hard to understand the phenomenon from present observation of human conditions. It seems as if the

servants of Satan were then permitted to control the brains and nervous systems of persons either sinful or weak and make havoc with their whole life, playing upon their delicate structure as a maniac upon an organ. This strange inroad of evil may be in contrast to the entrance of the Spirit of God into human life in the incarnation of the Son of God, and may belong almost solely to this striking period in the history of the contact of the world of spirit with the world of man.—*Rev. William Ingraham Haven.*

The conversations of Christ with the unclean spirits, and his references to them, clearly indicate a possession of individuals by an evil power foreign to them, and having a distinct personality; a part of the forces of the "prince of the power of the air." It is not necessary to infer that the persons thus dominated were vicious, but rather are they classed in the New Testament among the afflicted.—*Rev. Olin B. Coit.*

4. Why did Christ work miracles?

His object was three-fold: 1. To do good; to relieve the suffering and comfort the afflicted. 2. To give proof of his divine character and mission—fulfilling the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and doing such works as no man can do except God be with him. 3. To foreshadow the results that follow the establishment of his kingdom on earth; and to typify the analogous work of spiritual healing and restoration of lost powers to the sin-diseased souls of men, accomplished through his Gospel.—*Rev. H. G. Jackson.*

Jesus Christ wrought miracles to prove his origin and mission. They were his credentials that he was the Son of God. They manifested forth his glory as such. Such claims as he made required such works.—*Rev. D. C. Knowles, D.D.*

Because he had to. It was in him, as it was in Grant to crush the rebellion. He saw the sick and was moved with compassion. He knew he could heal them and he did. This will explain the reason of most of his miracles. His soul was fired at human need, and he did what he could to help; and he could do with the forces which we can only feebly use whatsoever he willed, and so he worked what we call miracles. In some instances he seems to have premeditated his wonder-working, and to have wrought his miracles to convince those about him of his mission from God, that they might trust him and have confidence in the good tidings of love which he brought from the Father.—*Rev. William Ingraham Haven.*

Jesus saw men, his brothers, blind, and lame, and suffering. His sympathy led him to make use of the power that was his to heal and restore. Men felt the presence of a higher power, and many who were drawn to him by his marvelous works remained to believe on the truth that he taught.—*Rev. Olin B. Coit.*

Cambridge Notes.

Mark 1. 21-34 (vers. 21-28)—Luke 4. 31-37; vers. 29-34—Matt. 8. 14-17; Luke 4. 38-41).

This lesson raises the profoundly difficult question of "demoniacal possession." Seven cases are recorded in the gospels, and in all there is definite physical or mental disease. Of the latter there are no other examples given. The symptoms, minutely described, suit unknown maladies perfectly, and the color of contemporary Jewish superstition would easily evoke a recognition of satanic agency. Nor would the evangelists conceive it their mission to controvert popular errors in psychology any more than in other science. The names of C. A. Row and Professor Bruce are enough to show that no skeptical bias inspires this attractive