

For the Christian Messenger. From Burma, India.

TAVOY, B. BURMA. Dec. 27th, 1881.

Dear Brother,

Ever so senseless or absurd an action is excused, if not commended by these eastern people, if it is sanctioned by custom. In absence of a better excuse I can plead custom, for writing a brief letter to the Messenger, on this, the anniversary of our arrival in Burma. That I have little of much interest to communicate, will readily appear. Five years here turns what was at first new and startling into the veriest commonplace, and only a few missionaries have experiences in their work that can particularly interest others. And yet it may be that missionaries would do more to stimulate others to effort if they would give more details of their labors and trials than they usually do. So far as the writer is aware it is only the bright, encouraging side of missionary life that reaches the most of home Christians. If we are permitted to gather a few from the ranks of the heathen, or notice the development of character among these native Christians, we delight to let it be known at home. But the clinging to old, sinful customs, the aversion to any improvement, the careless, filthy habits, the way in which error is more cherished than truth, the lack of zeal in the cause of the Master, the little desire to sacrifice worldly interests for Christ, the open apostacies in many cases, all these are grieved over alone, or carried to Him who says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will answer thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Missionaries know the poor opportunities, the sinful surroundings, the moral weakness of some of these people, and can overlook shortcomings that they are afraid to make public at home. But with all their faults we can say, as we often do, "Considering their opportunities they are fully up to, if not ahead, of Christians at home." Be sure to emphasize the first three words. But should their weakness discourage us? By no means. Think of what our Lord and Master endured. How much the great missionary Apostle had to mourn over in those who received the gospel at his hands. We should feel honored to tread in such footsteps.

But I must give you a brief outline of our work during the year. It began by attending our Association, in which we were accompanied by Dr. S. F. and Mrs. Smith, of Newton Centre, Mass., and their son, the esteemed President of our Karen Theological Seminary. They spent three weeks with us, and we cannot tell how much we enjoyed their visit. God sent them to cheer the hearts of His lonely laborers in these distant lands, and many look back to the hours spent in their company, their words of comfort, their loving presence, as their most happy experience since they parted with loved ones beyond the seas. Our Association was well attended, and all the meetings interesting. The Sabbath we spent there I baptized seven, and during the following two months, the only time in which itinerant labor can well be performed, more than one hundred were added to the churches in our field. More than four hundred pupils attended the village schools, and learned to read their own language at least. At home we built a large dormitory for our girls, at a cost of about four thousand rupees. We have since found it a great comfort, and a wise expenditure.

Our school began May 1st, and is still in session. We have had a good year, a good number asking baptism, but we have thought it best for the time to wait. We hope to send some new boys from our first class to the Seminary next year, that they may be better fitted to occupy the many needy villages in our district.

We are this year building a new house for ourselves. It is to be ready to be occupied the first of April. This is the fifth large building we have erected since we came. This done we shall be pretty well equipped for work. Of course we must do something in the line of building all the time, but our hardest work will be over. Our health continues excellent, though our associate, Miss Miller, is feeling the effects of a hot climate, and intends taking a trip which may extend to Northern India. We cannot be sufficiently thankful for our good health. We pray for grace to use it to the glory of God.

Yours faithfully, H. MORROW.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson XI.—MARCH 12, 1882.

POWER OVER EVIL SPIRITS. Mark v. 1-20.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 18-20.

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

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Mark v. 1-20. T. Matthew's Account, Matt. viii. 28-34. W. Luke's Account, Luke viii. 26-39. T. Wicked Spirits and Wicked Men, Jude vs. 1-13. F. Infernal Enemies, Eph. vi. 10-24. S. End of Satan's Kingdom, Rev. xx. 1-10. S. Praise for Deliverance, Psalm cxvi.

SATAN'S KINGDOM AND THE SAVIOUR'S WORK.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Infernal Power, and Malice, Vss. 1-9. II. Infernal Cunning, Vss. 10-17. III. The Captive Delivered, Vss. 18, 19-20.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 1-9.—Who is Satan? Who are demons? What do we know of their fall? What took place in Eden? Who ran to meet Jesus as he landed? Who was once possessed by seven demons?

Vss. 10-17.—What was the Jewish law in regard to swine? What did the demons ask of Jesus? What then took place? What was their chief objection? Did they succeed? (Vs. 17, 20.) From what does Satan wish to keep men away? Why did the people wish Jesus to depart?

Vss. 18, 19.—What wonderful sight did the people see? Did Jesus depart as requested? What did the saved man beg? Why? What did Jesus send him to do?

Special Subjects.—Reality of possession by personal demons, as shown by this narrative. Present abode of evil spirits. (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12). Their future fate. Intense reality and power of Satan's kingdom. Its final overthrow at the coming of the Lord.

We have, in this lesson, the most remarkable instance on record of the casting out of demons by our Lord. The demoniac possession was a real usurpation on the part of evil spirits of the bodies and minds of their victims. The objection is frequently urged, how comes it that this malady is not now among us? We cannot tell in how many cases of insanity the malady may not even now be traced to direct demoniacal possession.

NOTES.—I. Possessed by Demons, (Vs. 1-5)

This miracle, recorded by the first three Evangelists, has its most graphic presentation in our lesson. It occurred on the other side of the sea, whither Christ and his disciples were going when overtaken by the tempest, as seen in the last lesson. It was in the country of the Gadarenes, so called from Gadara, a strong and wealthy city of Peraea—some say its capital—on the east side of the lake, and opposite to Galilee, (Luke viii. 26). A mountain rises immediately above it, where the swine, rushing madly down its side, would be precipitated into the water and drowned. Immediately upon Christ's landing from the boat, there met him a man with an unclean spirit. There is significance in the title unclean, as applied to this spirit; for evil spirits delight in all villainies. Matthew (viii. 28) says, "two" men; but Mark and Luke mention but one, who was probably more noticeable, because more violent and degraded than the other. Luke represents him as naked, ("he wore no clothes"). His dwelling-place was among the tombs. These were excavations in the rocks, and in some cases, in the ground, for the reception of the dead. The unclean spirit sought a residence ceremonially unclean, (Num. xix. 11)—a place in keeping with the man's degraded condition. No man could bind him. Luke says, he "had devils long time." It was an aggravated and chronic case. The man was "exceeding fierce" (Matthew), and possessed of preternatural strength through the agency of the demons that dwell in him. Fetters and chains may have confined him at first; but, as he grew worse and more violent, no man could any longer bind him; the chains were plucked asunder by him, and broken in pieces. The first expression implying a tearing apart of the links, or ropes, and the second, a crushing of the manacles by his prodigious muscular power. Tame him. Moral suasion was as useless as physical force. Always, night and day. The frantic restlessness of this man is vividly described. Satan

gives his victims no quiet or peace. Crying. In wild excitement, making all hours hideous with his screams and demoniac yells. Cutting, etc. Lacerating his body with the sharp flint-stones common in that region, (Matthew iii. 9; iv. 3).

II. The Demons Cast Out, (Vs. 6-14).

Verses 5-7.—Ran and worshipped him.

The attitude was of one who not only knelt, but touched the ground with his forehead in token of reverence. It is difficult to explain why he rushed into the presence of Jesus. Was it some lingering remnant of needy manhood seeking deliverance? Or, in terror, hastening to plead with Jesus that they should not be cast into torment before their time? Obed with a loud voice. Rushing up to Jesus, he gave the unearthly shriek that had terrified others. But Jesus calmly addressed the evil spirit, saying, with authority, Come out of the man. Then, in great fear, the demon replied, What have I to do with thee? This was a common Jewish phrase, expressing the wish not to be troubled by the interference of another. See Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; John ii. 4. Son of the Most High God. The grandest of titles, denoting community of nature, identity of essence with the Father. But did the demons know the fulness of the truth to which they here gave utterance? I adjure thee by God. A form of exorcism with which evil spirits were familiar. The demon pleads that the time has not come when evil spirits are to be shut up in hell, (Rev. xv. 10). He prays that his doom may not be anticipated, but that he may still have the freedom to roam until that dread time shall come. We have a hint here of the intolerableness of hell. Even demons cry out in terror at the thought of it.

Verses 9, 10.—Legion. Not one evil spirit possessed this man, but many, a multitude, a host.

Verses 11-14.—Great herd of swine. The Levitical law (Lev. xi. 7), forbade swine's flesh as food. The rabbinical law forbade the keeping of swine. Hence, it is likely that these were kept by Gentiles; and especially so, as Gadara was a Greek city. All the devils. Up to this point, only one demon speaks; but here they all eagerly join in a request which will relieve them of the dread of the great prison-house reserved for them. Jesus gave them leave. The Lord is First Proprietor, owning all things. How explain the act of the storm, in destroying the harvest; the flash of lightning, which burns a man's house; the earthquake, which swallows the city? Told it in the city. A lively picture of the astonishment and alarm of the keepers of the swine is given. They reported the whole story to the owners, and to all whom they meet.

III. The Man Restored, (Vs. 15-20).

Verses 15-17.—They came to Jesus, from curiosity. They see, not with a casual glance, but they survey a wonderful spectacle. Sitting. Calm, instead of raving. Jesus gives rest. Clothed. Who before was naked. A more detailed account was given to the crowd of new-comers which produced a singular effect. The loss in the destruction of the swine, and their awe at the miracle, led them to beseech Christ to depart out of their coasts. The loss of 2,000 swine was more than an offset to the saving of a soul.

Verses 18-20.—Into the ship. Jesus at once answered the prayer, Depart; and it is not known that he ever went to Gadara again. Their one opportunity was cast away forever. That he might be with him. The man may have feared a relapse into his former degradation; he had the warm affection of the convert for his Saviour. Suffered him not. The ground of this refusal is found in the command which follows. It was a higher duty to go home and tell how great things were done for him. He departed, etc. With simple obedience and a glad heart, he told the story.

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Jesus uses radical measures. He came not to make men better, but to save.

If evil spirits cannot enter the body of even a swine without permission, they who trust in Christ need not fear.

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the shore, where he sometimes slept. What is a cave? Sometimes this wild man ran up into the mountains. He would pick up sharp stones and cut himself with them. Listen to what he did: read verses 3-5. When he saw the ship come to land, and Jesus step out with his disciples, what did he do? Read verses 6, 7. Jesus knew at once that this man too had an unclean spirit within him. Continue the account through verse 15. Do you think the people would invite him to come to their city? Read verse 17. There was one man who wanted to go with Jesus into the ship. Who? Read verse 18. But Jesus had some work for him to do. Read verses 19, 20.

Our Golden Text tells us that Jesus came into this world on purpose to destroy the works of the devil.

Satan is very, very powerful; but who is stronger than he?

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Shake Hands.

Shake hands with somebody as you go out of church. The more of it the better, if it is expressive of interest and feeling. There may be a great deal of the spirit of the Gospel put into a hearty shake of the hand. Think of Paul's four times repeated request—'Greet one another'—after the custom then in common use, and one which is expressive of even warmer feeling than our common one of hand-shaking. Why not give your neighbors the benefit of the warm Christian feeling that fills you to your finger-tips, and receive the like from them in return? You will be benefited by it; and the stranger will go away feeling that the church is not, after all, so cold as he had thought it to be.

SIGHT AND SENSE.—A skeptical young collegiate confronted an old Quaker with the statement that he did not believe in the Bible. Said the Quaker, 'Does thee believe in France?' 'Yes; for though I have not seen it, I have seen others that have. Besides, there is plenty of corroborative proof that such a country does exist.' 'Then thee will not believe anything thee or others has not seen?' 'No, to be sure I won't.' 'Did thee ever see thine own brains?' 'No.' 'Ever see anybody that did?' 'No.' 'Does thee believe thee has any?'

NO PLACE FOR ANYBODY.—An infidel young lawyer, going to the West to settle for life, made it his boast that he would locate in some place where there were no churches, Sunday-schools, or Bibles. He found a place which substantially met his conditions. But before the year was out he wrote to a former class-mate, a young minister, begging him to come out and bring plenty of Bibles and begin preaching, and start a Sunday-school. For he said he had become convinced that a place without Christians, and Sabbaths, and churches and Bibles, was too much like hell for any living man to stay in.

I have known what the enjoyment and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can bestow; and with all the experience that three-score years can give, I, now on the eve of my departure, declare to you that health is a great blessing; that competence gained by honest industry is a great blessing; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful and loving friends and relatives; but the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be, indeed, a Christian.—S. T. Coleridge.

A PERSONAL CHRIST.—The living soul is not content to be spoken to by a book alone, but by a Person. The word is mighty when it is "made flesh." The necessities underlying the incarnation are imperative as ever. We can have no sympathy with the 'stream of tendency' that would distribute Christ as a pale presence pervading all things, or bury his personality in the tomb of the universe. We cannot afford to ignore the teaching of sacred history. We remember that the strength of Judaism was bent on incarnation. The bush, the pillar of fire, the temple, were as far as the nature of the things would allow, a vesture of personality for God. Then came Christ into the world chanting, 'A body hast Thou prepared me.' And the sceptre will never depart from the pulpit while it stands between personality and personality, between the heart of Christ on the one hand and the soul of man on the other.—James Stirling.

THE ART OF NOT HEARING.—The art of not hearing should be taught in every well-regulated family. It is fully as important to domestic happiness as a cultivated ear, for which so much money and time are expended. There are so many things which it is painful and injurious to hear—very many which if heard will disturb the temper, corrupt simplicity and modesty, detract from contentment and happiness—that every one should be educated to take in or shut out sounds, according to their pleasure.

Messrs. Moody and Sankey's meetings in Newcastle, England, extended over five weeks, and were attended with unprecedented success. During that time they held one hundred and ten services, which were attended in the aggregate by 100,000 persons. The Evangelists then visited Edinburgh. They were to commence their mission in Glasgow about the 7th of January.

Reading at Home.

All young people should aspire to be good readers. With ordinary vocal equipments they may be. To arrive at that, there must be habitual practice. Reading aloud for the benefit of the home circle is an accomplishment for the many, and in practical results it is as much superior to music even as it is acquired at smaller cost. The man who by the evening lamp shares with his family the good things in the fresh newspaper or magazine, while his wife and daughters, perhaps, must keep to the mending or other quiet occupation, supplements the day's bread-winning with the scarcely less important nourishment of the intellectual natures. The boys and girls should be encouraged to read aloud for the general entertainment. Many a delightful and profitable hour will be thus spent, which will add to the fund of information and to dear remembrances when in coming years they shall be scattered. By-and-by when the parent's eyes grow dim and their ears dull, so that the world's doings are hardly more to them than the passing despatch to the bird on the telegraph wire, a manly son or gentle, loving daughter may freshen and brighten the withering life with the written page. And who of us but has at some time in the home or social circle an invalid to whom an hour's daily reading is a luxury above anything else? I have noticed that persons accustomed to read aloud often practise it from preference when there are no ears but their own to hear; they miss their audience and find a degree of tastelessness in the feast of soul, such as one is apt to experience when partaking a dinner alone.—Watchman.

Mr. John Bright, in a recent speech, urged that school children should be taught self-respect, respect of their playmates, respect of their parents, kindness to animals, a love of truth, a love of industry, and an idea of what is meant by prudence.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

After Jesus had made "the storm a calm" they went right on to the other side. It must have been morning when they all stepped out of that little boat, a wild looking man came running to meet Jesus. There were no houses near by where the ship stopped. This man was so wild that he lived out of doors all the time. There were caves near

Gems.

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