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BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN MARK.

First Quarter.

Lesson VII. February 10. Mark 5: 1-20.

THE FIERCE DEMONIAK.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Go home to thy friends, and tell them
how great things the Lord hath done for
thee, and hath had compassion on thee.—
Mark 5: 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE DEMONIAK. 1. And they came
over unto the other side of the sea, from
Capernaum, into the country (or district)
of the Gadarenes. In the Rev. Ver. it is
called the country of the Gerasenes.
Dr. Broadbent thinks that possibly Gera-
sa and Gergasa are different pronuncia-
tions of the same place, and Gerasenes
and Gergasenes both designate the in-
habitants of the village of Gerasa, on the
shores of the lake.

2. Immediately there met him out of
the tombs a man. Matthew says two men,
Mark and Luke speak only of the more
prominent and remarkable one, without
denying that another also was cured.

THE SCENE. Early morning. On a
narrow strip of shore, with a steep cliff
rising high on the background, on the level
summit of which swine were feeding; and
in the foreground the lake be-
neath. On this narrow strip stand Jesus
and His disciples, while the demoniacs
are approaching. A man with an un-
clean spirit. Called unclean because the
spirit defiled both body and soul, the out-
ward filth being a type of the inward de-
ilement.

DEMONIAK POSSESSIONS. It is not easy
to answer the question. What was this
demoniacal possession? But we may
gather from the Gospel narrative some
important ingredients for our descrip-
tion:

(1) Demoniacal possession seems to
have been always connected with a dis-
eased state.
(2) "Yet 'possession' is distinguished
from disease, Mark 1: 32, and other
places; and from lunacy (or epilepsy),
Matt. 4: 24.

(3) Dr. Edersheim holds that the de-
moniac influence was not permanent, but
rather in paroxysms, and "during the
period of their temporary liberty, the de-
monized might have shaken themselves
free from the overshadowing power, or
sought release from it."

(4) It is almost certain that this pos-
session never occurs but in a morally
disordered person, and by a yielding of
the will to evil.

(5) To the frequent objection, How
comes it that similar possessions do not
occur at the present day? it may be an-
swered, How is it known that they do
not occur even now? We cannot prove
the negative.

(6) Why was there a special manifesta-
tion of demons in Christ's time? The
crisis of the moral history of the world
was at hand. Satan would naturally
make his most terrible assaults upon
man when he and his kingdom were be-
ing most vigorously attacked.

DISCERNING THE DEMONIAK. 3. Who
had his dwelling among the tombs. These
were caves, natural or artificial, cut in the
rocks and mountain sides, and are of
great variety. And no man could bind
him. Better, as in Rev. Ver., no man
could any more bind him: implying that
the attempt had been so often made and
had failed that it had been given up in de-
spair. His preternatural strength had
triumphed.

4. Because, that he had been often bound
with fetters and chains. Fetters were for
the feet; chains for any other part of
the body.

5. Night and day. Deprived of sleep.
In the mountains, the tombs. At one time
he would be sitting moodily in an empty
tomb; at another he would be roaming
about excitedly over the mountains.
Crying. No doubt with unearthly yells.
Cutting himself with stones. There is
sometimes a strong propensity in maniacs
to wound and even to maim themselves.

A PICTURE OF THE FRUITS OF SIN. The
possession of this man by the evil spirit
destroyed his reason; and God says of
sinners, "Madness is in their hearts while
they live." All sin is a species of insan-
ity. Is he insane who dances on the
brink of a precipice which overhangs the
roaring ocean? Then what shall be said
of him who, if the Bible be true, is sport-
ing on the "slippery places" which over-
hang the gates of perdition.

II. THE DEMONIAK COMES TO JESUS. 6.
When he saw Jesus afar off. As he met
Jesus immediately on His landing from the
ship (see ver. 2). This must refer to the
more distant sight of Him, as the ship
was approaching the land. He ran
and worshipped Him. Obsession refers
the act of going to Jesus and bowing
down before him to the Man in contra-
distinction to the demon. The man
wanted help, and sought it in Jesus; and
the will of the demon trying to overpow-
er him made the terrible paroxysms of
conflict.

7. And cried with a loud voice. The
wild, inarticulate cries of ver. 5. And
said: in words; spoken with the con-
sciousness of the demon. What have I
to do with thee? Literally, What (a) to
us and thee, what we have in common?
Jesus, thou Son of the most high God.
They recognize Jesus at once. The
demons recognize their great enemy,
with his divine power. Torment me not.
Herein the true devilish spirit speaks
out, which counts it a torment not to be
suffered to torment others, and an injury
done to itself when it is no more per-
mitted to be injurious to others.

the leader demons for all the others felt
that his petition was of great importance
to them. Not and then away out of the
country. The petition of the devil may
be regarded as equivalent to, "Send us
anywhere; anywhere but to perdition.
Send us to the most shattered man;
send us to the lowest creature, into man
kind, bird or reptile; anywhere but
into hell."

III. THE DELIVERANCE. THE DEMONS
LEAVE THE MAN AND ENTER THE SWINE.
11. Now there was there high unto the
mountains. The meaning is, at the base
of the mountains. A great herd of swine
feeding. We are surprised at first to find
swine kept in a country where their flesh
could not be an article of food. But
though the Jews did not eat pork,
Roman soldiers did.

12. Send us into the sea. This they
asked naturally enough, from their love
of uncleanness as well as to gratify their
destructive passion.

13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave.
He gave no advice, no encouragement,
but allowed them to go where they
wished. "The devil cannot so much as
trouble a swine without leave from God."
Way Jesus PERMITTED THE DEMONS TO
ENTER THE SWINE. (1) Jesus did not
work this evil, but only allowed evil to
carry on its own work for a time, just as
God is continually doing in this world.

(2) The owners, if Jews, drove an illegal
trade; if Gentiles, they insulted the
national religion; in either case the per-
mission was just.

The unclean spirits went out and en-
tered into the swine: a fitting abode for
unclean spirits. And the herd ran vio-
lently down a steep place into the sea.
Not a cliff, but a steep bank.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE CURE ON THE
MAN. 14. And they that fed the swine fled.
Their occupation was gone, they were
thoroughly frightened, and it was neces-
sary that they should report what had
been done or they would be punished
for carelessness.

15. They came to Jesus. Matthew says
(8: 34), "Behold the whole city came out
to meet Jesus." And see him that was
possessed. Rev. Ver., behold. It is more
than see. They gazed upon the man.
Sitting (instead of his wild wanderings),
and clothed: at the feet of Jesus (Luke).
Right mind: sane, natural, true. Those
who forsake their sins always come to
their right mind, and see things as they
are.

THE REDEEMED MAN. FIRST. What he
gave up. (1) He gave up the evil spirit
which possessed him. (2) His unna-
tural and evil life. (3) His uncleanness,
and especially the Lord Jesus himself.
(4) His rags and poverty. (5) His
homeless wanderings, his wretchedness,
his restlessness. (6) His deeds of vio-
lence and sin.

SECOND. What he received. (1) A right
and reasonable mind. (2) The comforts
of clothing and a home. (3) Good friends,
and especially the Lord Jesus himself.
(4) Rest and peace. (5) An honorable
and useful career, in proclaiming to
many the Saviour of men.

THE EVIL SPIRIT OR CURSE OF THE
GADARENES. 15. And they were afraid.
They felt they were in the presence of
an awful power, the extent of which
they knew not.

16. And they that saw it. The swine-
herds, and others who came to the shore
out of curiosity. Jesus drew near to
his boat. The disciples, too, may have
told the story.

17. And they began to pray (beseech)
him to depart out of their coasts (borders).
"The devil would seem to enter into the
hearts of the Gadarenes, as well as into
the bodies of the swine." Can hearts
prefer their swine before their Saviour,
and had rather lose Christ's presence
than their worldly profit.

RESURRECTING SALVATION. 1. These men
rejected Jesus while they knew but little
about Him. 2. What did they reject?
Jesus, the Son of God, bringing for-
ness and salvation, rest for the weary,
health for the sick, blessings for all.

3. Why? Because they feared He might
injure a bad business; for there were
many other herds of swine left. 4.
Jesus heeded their request. He left
them, and never returned, so far as we
learn. Their decision was final. Jesus
came to them in spite of sea and storm,
and demons, and their own sins, but He
would not stay where He was not wanted.
Nothing but our own wills can hinder
our salvation. Only our own hands can
lock the doors of heaven against us.

VI. THE SAVED MAN AT HOME AND AT
WORK. 18. That he might be with him.
He was afraid that the demons might
return, and so wished to be near
his deliverer; or, more probably, in his
gratitude and love he wished to serve
Christ.

19. Jesus suffered him not. Note how
Jesus had given to the demons and the
Gadarenes just what they asked for,
though it would have been far better if
they had not asked what they did. But
He denies the prayer of this one whom
He had just cured, it was far better
for the man so to do. Go home to thy
friends. To be a missionary for Christ,
in the region where he was so well
known and so long dreaded, was a far
nobler calling than to follow him where
nobody had ever heard of him, and
where other troops, not less illustrious,
could be raised by the same power and
grace. Tell them how great things the
Lord hath done for thee. His greatest
power for good was in testifying to the
facts, in bearing witness to the love and
power of Jesus, as he had felt them.
We can do little effective work in
preaching the Gospel, except so far as
we have experienced it.

20. Began to publish in Decapolis: i. e.,
the region of The Ten Cities. The large
region south-east of the Sea of Galilee
and east of the Jordan, of which Gadara
was a portion.

At No 28.

A handsome and distinguished looking
young man and a pretty, graceful young
lady were going into the door of a hum-
ble house in the East End of London,
and so unobtrusively to the place, so unlike
its accustomed denizens, did they look,
that a saunterer through those wretched
streets, in pursuit of picturesque poverty
perhaps, and determined at any rate to
see what life at the East End was like,
had his curiosity aroused.

"Who are they?" he asked of a de-
cent-looking man, who like himself had
been watching the young couple, while
he worked away on a doorstep he was
mending.

"You mean that handsome young
gent and the pretty young lady, as just
went into No. 28?"
"Yes."

"Well, that man is Mr. Cavendish
Boyd—the Honorable Cavendish Boyd,
some say he is—and the pretty young
lady is his wife, as he married her two
years ago, and brought her here to live."

"To live! What! Do they live at No.
28?"
"They just do, sir, and a power of
good they do 'ere too. If you'd like to
know the district of the story, 'ere comes
the district visitor as can tell you all
about it. Good afternoon, Miss Simms!"
and he pulled off his hat to a lady who
was approaching.

"If you please, sir, I am
Miss Simms, and I am interested about the
Honorable Cavendish Boyd and lady, and
I took leave to say as you could tell him
all about 'em."

The lady smiled. She was a lady well
on in middle life, with a sweet but weary
face, and a gentle, low voice.

"Yes," she said, "I can; and I'm not
sorry to tell you the story, for it makes
one believe that the religion of Christ—
the religion that means really loving
your neighbor as yourself—has not died
out in the world, though perhaps you
don't come across very often."

"Three years ago Honorable Cavendish
Boyd came of age. His father and
mother were both dead, and he came in-
to a comfortable fortune when he was
twenty-one—not great riches, you know,
but enough to take good care of him. He
was fond of travel and study, and he
meant to see the world of men and
books, and people thought life was open-
ing brightly for the handsome, prosper-
ous young man. But all of a sudden
something took hold of him. He didn't
talk much about it; but it must have
been the breath of a new life in his soul,
for it changed all his purposes and plans.
He began to come down here every day,
among these poor souls, not preaching to
them or making a fuss about anything,
but just searching out what he could do
to help them, and treating them as if
they were poor relations of his own,
whom he was bound to see to."

"That went on for awhile, and then a
still stranger thing happened. He mar-
ried, and came here with his wife to live.
I have been told that the lady was an or-
phan, as well as herself, and there was
no one to oppose their wish. At any
rate, married they were, and down here
they came; and Mr. Boyd only said, when
he had occasion to say anything about it,
that he thought they could help the peo-
ple best by just living among them. And
here they have been ever since. If a man
in this neighborhood is ill, Mr. Boyd is
pretty sure to be nursing him. He would
find Mrs. Boyd among the sick women
and babies. I don't believe there's a
man or woman on this street who wouldn't
die for either of them, if it came to that."

The lady smiled faintly, but there were
tears in her eyes, and she spoke the next
sentence in a very low voice: "And I
think sometimes, if the Master came to
find His own, He would not pass by No.
28."—Youth's Companion.

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and what appeared to be a fatal attack
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may be afflicted with that terrible disease.
JOHN D. BOUTILLER.
French Village, Jan., 1883.

G. C. RICHARDS & Co.
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bronchitis. Nothing gave me relief till I
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bottles made a complete cure, and I
firmly believe it to be the best cough
mixture made. JAS. S. VANBUREN.
Fredericton, July, 1887.

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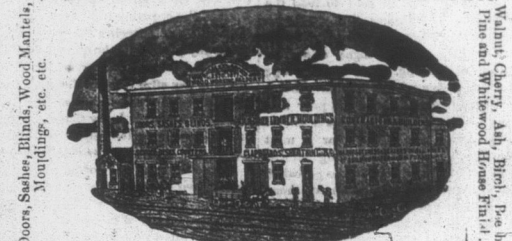
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