



THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON I.—JULY 1.

Jesus Walking on the Sea.

Matt. xiv., 22-33. Memory verses, 25, 27. Compare Mark vi., 45-56; John vi., 15-21.

Golden Text.

Of a truth thou art the Son of God. —Mat. xiv., 33.

Daily Readings.

- M. A Storm. Mk. iv., 35-41.
T. A Song, Psa., lxx., 1-13.
W. A Sermon. Jn. xiv., 1-27.
T. A Warning, Jn. xvi., 1-33.
F. A Prayer. Jn. xvii., 1-26.
S. A Trial. Mt. xxvi., 30-46.

Lesson Text.

(22) And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him into the other side while he sent the multitudes away. (23) And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. (24) But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. (25) And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. (26) And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. (27) But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. (28) And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou bid me come unto thee on the water. (29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (32) And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. (33) Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Suggestions.

After the feeding of the five thousand with the few small loaves and fishes, the people who had benefited by this miracle became wild with enthusiasm to make Jesus their leader and ruler, and wanted to take him by force to make him a king. (John vi., 14, 15.) But Jesus seeing the danger, and knowing that his own disciples would be eager to join the multitudes in their wild desire, sent the disciples away, bidding them cross the lake in the little boat in which they had come. Then, dispersing the multitudes, the Lord Jesus went up alone into some quiet spot on the mountain to pray.

Our Lord needed the strength which comes only from contact with the Almighty Father. The strength and rest and peace which come from being alone with God, and can be obtained no other way, are necessary to every one who will follow Jesus. It has been pointed out that at this time one of the greatest temptations was again presented to our Lord, that of obtaining a worldly kingdom (Matt. iv., 8, 9.) by worldly and easy means, instead of following God's plan of working hard for a kingdom of hearts. Christ's kingdom must come not by outward reformation but by inward regeneration. The only permanent power is the power of immortality. An immortal soul is worth more than a throne and crown.

Our Saviour could not live his own life without coming into frequent direct contact with his Father, neither can we live a godly life without that power. But our Saviour was not only praying for himself, no doubt he was praying also for his disciples. In the prayer—that has been recorded for us

(John xvii.) we see how he prayed not only for his disciples then, but for all those who should ever be brought to believe in him. We know also that he still prays for all those who will come to him. (Heb. vii., 25.)

The disciples needed his prayers, for at that very time they were out on the lake in the little open boat, and a fierce storm was raging. Perhaps they thought that their Lord had forgotten them. Perhaps you sometimes think that the Lord has forgotten you, just because you are in the midst of a storm of trial and temptation. That is the very time when your Saviour is remembering you the most and praying that your faith may be strengthened by the very trials you bemoan.

In the fourth watch of the night, between three and six o'clock, toward morning, Jesus went to his disciples. As he came near them, the Lord of land and sea, walking on the water, the disciples, seeing him dimly through the mist, cried out with fear saying—it is an apparition. But Jesus spoke to reassure them, and at the sound of his voice their fears subsided and their hearts were filled with joyful relief. The cares and worries of earth may sometimes so distort our vision that we cannot recognize the blessings that come to us, until we hear the voice of Jesus speaking through them, It is I; be not afraid:

O where is He that trod the sea?
My soul! The Lord is here:
Let all thy fears be hushed in thee:
To leap, to look, to hear
Be thine: thy needs He'll satisfy:
Art thou diseased or dumb?
Or dost thou in thine hunger cry?
'I come,' saith Christ, 'I come.'

Peter, the impulsive disciple, called out to the Lord asking him to call him to walk also on the sea. The Lord said, Come, and Peter without hesitation sprang out of the boat and began to walk toward Jesus. But when he had taken a few steps his faith gave out and he began to think about himself, and took his eyes off Jesus, to note the strength of the waves and the wind. As soon as his faith failed he began to sink, but he did not sink very far before he called out to Jesus, 'Lord, save me.' And immediately Jesus put out his hand and lifted him up, with a tender rebuke for the doubt which Peter had allowed in his heart. As they got into the boat the storm ceased, and those that were in the ship, probably others beside the disciples, came and worshipped the Lord, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Lord save me, this, the cry of the sinking Peter, should be the cry of every burdened sinking soul. In this cry heaven and earth—the mighty power of God and the weakness of the humblest individual—are connected by the strong cords of salvation. Lord save me—the ear of God is ever open to hear that cry, his arm is always stretched out ready to answer it. (Isa. lix., 1.)

Questions.

1. Why did Jesus send the disciples and the multitude away?
2. Where were the disciples in the middle of the night?
3. What did the Lord Jesus do for them?
4. What did Peter say and do?
5. Why did Peter begin to sink in the waves?
6. What lesson may we learn from this?

C. E. Topic.

July 1. When is a nation safe? (Deut. xxvi., 1-11.) (A patriotic service.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

NATIONAL BLESSINGS.

- Mon., June 25. A pleasant land. Ps. xvi., 13.
Tues., June 26. A fruitful land. Ps. lxx., 6.
Wed., June 27. A rich land. Deut. viii., 9.
Thu., June 28. A land with religion. Ps. cxliv., 15.
Fri., June 29. A land with schools. Isa. liv., 13.
Sat., June 30. Men of faith. I. Kings, xix., 18.
Sun., July 1. Topic—How has God blessed our nation? II. Sam. vii., 18-24. (A patriotic meeting.)



Alcohol Catechism.

(Dr. R. H. Macdonald, of San Francisco.)

CHAPTER XVI.—DRUNKARDS.

1. Q.—What is a drunkard?

A.—A person who has become so fond of intoxicating drinks that he drinks whenever he gets a chance and is always getting drunk.

2. Q.—How is a man injured by becoming a drunkard?

A.—He loses all his property, loses all his friends, he ruins his business, he ruins his family, and ruins himself body and soul.

3. Q.—Why does a drunkard lose his property?

A.—Because when a man becomes a drunkard he loses his good sense; becomes a fool, and throws his money away for drink and foolish things.

4. Q.—Why does he lose his friends?

A.—He becomes low and vile and filthy, until his friends cannot endure him.

5. Q.—How does he ruin his business?

A.—By not attending to his business and earning money, by wasting time hanging around saloons and grog shops, and squandering his money for drink.

6. Q.—Why are industry and close attention to business necessary?

A.—Because very few people have property enough to live without earning a living.

7. Q.—Can a drunkard earn his living as a laborer or a mechanic?

A.—No, he cannot; a drunkard will not attend to his work, or do it properly, and nobody will hire him who can get a sober man.

8. Q.—Can a drunkard make money as a storekeeper?

A.—No, he cannot; because he is not fit to wait upon customers, and everybody imposes upon him.

9. Q.—Can a drunkard be a doctor?

A.—No; he is never in his office when wanted, he goes to see his patients when he is drunk, and is liable to give poison instead of medicine.

10. Q.—Do doctors ever kill their patients in this way?

A.—Yes; doctors sometimes give deadly poison instead of proper medicine; drunken drug clerks put up the wrong prescriptions, and the patients die.

11. Q.—Can a drunkard be a successful lawyer?

A.—No; for no man can trust him.

12. Q.—Can a drunkard be a successful banker?

A.—No; because no drunkard could ever make money enough to become a banker, or if he had it left to him, could keep it. No one would trust their money to his care.

13. Q.—Can a drunkard be successful in any business?

A.—No; universal experience tells us that drunkards either die young, or die poor, and can never be trusted. The Bible says: 'Be not among wine bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.'—Prov. xxiii., 20, 21.

'Boy Billy' and the Beer.

'Boy Billy' was the adopted son of Christian Zende, an honest German, who was very much shocked one day at seeing the boy in a lager beer saloon, tossing off a foaming glass of beer. He bade the boy go home, but said nothing till evening. After tea, Zende seated himself at the table, and placed before him a variety of things. Billy looked on with curiosity.

'Come here, Billy,' said Christian Zende. 'Why were you in the beer-shop to-day? Why do you drink beer, my boy?'

'O—O—because it's good,' said Billy, boldly.

'No, Billy, it's not good to the mouth. I did never see such big faces as you did make. Billy, you think it will taste good by-and-by, and it looks like a man to drink, and so you drink. Now, Billy, if it is good