

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXII.

POWER OVER NATURE.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 40, 41. PARALLEL PASSAGES - Matt. viii. 23-27. and Luke viii. 22-25.

With v. 36. read Matt. viii. 23 with v. 37. Ps. cxxv. 25; with v. 38, Isa. xl. 27, with v. 39, Ps. lxxviii. 8, 9, with vs. 40, 41, Ex. iv. 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The sea is his and he made it.

LEADING TEXT.—He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.—Ps. cvii. 29.

The Lord's miracle arose out of the circumstances in which he was placed. There were no preparations behind the scene, and no stage effects. They displayed his supernatural power (v. 40, 41); attested his divine commission (John iii. 2); impressed his disciples (Luke viii. 25); silenced, for the time, his enemies (John ix. 30-34), and are well fitted to instruct us.

We might examine the sudden storm, the alarmed fishermen, and the great calm, but we cannot do better than regard the Master as the central figure, and watch him throughout.

I. THE UNTRUTHFUL WORKER. "The same day," v. 25. It had been spent in teaching the people, a "great multitude" (v. 1), from a boat at the water's edge, the people on the land. The parables of the chapter were thus delivered, Mark no doubt condensing lengthened discourses, for "with many such parables spake he the word unto them" (v. 34). John iv. 31, gives the secret of his industry.

He was now on the west side of that sea of Galilee, among the shores of which Capernaum, Chorazin, the two Bethsaiidas, Magdala, and Tibérias stood, and through which flows the Jordan. Four—perhaps more—of His disciples belonged to this region. Here much of his teaching was enjoyed. He did not seek rest as night came (Matt. viii. 26). He thought of others: he "sent the multitude away," and "even as he was," apparently without a meal, or rest, or any arrangement for his comfort, he proceeded to pass over to the other side. Gadara, as we see by ch. v. 1, was "the other side," or the country of the Gadarenes (Luke viii. 26), or Gergesenes (Matt. viii. 28). Ten cities were then grouped together, and called Decapolis. Phry gives their names, and Gadara among them.

The evening, we infer, was fair, from the other little ships—fishermen's boats—venturing out, the people being eager to accompany him, some perhaps having come from the other side. But it is of the "ship" containing Jesus, the Evangelist writes.

II. THE PROMPT DELIVERER. Like all lakes partially surrounded by high and irregular lands, that of Galilee is subject to sudden and violent gusts. Residents by lonely spots in Switzerland, Scotland, England, visited in Summer by delighted tourists, tell of "the squalls" and the boats that went down, and the lives lost. Such a storm came (v. 37); the bark was frail, the waves beat over it and into it; filled it; water-logged, it became unmanageable, and threatened to sink. "They were in jeopardy" (Luke viii. 23).

Jonah slept in a storm, weary, but with a guilty conscience. Jesus slept (v. 38), weary also, but with a conscience undefiled. The ship of Jonah came nigh foundering for his sake. This was saved from its carrying the great prophet. Jonah was running away from duty; Jesus was hastening to do it.

Jesus had a true human body, affected as ours are by fatigue. "As they sailed," says Luke, "he fell asleep." Some one of them, let us hope, placed the pillow or cushion—the bed of the East—under that holy head. When the danger is imminent, they remembering what he had done, almost reproachfully appealed to him: "Carest thou not that we perish?" It looked like it. He could not but know their case, they inferred from what they had seen, but he seemed so indifferent as to sleep. Ah! they slept in the hour of his agony. Matt. xxvi. 40.

A child would have the lakes and seas without storms. Then we should have less manly courage; less coolness in danger; less vigilance and observation; less science, and far less sympathy; less prayer for those who go down to the sea in ships (Ps. cviii. 28); and less prayer from them to Him who rideth upon the heavens (Ps. lxxviii. 4).

The disciples awoke him with their appeal. They were at their wit's end (Ps. cviii. 27); "then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble" (v. 28), and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

The heaten post makes the god force the winds with his trident into their cave. There is greater and simpler grandeur in Mark's narrative (v. 39). "He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace,' &c. There was a great calm. This is God; and he is God-like. He stilleth the noise of the seas" (Ps. lxxv. 7). See Prov. xiii. 4.

III. THE LESSONS HE TEACHES, in two ways, practically and verbally.

(a) Practically, his great power, so that they may well fear him (v. 41). This was the main end. No "manner of man could do this." He speaks to great natural forces, "as one having authority." "The wind and the sea obey him." This is a divine work (Isa. xlv. 8). God "createth the wind (Amos iv. 18). He speaks as its creator, with conscious power. What David described in bold figure, as done for him by God, Jesus did literally for the twelve.

He teaches also his willingness to hear. He is the hearer of prayer, to be called upon "in the day of trouble" (Ps. l. 15). The prayer is imperfect, but is not vitiated by its defects.

(b) He teaches verbally. He has a word for the disciples, as well as for the sea. "Why are ye so fearful," &c. (v. 40). They had faith, hence they cried to him. They had not enough, or they would have been

at rest. So disciples often err. Fear and faithlessness go together. They were not deficient in fisherman's skill, or in manly courage, but confidence in Him. Faith is the master grace in the human soul, for which God looks. But faith must have a warrant. Was there warrant for it here? Certainly, in the work he had spoken, and the deeds he had done. Even when he said, "Let us go over unto the other side of the sea"—words that would have been common in other lips, spoken by him, should have raised the belief that the other side would be reached.

It is thus that God's word and God's works throw light on each other, and each is best understood, when read in the light of the other. Let us see what God does, let us hear what God says.

(a) Are we disciples of Jesus? Do we come and go at his bidding? This is the proof of our being his true followers.

(b) We give ourselves to him, and he accepts us, for all life—"to the other side." He is with us.

(c) This does not prevent our having storms and dangers, such as poverty, sickness, temptation by the way.

(d) But when they come, though Jesus may seem indifferent to us, he only seems, and we are to cry to him. He would have us lean on him.

(e) He will either put an end to the trial, or carry us through it safely. He gives patience; he gives strength, he turns the trial into blessing. See 2 Cor. ix. 16-18.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

MIGHT OF GOD.—King Canute, a Danish conqueror of Britain, was one day flattered by his courtiers on account of his power. Then he ordered his throne to be placed by the seaside. The tide was rolling in and threatened to drown him. He commanded the waves to stop. Of course they did not. Then he said to his flatterers, "Behold, how small is the might of kings!"

POWER OF GOD.—You have marked the spring as it unfolded its mantle, and hung it gracefully on the shoulders of the hills, and spread its gifts of flowers on the lap of the grateful earth; that is a manifestation of God's all-transforming power. You have marked the blustering water, as it has torn off that verdant robe, and blown out the floral lights; that, too, is a display of God's all-changing power.—Dr. J. Parker.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The lake in question—man,—peculiarities—the other side—what distinct—how otherwise described—how Jesus had been engaged—how he embarked—form of his command—his condition—the accompanying ships—weather at setting out—change—alarm—disciple's doubt—appeal—response—effect on the wind—the sea—evidence of power—impression made—rebuke to the disciples—the deficient grace—importance of faith—parallel between disciples and us and lessons to us.

Health Better than Wealth.

Little Martin was a poor boy who had no father nor mother. He earned his bread by going on errands. One day, on his way home, he sat down to rest, and to eat his piece of dry bread, near the door of an inn. As he sat there a fine carriage drove up, and the master of the inn came out to serve two gentlemen who were in it. One of them was very young—not much older than Martin—and Martin thought to himself that he should like to be in his place. When he looked at his own crust of bread and his worn clothes, and then at their fine things, he could not help saying aloud:

"O dear, I wish I had that young gentleman's grand coach. I wish I could change places with him."

The other gentleman, who was the boy's tutor, heard this and told it to his pupil, who made signs to Martin to come to him.

"So, little boy," said he, "you would like to change places with me, would you?"

"I beg pardon, sir," said Martin, "I did not mean any harm by what I said."

"I am not angry," said the young gentleman; "I only wish to know if you are willing to change places with me?"

"O, now you are joking," said Martin, "no one would wish to change places with me, and walk so many miles each day, and have nothing to eat but a dry crust."

"Well," said the young man, "I will give you all I have, if you will give me all that you have, and that I have not."

Martin did not know what to say; but the tutor told him to speak freely.

"O yes," said Martin then; "I will change places with you."

But when the young gentleman stepped out, Martin saw that he was very lame. His legs were bent so that he had to walk with crutches. His face was pale and thin too, like that of one who is often ill. Martin then began to think that health was better than a fine carriage.

"Will you change places with me now?" asked the youth. "I will give you all that I have to be strong like you."

But Martin said, "O no; not for the world."

"I would gladly be poor," said the young man, "if I could run like you; but as it is God's will that I should be lame, I try to be happy and thankful as I am."—Church and State.

If you know the principles of prayer, and have a lively sense of your necessities, and hearty desire of God's grace and mercy, you will be able to pray without forms, and your affections will bring forth words out of the fulness of your heart; and you will not be ever solicitous and timorous about words; for, doubtless, the Spirit, who is the help to us in speaking to men, will also much more help us to speak to God, if we desire it; and God regards not eloquent words, nor artificial composure; neither need we regard it in private prayer. If you limit yourselves to forms, you will thereby grow formal, and limit the spirit.—Marshall.

He who laughs at cruelty sets his heel on the neck of religion.

Our Young Folks.

Hymn for a Little Child.

God make my life a little light. Within the world to glow. A little flame that becometh bright. Whence'er I may go. God make my life a little flower. That giveth joy to all. Content to bloom in native lowly soil. Although its place be small. God make my life a little soul. That helpeth others to be strong. And makes the singer glad. God make my life a little star. Whose light the weak may see. That showeth health and strength to all. May serve my neighbors best. God make my life a little hymn of tenderness and praise. Of faith that never waxes faint. In all his wonderful ways.

Helping the Minister.

"One thing helped me very much when I was preaching to-day," said a clergyman.

"What was that?" inquired a friend.

"It was the attention of a little girl, who kept her eyes fixed on me, and seemed to try to understand every word I said. She was a great help to me."

Think of that, my little ones; and when you go to church, or chapel, fix your eyes on the minister, and try to understand what he says, for he is speaking to you as well as to the grown-up people. He is telling about the Lord Jesus, who loves the little ones.

Don't Do It.

Don't attempt to punish all your enemies at once. You can't do a large business with small capital.

Don't say "I told you so." Two to one you never said a word about it.

Don't worry about another man's business. A little selfishness is sometimes commendable.

Don't imagine that you can correct all the evils in the world. A grain of sand is not prominent in a desert.

Don't mourn over fancied grievances. Bids your time, and real sorrow will come.

Don't borrow a coach to please your wife. Better make her a little sulky.

Don't publish your acts of charity. The Lord will keep the account straight.

Conscience.

When a very little boy, I remember reading of a child who was in the habit of going to an upper room, or loft, where there was a store of apples; but as she went from time to time to steal these apples, she met with something that greatly troubled her, for there happened to have been placed in that store room an old oil-painting.

It was a large face, the eyes of which, go to what part of the room the little girl might, seemed to follow her; and they appeared to be saying to her, as she scolded down to take up the apples, "Ah! I see you. It is very naughty. I'll tell upon you. You are sure to be found out."

Well, this so annoyed the little girl, from time to time, that she was determined to put a stop to this speechifying of these 'two great staring eyes; so she got a small knife, or a pair of scissors, and struck them out.

Ah! but there were still the two large holes in place of the eyes, and what they used to say to her. She had put out the eyes, but she had not, nor could she, get rid of her conscience. Moreover, the very means she had adopted for silencing without rebuke, only served to discover her guilt; for when what had befallen the painting came to be found out, it led to such inquiries as at last to reveal the whole truth.—Episcopalian.

Courage in Every-day Life

"Moral Courage" was printed in large letters, and put as the caption of the following items, and placed in a conspicuous place on the door of a systematic merchant in New York for constant reference:

Have the courage to discharge a debt while you have the money in your pocket.

Have the courage to speak your mind when it is necessary that you should do so, and hold your tongue when it is prudent that you should do so.

Have the courage to speak to a friend in a "seedy" coat, even a though you are in company with a rich one and richly attired.

Have the courage to own you are poor, and thus disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.

Have the courage to tell a man why you refuse to credit him.

Have the courage to tell a man why you will not lend him your money.

Have the courage to cut the most agreeable acquaintance you have when you are convinced that he lacks principle; a friend should bear with a friend's infirmities, but not with his vices.

Have the courage to show your respect for honesty, in whatever guise it appears, and your contempt for dishonesty and duplicity by whomsoever exhibited.

Have the courage to wear your own clothes until you can pay for new ones.

Have the courage to prefer comfort and propriety to fashion, in all things.

Have the courage to acknowledge your ignorance, rather than to seek for knowledge under false pretences.

Have the courage, in providing an entertainment for your friends, not to exceed your means.

Have the courage to insure the property in your possession, and thereby pay your debts in full.

Have the courage to obey your Maker at the risk of being ridiculed by man.

Robbie's Chance.

BY MRS. A. W. CURTIS.

"Robbie dear, mother is very sick this morning, can you get your own breakfast for once?"

"Of course I can, and something for you, too," and Robbie bustled about briskly, for it was a cold morning. But he soon had a fine burning, and the kettle on for his mother's tea. But when he went to the cupboard and found only a very small loaf of bread and a bit of butter the size of a walnut on a little plate, and barely enough for one cup for his mother, the boy scowled and thought that he would step up from his heart. Not another thing in the house to eat, and his mother sick, something must be done, but what? Robbie was only ten years old, small and slender of his age. His father had died two years before, leaving them only the little home that sheltered them, for the savings of years had been suddenly swept away. His mother had struggled bravely in the attempt to support herself and child, until her health failed, and she was threatened with serious illness. Robbie's face was very grave when he earned the tea and a slice of bread and butter to his mother. She drank the tea but could not eat a morsel, and lay back on her pillow so white and faint a great fear crept into Robbie's heart that she too might die and leave him alone in the world.

"Mother, I can't go to school to-day; I'm a great strong boy, and I know I can earn something if I try. You'll let me now, mother, for I must, or we'll starve."

"I know, dear, I shall have to let you try; but I am sorry, very. I did so want to keep you in school."

Robbie tried to eat, but couldn't, and very soon every thing was put back, and he talked up the little room as well as he could, putting the coal where his mother could replenish the fire without much effort, then he prepared to go out and see what he could find to do.

"Come here, my boy, and kneel down by my bed." Robbie bowed his head reverently, while his mother laid her thin white hand upon it, and said: "O God of the widow and fatherless! pity and help us now. Bless this dear child, and give him something to do. Give us this day our daily bread. Keep us in thy love, and care for us in our trouble and sore distress, for Jesus sake. Amen."

As Robbie kissed his mother "good-by" a tear fell on her face. She smiled and said: "Never mind, dear, it will all come right; God will take care of us if we put our trust in Him."

Robbie went hurrying down the street saying this little prayer over and over again in his heart. "O Lord! give me a chance! give me a chance to do something for mother now!"

It was not strange that Robbie had learned to love and trust his Heavenly Father, for the sweet lessons had been taught by his dearest earthly friend. Their hearts were bound together by the tenderest affection and sympathy. Mother and child were all the world to each other, and Robbie's heart was almost breaking with grief at the bare possibility of losing her. So, as he went, he kept saying his little prayer over and over again, "O Lord! please give me a chance to help mother now!"

A little child suddenly let go her mother's hand, and ran laughing with glee out into the middle of the street. The next instant a frightened horse came dashing along with the fragments of a broken carriage striking his heels at every step. The mother sprang for her child with a scream of terror, but fell prostrate before she could reach her. Robbie saw it all, and with a swift bound caught the child and pushed her towards her mother, but the next instant the brave boy's foot was crushed by the frightened horse, and a cruel blow upon his head threw him senseless upon the pavement.

"Bring the boy into my house," the mother exclaimed, for all this had happened before her own door.

Tenderly they carried him in, and laid him upon a sofa in her elegant drawing-room while a surgeon was summoned at once, who looked very grave as he examined the poor crushed foot and the terrible blow upon the head of the unconscious boy. "Who is he?" was the anxious inquiry, but no one knew, until at last a boy, who had heard of the accident, slipped in with the crowd, and told them that he was the Widow Worthington's boy.

The parents of the little girl whose life Robbie had saved at the peril of his own at once sent a message to tell the sad news as gently as possible to his mother, assuring her that the boy should have every possible attention until able to be moved to his own home.

Poor little Robbie! for many days he remained unconscious of all this, but at last, after a long refreshing sleep, he opened his eyes and found himself in a fairy land of beauty and comfort, with a kind pleasant face bending over him. He didn't know what to make of it and looked so bewildered the lady told him at once, in a few quiet words, how he had been sadly hurt in saving the life of her own dear little girl, and they were taking care of him until he should be able to go back to his own home.

"Was the little girl hurt?" "No, dear, not at all."

"Oh! I'm so glad of that."

Just then Robbie tried to move his foot, and cried out with pain and surprise.

"Yes, dear, your foot is badly hurt; we are afraid it will trouble you a long time."

It flashed over him all at once, the poor sick mother at home—he was going to do such brave things for her, and now perhaps he would be a poor helpless cripple for life. He hid his face under the white counterpane, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

"Don't cry so, dear! you were a brave, noble boy to risk your life to save another. Surely, you won't mind a little pain and inconvenience."

"O mamma," interrupted Robbie, "don't mind that, but my poor sick mother, I thought I was going to help her—that was

as far as Robbie could get, for the sobs and tears that would come.

The lady's eyes were full of tears. She kissed the poor bruised forehead tenderly, and stroked the thin little hand she held in her own. During his childhood the story had been revealed of his mother's illness, the want starting them in the face, his determination to do something to help her, and, oh! so often the unconscious boy had folded his poor weak hands, and said: "O Lord! please give me a chance."

"Dear Robbie, it seems hard now, but someone, perhaps, you will think it the best way's work you ever did. And now I've something pleasant to tell you. Your mother has had every attention since you were hurt. The doctor has been to see her every day, and has given her such cheering news of her boy, besides the medicine and most skilful she so much needed, that she is much better now, and is coming to see you this very day. The doctor will bring her in his carriage, and we are going to persuade her to stay here with you awhile if we can."

How Robbie's eyes brightened at that! He took the lady's hand and pressed it to his lips, and said: "I thank you so much," then fell asleep.

The meeting between mother and child was touching indeed. The doctor made her lie down by his side, then left them alone. Oh Robbie, dear child! mother is so sorry for her boy."

"Yes, mother, but I saved the little girl, and I guess it all will be right somehow."

"All things work together for our good if we love God, and we do love him, Robbie."

"Yes, mother."

Sweet and precious was that quiet hour, and when the doctor and Mrs. Clare came in Mrs. Worthington kissed her boy tenderly, and rose up to go back to her lonely home.

"Lie still, mamma; Mrs. Clare says you are not going home until this young hero is able to go with you."

"If you will consent to remain here a few days it will please Mr. Clare and myself greatly, and I am sure this dear boy will get strong and better much sooner if he can have his mother with him all the time."

"Oh, mamma, do say!" said Robbie. "I shall miss you so much, and you will be lonely without me."

Mrs. Worthington gratefully accepted the kind invitation, and for two weeks was a most welcomed and honored guest in that hospitable home, rapidly gaining the health and strength she had lost.

Robbie was glad to get about again, even if it must be on crutches, and one fine afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Clare lifted the boy tenderly in his arms and carried him into the house. What a surprise awaited them! A fire was burning brightly in the little stove, the table was set for tea, covered with a profusion of everything that could tempt the boy's returning appetite; new comforts had been furnished until the little home was pretty and cozy as heart could wish. Cellar and pantry were literally filled with provisions, while an abundant supply of coal gave promise of good cheer during the long winter before them. Mr. and Mrs. Clare would not listen to thanks or protests, assuring them that this obligation was all on their side. As they bade their good-by Mr. Clare said: "Now, Robbie, get well as fast as you can, and then come to me and I will give you another chance."—The Christian Union.

I too acknowledge the all but omnipotence of early culture and nurture: hereby we have either a doddered dwarf bush or a high towering, wide-shadowing tree! Either a sick yellow cabbage or an edible luxuriant green one. Of a truth it is the duty of all men, especially of all philosophers, to note down with accuracy the characteristic circumstances of their education—what further, what hindered, what in any way modified it.—Carlyle.

"John," said a clergyman to his man, "you should become a teetotaler; you have been drinking again to-day." "Do you every take a Drop yourself, meester?" "Yes, John, but you must look at your circumstances and mine." "Very true, sir," says John; "but can you tell me how the streets of Jerusalem were kept so clean?" "No, John, I cannot tell you that." "Well, sir, it was just because every one kept his own door clean."

We shall soon be in eternity, and then we shall see how trifling all the things of this world are, and how little it mattered what became of them! Yet now we are as eager over them as if they were all-important! When we were children we used to be eager in collecting bits of wood, and tile, and mud to build our play-houses; and if they were knocked down, we were sorely grieved, even to tears; now we know that this was all child's play. Even so when we reach heaven we shall see that all these earthly interests were but child's play too.—De Sales.

The actions of men are governed more by their character than by their interests; their conduct takes its color more from their acquired tastes, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good. It is only on great occasions the mind awakes to take an extended survey of her whole course, and that she suffers the dictates of reason to impress a new basis upon her convictions. The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections and habits, the elements of charity and masters of action.—Robert Hall.

If you stand upon a mountain, you may see the sun shining long after it is dark in the valley. Try to live up high! Escape, if you can, the malarious damp of the lowlands. Make an upward path for your feet. Though your spirit may be destined to live in there, you cannot be at home, for God is there. Your best strivings of soul are there! Your standing-ground should be there! Live upward! The center is always developing its branches toward the top, while the lower ones are dropping away. Let your soul-life be set upward! Upward!