

The incidents of the day were not yet over. The streets on the way to the boat were full with the evening gossips, glad to talk with their neighbours in the gathering twilight, now their day's work was done; and, with others lingering about, in the hope of seeing the new Rabbi, of whom so much was now being said. A number of these soon gathered about Christ and his disciples as they made toward the shore. They were easily wrought upon by the Master's mien. They felt that it was an honour to be associated with him. What privileges and emoluments would follow they knew not. At any rate they felt anxious enough to volunteer.

The suddenness of the tempest mentioned in this lesson is characteristic of the lake of Galilee. As it lies 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and is confined between two mountain walls, which rise from 1,500 to 1,800 feet above its surface, with only six or seven miles between them, the sea breezes from the Mediterranean across to the desert, which blow almost every day in the year, usually pass over it without disturbing its waters; but when, from any cause, the wind makes a plunge down upon its surface, it necessarily produces a sudden agitation. It is from this peculiar plunge made by the wind that Luke, in describing this tempest, says, "There came down a storm of wind on the lake" (viii. 23). Several modern travellers, and among them the author of these notes, with his company, have been overtaken by similar storms, though less violent, while on the lake in boats.

This is a stirring scene, and, properly handled, will greatly interest and instruct young classes. The Saviour and his disciples were good sailors, and were often on the Sea of Galilee. It must have been a very severe storm, or certainly these weather-beaten men would not have been so alarmed. One of the evangelists says, "The water beat into the ship so that now it was full." If ever you have been in a boat when in this condition, you will understand the danger of the situation. The calm sleep of Jesus while the winds were blowing, the ship rocking and pitching, and the water rushing over its sides, is a proof of his weariness after incessant toil. He laboured as long as he could stand on his feet before he retired to rest. The whole world was before him, troubled and needy, and he was the only one to help it.

Wrapped in slumber, little did Jesus know of the critical condition of the vessel. But, as Parker aptly says, "A storm always arises when he is absent." His turning away from us means the opportunity for a storm. We are only at peace when his hand is on the helm. He is to us in redemption what his Father is in creation. Let either let go for a moment, and danger brews in the natural or spiritual world. Even as a tiger knows its keeper, so the winds and waves know Christ. Not that they were creatures of sense; but matter is so constructed

as to be subject to mind. Everywhere it is the spirit that moulds the body. Out of the forest and the clay man constructs the city. He harnesses the lightning to do his bidding in the telegraph. Christ, from whose hands, jointly with the Father's, all things come, controls nature with a word.

How is it people get so frightened when Jesus is at their side? How is it his lessons of faith and mighty deeds are so soon forgotten? As it was with Israel when leaving Egypt, so it was with these disciples. The gracious deeds of yesterday are swallowed up in the sorrows of to-day. God must be a constant paymaster. We do not care to trust him an hour. These men in the boat had seen those, again and again, relieved from their troubles, who were drawn to Jesus by no such sympathetic chords as themselves, and yet they cry, "Save, Lord, or we perish!" Did they suppose that the Lord intended his apostles to be drowned in that sea, and so his work on the earth to be suddenly broken off? God gives every person a sphere to fill, and time to fill it in. Do not be alarmed at what seem to be dark prospects, but trust in him, and occupy till the Lord comes.

A.D. 28.]

LESSON III.

[Oct. 16.

POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.

Matt. 9. 1-8. Golden Text, Matt. 9. 6.

THE boat had been driven by the storm to the southern end of the lake, and Christ consequently landed in the territory of the city of Gadara, a half-heathen town on the table-land, twelve hundred feet above the shore, and at some distance from it. It was then in its glory, and lay round the top of the hill, looking far over the country. It happened that in this vicinity dwelt two madmen, abiding in the caves and tombs by the side of the road from the lake to Gadara, and had made it almost impassable by their fierceness. Jesus had hardly set his foot on the shore before they sallied out towards him, shrieking fiercely, seemingly deprecating his interference with them. They recognized him instantly as the Son of God, the demoniac presence controlling the human will, and adjured him not to torment them before their time. A greater than even the strong demons was before them. The one who especially appealed had hitherto resisted all bondage. Ropes and chains were as straws in his grasp. "What is thy name?" exclaimed Jesus. "Legion," was the answer; "for we are many." Then Jesus commanded the demons to come out of him, permitting them to enter a herd of swine grazing on the slope of the hill that led to the lake. On entering, the swine rushed headlong to the waters, being drowned in the act. This discomfited the owners, who, infuriated at their loss, turned savagely upon Jesus, and demanded that he should leave their country. Their insinuation that he cast out demons by a league with their chief, filled all weak minds with