

# The Quiet Hour

## Jesus Walking on the Sea.\*

BY WAYLAND HOYT.

"He constrained the disciples to enter into the boat" (v. 22). It would seem strange to be compelled to leave the sacred spot of so great a miracle, "the interested crowds, the Master Himself. So we, too, must often do what the Lord in His providence and His word clearly requires, even when it seems to us a strange and painful course." But Jesus was wise in this compulsion; toward the multitudes, they were determined to force upon Him an earthly crown and sceptre (John 6, 15); toward the disciples, they were subject to this same bad infection. So always be sure there is the wisest and most loving reason behind what may seem to you the strange compulsions of your Lord. What Jesus commands is always best, however it may clash with our present inclinations, and though, with our short vision, we cannot, for the now, see it to be best.

"He went up into the mountain apart to pray" (v. 23). Jesus steadily used prayer (Luke 5: 16; 11: 1). But Jesus also gave Himself to special prayer before any great action; and, as in this case, in the presence of any great exigency and temptation. Notice, also, that Jesus was wont to give Himself to lonely prayer. The lesson is plain and insistent. If Jesus could not get on without such prayer, surely we cannot. You have no time for it? Then you must take time, as Jesus did; see specially Mark 1: 35. Special difficulty now confronted Jesus. He had been teaching, that day, of God's kingdom (Luke 9: 11). But the people were bound to make Him an earthly king, a great wave of popularity was rising round Him. And this popular desire and acclaim took the form of a temptation also. Jesus was not tempted only in the beginning, as in the wilderness; He was tempted all through His life, and in many ways, as we are. Could he not seize upon this popularity, swiftly win a kingdom, and miss the appointed cross? But our Lord's quick refuge was prayer. Prayer should be ours also. Never yield to what seems to you a possible temptation; never go on into any grave decision until you have tested it all, and thoroughly, by prayer. Prayer is the great clearer of spiritual vision.

"The wind was contrary" (v. 24). If ever men were exactly in the way of duty these disciples were. They were doing precisely what Jesus had commanded them. Yet the wind was contrary. Do not think that there are never storms and contrary winds in the way of duty. Do not think that because you meet storms and contrary winds you are not in the way of duty. If you are trying to do as far as

you know what Jesus would have you keep on in spite of opposing winds. Always join with the other accounts of this incident that exquisite touch of St Mark,—Jesus "seeing them distressed in rowing." Note two things: though they were distressed in rowing, they were keeping at it, and Jesus was seeing them all the time.

"In the fourth watch of the night He came unto them" (v. 25). The "fourth watch" would be from three to six in the morning, the weariest and faintest time after a wakeful and laboring night; but just then Jesus comes to them. He knows precisely when we most need His special help, and He will give it to us. Notice, also, the raging waves the peculiar danger of the disciples, was an easy and entirely subdued path to Jesus. What a Christ we have! Our most tumultuous troubles and dangers are easy treading for His gracious feet; never despair, then; no waves can drown or winds blow away your Christ.

"It is an apparition" (v. 26). What we often think worst is best. "An apparition," cried the frightened disciples, and at the best thing that could come to them—their Lord! Never despair, even when what seems the worst appears. Your worst may be your Lord's best.

"It is I" (v. 27). Literally, "I am." I think that wonderfully beautiful and helpful. Amid every storm and opposition, this is Jesus' word to us,—*"I am."* It is as if He said, "No trouble of yours can destroy or hinder me; I am in it all, and over it all." What a reason this for fearlessness and cheer! Always we have and we have with us, the living, controlling Christ.

"Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee upon the waters" (v. 28). Many lessons crowd here. (a) The danger of self-confidence. That was Peter's besetting sin; what Jesus could do, Peter self-confidently thought he could do. (b) The danger of making unusual and needless tests; do not risk everything on some daring and abnormal enterprise. (c) Jesus said, "Come"; sometimes our Lord allows us to do foolhardy things that in their issue we may be taught the unwisdom of our self-confidence and the constant need of trust in Him. (d) Even great and unusual things are sometimes possible if we keep our eye on Jesus. (e) If dangers and difficulties shut of our gaze from Jesus, we are helpless; we sink, as Peter did, like lead. (f) Amid our fear and sinking the best thing is a quick eye to the Lord, like Peter's. (g) Only great faith can empower us in great matters; little faith will not do. (h) Even out of our unwise, foolish attempts Jesus can rescue us, as He did Peter. (i) Even little faith will bring Jesus to our aid. (j) When our hand is in the hand of Christ, we can have wonderful mastery. (k) Normal and usual service is better for

the most of us; Peter was better off in the boat than making great attempts on the sea. (l) Christ is master of winds of every sort.

"Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (v. 33). Christ being the Son of God, miracles, the display of divine power, and in all directions, are normal and natural. Such a being ought to be wreathed with miracle. It would be unnatural, were He not. And these "signs" of his divine power ought to be reasons why we should accept Him as the divine Christ.—C. E. World.

## "Made Nigh"

BY MARY E. ALLEBRIGHT.

\*Ye who sometimes were far off—

In winter time the sky is far away,

So far, so high!

I gaze—myself a speck upon the white—

On all the wondrous pageant of the night,

And stand abashed, and have no word to say,

So small am I!

The earth beneath my feet is white and still;

And though, around

Frost-work and ice gleam under moon and star,

Reflecting heavenly beauty from afar,

Yet there's unmeasured space which naught can fill,

'Twixt sky and ground.

But when June comes, ah, then the skies bend down—

Deep, throbbing, blue—

Close to the earth like some great heart of love,

Pouring out sunshine from the stores above,

Till whoso'er we walk, in field or town,

'All things are new."

And so God seems to hearts of winter chill,

Remote and high:

But time will come, if they but open wide

Their doors to Love that pours in like a tide,

When through Christ Jesus every soul that will

May be "made nigh!"

## "Thy Name Shall be Israel."

BY NICOL MOFFAT.

The art of naming is fast becoming one of the lost arts. We have names and names, but their significance is very faint as compared with the solemn appellations of long ago. Jehovah does battle is the remarkable idea that is to cling to Jacob in his new career as a man of God. Let every one that believeth, learn that among the things which have become new in the name—Thou shalt be called Israel.

The first Israel grew and became a nation. She had her fortunes of glory and humiliation, of progress and defeat until at the time of Ezekiel we find her in a condition like many a man at the crisis of life. It was then that Israel lived thirteen years without a vision from God to brighten the eye, or a message to loosen the tongue. They were barren years. At length the glory returned to the nation's eye and every tongue caught up the Divine counsel, and the years became fruitful.

Reader thy name is Israel. How is thine eye illumined with spiritual light? Hast thou a message for thy self daily, and one for thy friends, from the secret place of the Most High? If not how many years have passed? Was it at thy conversion or in the home church, or perchance upon the sick bed? The only thing to bring years of plenty to thy soul again, will be the message from God welcomed and obeyed. It will bring the joy of youth to thy life, and living words will be thy speech in thy home and shop. "God's voice will be like the voice of many waters, and the earth will shine with His glory."—Ezek. 43: 2.

\*Sunday School Lesson, July 1. Matt. 14: 22-38.  
Golden Text.—Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.—Matt. 14: 33.