

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## WHEN STORMS ARISE.

By Professor James Stalker, D.D.

More miracles, and of still greater variety! It is generally allowed by the most modern thinkers that there was a healing ministry which formed no inconsiderable portion of the Saviour's earthly career. To this, however, some would restrict the miraculous activity of Jesus; and they are fond of citing recent instances of mind-healing and similar practices, as if these explained the kind of power exercised by him. How inadequate this is to account for the miraculous element in the Gospel-records will be manifest to any one who recalls the healing of a leper studied in last lesson; and, in to-day's lesson, the stilling of the tempest is a miracle of a totally different kind from miracles of healing, to the explanation of which mind-cures and the like contribute nothing whatever. Yet such miracles occur in considerable numbers in the record—miracles wrought upon nature, as they may be called.

If possible, more astounding are the instances in which he raised the dead; yet, in his reply to the messengers of the Baptist, Jesus included these in his ordinary proceedings. There is no difference whatever in the tone in which these different kinds of miracles are related; they are all told with the same simplicity and naturalness; and they all combine in shaping the image of our Lord which rises up in the Gospels and has imprinted itself indelibly on the mind of the world. The other miracle in to-day's lesson belongs also to a kind by itself,—the casting out of devils,—and the present instance is a stupendous one, hardly less remote from ordinary experience than the physical miracle itself. No doubt the analogy of modern mental cures might be suggested here; but there are more sayings of Jesus than one which prove that, in performing miracles of this class, he was conscious of being in conflict with a personal power of evil standing behind all the sin and misery of the world, and of overcoming it.

The Storm Without.—As Jesus goes down first into the boat, the disciples following, it is evident that he is tired out with labors; and so he falls asleep at once, and does not awake even when the storm is raging. Inland seas surrounded by mountains are liable to sudden tempests; and the water which, at one hour, is peaceful as a sleeping child may, the next, be furious as an unchained wild beast. Peter and John and their companions were experienced mariners; but the hurricane which now descended on their boat was so sudden and bewildering that even they lost their habitual self-control and roused their sleeping Master with the short, sharp cry, "Save, Lord; we perish." In reply he called them something like cowards. As men and as sailors they ought not thus to have lost their nerve; but their worst fault was that they had shown little faith in him. They ought to have realized that he was immortal till his work was done, and that they could not perish while he was in the same boat.

True faith in Jesus imparts calmness even in the most alarming circumstances. Thus John Wesley, on his first voyage to America, encountering a tempest, was so struck with the behavior of some Moravians on board, in contrast with the terror exhibited by himself and the other passengers, that the conviction was forced upon him that they were acquainted with a secret of which he was not yet possessed. Who "the men" were who marveled at the great calm which ensued after Jesus had rebuked the wind and the sea, it is not easy to determine. The expression may be used for the disciples, and may be extended to hint how different they felt themselves, who were only men, to be from him who had proved himself able to plant his footsteps in the sea and ride upon the storm; but such a thought would hard-

ly be after the manner of this evangelist; and the explanation may be the simple one that, as we learn from another evangelist, there were other little boats near, by some of the occupants of which may have seen what had taken place.

The Storm Within.—The storm in the demoniacs is much more terrible to behold than the storm on the sea. It is impossible to tell whether or not the condition of these men was a result of personal ill-doing; but at any rate it is a vivid image of the tendency of sin to degrade and brutalize. When Jesus appeared on the scene, they were moved by opposite tendencies—the one to draw near, the other to flee from him. So, St. Augustine confesses, at the crisis of his life, he was both longing to throw himself into the arms of Jesus; and, at the same time, utterly disinclined to come in contact with him, fearing to die unto death at the very moment when he was on the point of entering into life. These demoniacs had confused their own consciousness with that of the spirits by which they were possessed. So, many a man might say that his name was Legion; because he is so distracted by opposite inclinations and passions that there seem to be many men within him, and he can scarcely tell which of these is himself.

Was Jesus responsible for what happened when the demons were cast out, and for the pecuniary loss caused by the death of so many animals? With such puzzles some have distressed themselves; but it is noteworthy that even the owners never thought of this; and it was a different motive that made the inhabitants pray Jesus to depart out of their coasts—namely, a shyness which resides in human nature against too close contact with the Divine. If Jesus complied with this prayer, how much more will he answer when he is asked to abide, as he was by the inhabitants of Samaria and the two disciples at Emmaus. —Sunday School Times.

## PRAYER.

We pray for Thy help, O Lord, in our worship; teach us how to speak Thy name in Thy name; and grant to us a message worthily shared and delivered which may find its way to many hearts, and may there spring up unto life eternal. Bless in like manner all Thy servants who have gathered themselves in many churches, in many unions, worshipping Thee in many tongues and fashions, and with many admixtures of imperfection both in belief and in character. We thank Thee that Thou dost draw near to the many thousands of Thy Israel, and we pray that Thou wouldst help Thy servants universal to proclaim the name of Jesus with earnestness of faith, and with the demonstration of Thy holy Spirit. And give us, O Lord, even us also, Thy gracious presence now, taking away from us all unfitness to hear and to speak Thy Holy Word. And give power to our weak words that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. O Lord, bless us all in duties and temptations, in joys and sorrows, in all changes of this fleeting education of life, and grant that we may take the true use of all which comes to us, whether it be bright or dark; may learn by our sorrows, and not be spoiled by our gladnesses, neither be weighed down by our duties nor negligent of our obligations, but in all things may seek to please Thee, and in all may feel that we have Thee with us. Amen.

As a countenance is made beautiful by the soul's shining through it, so the world is beautified by the shining through it of God.—Jacobi.

## CHRIST IS THE PSALMS.

There are many who profess to expel Christ from the Psalms in the interest of the Psalms themselves. But the Psalter as a living thing and the association with it of our Incarnate Lord, stand together. Those were memorable words which Mr. Coleridge wrote upon the margin of his Prayer Book, "As a transparency on some night of public rejoicing, seen by common day, with the lamps from within removed, even such would the Psalms be to me, uninterpreted by the gospel." A living statesman has spoken in language of transcendent truth and beauty, of the Psalter in one of its aspects, as "the whole music of the human heart, swept by the hands of its Maker." But not all the human universality of the Psalter; not all the unquestionable pathos, and cries from the depths; not all the mystic elevation of the "Songs of Degrees;" nor all the ringing bells of its Hallelujahs, can alone preserve it for its present place. A learned Brahmin Pundit has lately become a convert to the gospel. From his acknowledged eminence as a Sanscrit scholar, it was expected that he would first study the Greek of the New Testament as its cognate language. But his love for the Psalter is so deep that he had first devoted himself to Hebrew. For in the Psalter he finds Christ and the gospel; and, without that, he would no doubt prefer the ancient hymns of his race and country. Without an intense conviction in the hearts of God's children that Christ is in the Psalter, that it is in sympathy with His Passion and His Glory, its words would, after a brief season of deference to ancient custom, be almost unheard in our churches and cathedrals. They would be comparatively silent, for the future in sick rooms, and unbreathed by the lips of dying saints. The voice of millions of Christians about them would be like the pathetic cry of a simple old man, who said, when the photographs of his grandchildren, in a distant land, were presented to him, "It is they, and it is not they; take them away." The Psalms for the future might no doubt remain and be read in a book, of which successive editions might be called for; but the fitting symbol for the frontispiece of that book would be a broken lyre dropped from a dead man's hand.—Bishop of Derry, Hampton Lectures, 1876.

## BETTER THAN SAYING IT.

It is always better to help others to criticise themselves than it is to criticise them. They will believe themselves; they are not likely to believe you. The way to bring about this healthy and helpful condition of self-criticism, with its accompanying desire for improvement, is to show by our lives, silently, the better way while resolutely refraining from urging it on others. It was a high tribute paid to a Christian man, who is not now living, when one who had known him intimately said: "He never told me that I ought to do better, but I always came away from any conversation with him wanting to do better." If we would do this for others, let us seal our lips to criticism, and incarnate the better way in our lives.—Sunday School Times.

Let men dispute artfully as they please against the doctrine of original sin, let them flatter themselves with the goodness of their hearts, and the goodness of their state, till they lull their minds with the vain dream of safety and happiness; it will nevertheless appear in the conclusion that our carnal minds are enemies against God; and can never without renewing sanctifying change, be admitted into his presence.—Jonathan Dickinson.