

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus Calms the Storm.

S. S. LESSON—Mark 4 : 35-41. March, 6, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.—Ps 107 : 29.

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The same day, v. 35. This has been called "a great day" in the life of Jesus. Christ's ministry was brief, but how He packed the moments! By the silver sands of the Sea of Galilee He had sat in a boat, discoursing in parables about the profound truths of the kingdom of God, to a vast and hungering audience. The sermon over, He had been waited on by several anxious inquirers, who, touched by His words, were on the point of decision; for our Lord ever followed up His preaching with personal dealing. Hardly were these talks at an end, when the disciples prepared to embark on their momentous voyage across the lake. Shall we not imitate the holy industry of our Master?

"Count that day lost, whose low descending sun Views at thy hand no worthy action done."

Even as he was, v. 36. There were no needless delays. The disciples did not search the shore for a more comfortable boat, nor hurry to the town for a supply of provisions, nor make any other preparations; but "they took Him even as He was in the ship." For Christ is always ready. All reasons for our delay are equally irrelevant. It is not necessary to wait until we are better off, or until our hearts offer a purer abode, or until we are better acquainted with Him; but just as things are now, let us take Him into our ship to be its Pilot. He will come.

A great storm of wind, v. 37. Everyone at all familiar with the sea can recall times when he lounged on the deck in the sunlight, as the ship heaved sleepily in the long rollers, and the sails flapped idly for want of wind. Then, in an hour, the sky was overcast, the surface of the sea angry with crested waves, every rope singing, the masts straining, the skipper bending with all his might on the wheel spokes. So in life the sunny hour is too soon succeeded by the unexpected tempest. Job sits happy among his vast possessions and his prosperous family. Four successive messengers, treading on each other's heels, and he is left penniless, childless, clothed in sackcloth, on a heap of ashes. David, the victorious warrior, the renowned king, in a moment of self-complacent prosperity, is beguiled into sin, and plunged into a course of evil conduct, from which his name does not escape untarnished, nor his kingdom without judgment. How sudden and surprising comes the great storm of wind, whether in inevitable trial, or fierce temptation! He is a wise captain who, in time of calm, prepares against the storm.

Asleep on a pillow, v. 38. Neither the roar of the hurricane, nor the fierce buffeting of the waves, nor the imminent peril of the sinking craft, disturbed our Lord's childlike sleep. A healthy weariness had overcome Him after an honest day's toil. Besides, was not His life in His Father's hands, and where could it be in safer keeping? Happy the child of God, who with like confidence can peacefully sleep, when "rocked in the cradle of the deep!"

Peace, be still, v. 39. Thus Christ answers the alarmed entreaties of His disciples. An

extra furious gust of wind, a larger wave breaking over the side of the quivering boat, and they awake Him with the startled cry, "Carest thou not that we perish?" He did care; He always cares. So He rebukes the elements; and the wind is hushed, and the waves are still. Does He not come thus to our souls now? Over the wailing of our sorrow and the raging of our passions, we still hear that sovereign command, "Peace, be still." And they are still. How great the calm!

Why are ye so fearful? v. 40. Carlyle tells a characteristic story of the old bronzed seceder elder, David Hope, with a face "brown as mahogany and a beard as white as snow." His stacks were in danger from a rising wind. A messenger broke in on family worship to inform him of the state of affairs. But David only re-adjusted his glasses, with the remark: "Wind cannot get at straw that has been appointed mine. Sit down and worship God." Yes, why should we be fearful, if God reigns—God, who so cares for us?

Have ye not yet faith (Rev. Ver.)? v. 40. The Saviour's dealings with us and others in the past are the firm foundation on which we may fix our faith. The future may have in store for us testing times of terrible trial. But, resting on the solid rock, we shall not be moved by the fiercest storms.

Even the wind and the sea obey him, v. 41. What forces are apparently more free from control than the winds and the waves! If these are governed and guided by the will of the Saviour, how certain is it that nothing affecting our lives is beyond the region of His rule!

The Burning Bush.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

How sacred the most common things become when God is in them! How ennobled is the humblest when employed for His glory! A lonely shepherd in ancient Midian goes out to watch his flock. Before him is a prickly thorn-bush, just like a thousand other wild acacias of that desert region. Suddenly the bush begins to blaze with a supernatural light that kindles every leaf and twig; the bush is burning, yet it is not consumed! Out of the fiery splendor goes a voice: "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham." And the shepherd put off his shoes from his feet and hid his face, for he feared to look toward the glory of the Lord.

Here was an ordinary bush that might have been used by Moses to cook his evening meal. But God made it the place out of which spoke the majestic voice that "rolls the stars along!" The man who stood beside it is a simple shepherd, he is soon to become the most extraordinary of lawgivers; the staff which he carries in his hand is about to be used in the working of mighty miracles.

So are the humblest things ennobled when God uses them for Himself. The stones and timber of yonder church might have built a warehouse or a factory. They were fashioned into a sacred sanctuary, within whose walls many hundreds of Christ's followers assembled last Sabbath to commemorate His redeeming love. Beside me on this study table lies a volume made from linen rags and printer's ink; the volume itself is the inspired word of God. Within it resides that infinite light which proceeded from

heaven; it is the burning bush that has illuminated the human race throughout the centuries; yet it is not consumed. I write these lines for the columns of a newspaper; and until a comparatively recent time a newspaper was not the vehicle of sacred truth, or spiritual influence. But in these days the Lord makes known to millions, a multitude of truths pertaining to his kingdom through the evanescent sheets that issue from the press room. Thousands of souls are converted; tens of thousands are comforted, strengthened, and directed in Christian enterprises by these couriers of the Cross. Every man who holds a pen or a type holds a Moses rod. God dwells by His Spirit in a sanctified press, as in a flaming bush.

In all the history of His kingdom the Lord has chosen the weak things and the humblest to confound the mighty. He lighted up the shepherd Moses, and David, the farmer's son, and Amos, the herdsman, and Peter, the fisherman, and Paul, the tent-maker; and has not the world "turned aside to see" the marvellous illumination? They were no more self-luminous than that acacia-bush in the Arabian desert; the inspiration of the Divine Spirit was but the kindling of a flame that shall never die out.

"Ah," whispers some follower of Christ, "I cannot be a prophet, or an apostle, or a reformer, or a hero such as the Luthers, the Bunyans, the Wesleys, and the Chalmers and Finneys have been." Very true. You may be lowlier than any thorn-bush in the desert; but He who made Horeb's shrub to be bright by His presence, can shine in you and through you to others. He can ennoble and consecrate your humble life by His indwelling grace. What every Christian needs to feel is that if the love of Jesus has kindled his or her soul, there he or she ought to shine. Because you are not called of God my friend, to a theological chair or pulpit, must you not preach anywhere? You can witness for Jesus wherever you find an ear to listen to your message. You can speak for Him in the prayer gathering, in the Sunday school, in the sick room, in the dwellings of the poor, and in your own family circle. Let such live Christians as Ralph Wells and John R. Mott and Miss Grace Dodge and many a city missionary and Salvation Army slum-worker testify how the bush can shine even though it be not fed from the coal bin of a theological seminary.

Next to the gift of the Holy Spirit the crying want of these days is the fuller development of the "rank and file" of Christ's blood redeemed hosts. This world is not to be saved by the geniuses; but by the common folk who are inspired by an uncommon zeal for the Master's work. If you cannot be a calcium light or a great electric burner, you can be a candle and shed a clear halo of spiritual radiance around the humblest occupation. A kitchen may become as sacred as a temple if the Holy Spirit dwells there in a devout heart.

A servant, with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that, and the action fine.

Oh thou blood redeemed sinner, what did Jesus Christ turn thee into a Christian for, except to let thy light shine? Whether thou hast five talents or only half a talent, let thy thorn-bush glow with a simple desire to glorify thy Father which is in heaven.

A Sister's Influence.

The character of the young men of a community depends much on that of the young women. If the latter are cultivated, intelligent and accomplished, the young men