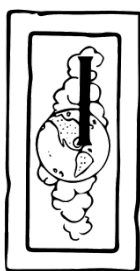


[R5239: page 150]

STORMS ON THE SEA OF LIFE

'He maketh the storm a calm'.—Psalm 107:29.

IF THERE is anything in the world which causes a man to feel his own littleness it is a storm at sea. The voyagers realise that no human arm could calm that storm. The text, then, refers to the Almighty One, our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father, however, always uses instrumentalities. The Scriptures tell us that after He had created one great being, He rested. This One was the Logos, the Only Begotten of the Father, the First-born of all creation. (Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14.) All the power the Father has since exercised has been through the Lord Jesus.

The passage of Scripture used as our text may not have been understood fully and completely by the Psalmist, the one who uttered this prophecy. Like many other Scriptures it has a special application to the Church of Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us that these things were written beforehand for our admonition, instruction. (I Corinthians 10:11.) We believe that nearly all the prophecies recognise the Lord and His Body first. There have been many storms permitted by the Lord to come upon the little company of His followers. Sometimes the whole journey of life has been a stormy one. We sometimes sing, 'When the storms of life are raging'. In his Epistles, the Apostle intimates that those who do not have storms, trials and difficulties lack proof that they are God's children; for God would not be dealing with such as His children.—Hebrews 12:7, 8.

If we are children of God, we need to have trials and testings, that these may make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. (Colossians 1:12.) In

all these experiences, the tendency of the trial is to drive us nearer to the Lord, to make us feel that we need the Divine shelter and care. And so a blessing comes out of these storms. We are not to think of God as making these storms, either literal or figurative. Satan is the great Enemy. While literal storms come about by natural laws, apparently, yet there may be a power exercised by spirit beings to produce them. During our Lord's ministry a storm of this kind was raised on the Sea of Galilee. The storm was so sudden and so great that, although the lake is not very large, the boat seemed in danger of going down, and the disciples, although experienced fishermen, were in terror. Jesus was asleep in the end of the boat. They came to Him and said, 'Master! carest Thou not that we perish?'

STORMS A TEST OF FAITH

Satan knew that Jesus and the disciples were in the boat on the sea. Perhaps he thought that by causing this storm he could destroy Jesus and thwart the Father's Plan. Jesus rebuked the storm. This He would not have done, we suppose, if it had been caused by the Father. Then He applied the lesson to the disciples, saying, 'O ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?'

The Lord's evident intention in letting the storm go as far as it did was to test the faith of the disciples, and to give a lesson such as this text is giving us now. It would cause them to remember in future years, in all their difficulties, whether from their own imperfections, or the imperfections of others, or as the result of the work of fallen angels, that all things were under Divine oversight. This also we should

remember: We have the assurance that all these things will work for good to us, and that He will with the temptation provide also a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.—I Cor. 10:13.

This was illustrated in the storm on the sea, and the Lord's act in rebuking the storm. So if we have trials and difficulties, we should cry unto the Lord—we should exercise faith enough to cry unto Him. It should not be that blind faith which would say, 'Whatever the fates have ordained, that is my portion; and there is no escape'. This latter is the condition of the heathen, but is not the case with us. The Lord allows the storms to press us more and more so that we will cry unto Him. Then He will hear us and give us the necessary deliverance. He may not always make it a very speedy deliverance, but He will make a way for us to escape. We must remember also that it is the New Creature with which He is dealing. These storms may be right *inside*, in our own person—[R5239: page 151] storms of passion, of anger, of resentment. These we are not to allow to go on; but we are to cry for the Lord's help, that we may be overcomers of these storms—trials.

GREAT STORM OF WRATH COMING

This incident of the Sea of Galilee pictures what the Lord is doing for the Church now, and what He will do in the future for the world. He intends to deliver the whole world from sin and death, which have had a long reign of six thousand years. This period has been one continuous storm, with occasional brief lulls. Meantime the world is receiving certain great lessons as to the desirability of harmony with God. By and by they will come to understand, and will then greatly appreciate the importance of being fully in accord with God and

very obedient to the Divine direction. Thus a foundation stone is being laid in their education for the next Age.

Finally, this storm on Galilee seems to picture very graphically the great time of trouble with which this Age will end. Then the reign of Satan will cease, and the reign of Messiah will begin. We are not to think of Jesus' Kingdom as bringing about the great time of trouble. The Scriptural thought seems rather to be that Christ's work in the present time is with the Church, and that with the completion of the Church, with the glorification of the Church, Christ's Kingdom will be set up. This Day of Trouble will be more particularly the Day of Jehovah. In this, Divine Justice will have a hand.

We do not mean, however, to exclude the Lord Jesus, for He is the chief factor in all that God does. But when the Kingdom of Messiah comes, it will exercise a restraining power—will bring down the lofty, will turn the wrath of man so as to cause it to praise God. This wrath of man will bring 'a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation'. In some of the Scriptural pictures it is represented as a whirlwind, and in others it is represented as a great tidal wave—the sea and the waves will roar. Then in the midst of a great storm, which will be sufficient to wreck the whole human fabric, Messiah's Kingdom will be set up. It will cause wars to cease. Satan will be bound. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. 'The desire of all nations shall come', and will be recognised in the making of the storm a calm, by this Kingdom of Messiah.

—THE WATCH TOWER, MAY 15, 1913.