



Aboard "The Empress of Ireland," on the Atlantic, Pastor Russell preached from the following text: "There arose a great tempest from the sea, * * * but He was asleep. And His disciples awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us we perish. * * * Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."—Matthew 8:24-26.

The Bible informs us that all of Jesus' teachings were parabolic. The Master explained the significance of some of His actions and words to His disciples, saying, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to all outsiders these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand." Jesus did not explain all of His dark sayings even to His apostles. Indeed, very few of His parables were explained. On the contrary, he said, "When the spirit of truth is come, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and after, He shall guide you into all truth, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken unto you." On another occasion of similar import, He said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Thus we see that it has been possible for all the followers of Jesus since Pentecost to understand the Master's teachings in a way that His earliest followers could not understand them. The reason for this is plain. It was not expedient that the natural Jews or other natural men should understand clearly the Divine plan. For them to understand would have meant that in many instances God's plans might have miscarried. As, for instance, St. Peter informs us that if the rulers of the Jews had known, they would not have crucified the Prince of Life. But only by the crucifixion of Jesus could the Divine plan be carried out, and therefore it was hidden from those for whom it was not intended.

Nor was there any injustice in this; rather it was a blessing in disguise for them. If they had done the same things under full light and knowledge, their guilt would have been many fold greater. They are not, therefore, to be punished according to the measure of light and knowledge which they possessed, which was very limited.

And the same principle obtains in respect to the whole world from then until now—little light, little responsibility; more light, more responsibility. He that knew the Master's will and did it not, will have many stripes; but he that knew not the Master's will and was punished according to the measure of light and knowledge which they possessed, which was very limited.

Such experiences are tests of faith. If our faith be strong, we would keep on with our proper endeavors to adjust matters, corresponding to the efforts of the apostles to keep the ship afloat, but with implicit faith in the Lord's promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." So according to our faith shall we be able to rejoice even in tribulation. Not that we enjoy the sufferings; but we enjoy the thought which faith attaches to them—that these are only light afflictions, intended to "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17.

The Boat and the Storm in Antitype.

We may regard the incidents of our lesson from a typical viewpoint. Thus the boat would seem to be the gospel of dispensation, or God's provision for carrying Messiah and His followers to the other side. The Master asteep would seem to prefigure the apparent indifference to the Lord, the Head of the church, in the storms of persecution and suffering assaulting His church. The disciples awakening Him would seem to imply the prayers of the church throughout the age, crying unto the Lord, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

What a tempestuous storm broke upon the Lord's people after Jesus had gone from them! Persecutions from the Jews, then from the Gentiles, followed one another until the entire history of the true church has been marked in severe trials, disciplines, testings of patience and of faith. Many a time have the Lord's people wondered at the amount of affliction and opposition from the world, the flesh and the devil that their glorified Head permits to come upon them. Verily, it seemed as though He were asleep, as though He cared not for their welfare!

The storm of the Sea of Galilee may have arisen in some ordinary way, for, as we know, to the contrary. It must have been a very severe storm; for the disciples were expert, experienced fisherman. We might reason that surely God would not specially raise up such a storm; and that if He had Jesus would have submitted to it.

All who desire to go on unto perfection, and to grow in grace and knowledge and character, should be informed that the second step after the primary study is consecration. Those who will not consecrate will not have the privilege of looking deeply into and discerning clearly the lengths and breadths

and heights and depths of the Divine character and plan. This also is for their good, a wise provision of God's love. For any having come into the begotting of the Holy Spirit will have no further claim with the world upon God's general provision for human restitution. Their hope must be on the spirit plane. Begotten of the spirit, they must develop and be born of the spirit in the resurrection, in order to have life eternal at all.

Spiritual Lessons for the Spiritual Household.

There is a precious lesson in this miracle for all of the Lord's followers. We also have need of faith and of tests of that faith. Our daily experiences since we became the Lord's followers have been guided and guarded apparently by the Power unseen, to the intent that as pupils in the school of Christ we may all be taught of Him and develop more the graces of the Spirit, particularly more faith.

How important this item of faith is we probably cannot fully appreciate now. It seems to be the one thing which the Lord especially seeks in those now called to be His followers. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." With faith "all things are possible." According to thy faith be it unto thee." Proper faith, of course, is meant, not credulity, nor reliance upon the words of men, but implicit faith in the Lord for all that He has promised to them who love Him supremely.—Hebrews 11:6; Mark 9:23.

So important a grace must of necessity require many lessons for its proper development, and therefore we find that our individual experiences as Christians we have those corresponding to the experiences of the apostles, as recorded in this lesson. How suddenly this adversary may at times bring against us a whirlwind of temptation or of opposition or of persecution! How everest, how dark, our sky seems at such times! How the waves of adversity or of affliction have almost overwhelmed us! And how the Lord has seemed asleep, heedless of our distress!

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When the scriptures declare, "The wise shall understand," the reference is to those who are especially enlightened by the Lord through the Holy Spirit and through the deeper understanding which they gain respecting the true meaning of God's word. On the contrary, we have the assurance also that "none of the wicked shall understand." St. Paul explains the situation to us, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Here, then, is the secret of demarcation between the church and the world. The former have the begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature, and with that begetting go privilages and opportunities of knowledge of God and of His plans, purposely secreted from all others not spirit-begotten. Hence, in all our attempts to spread the knowledge of God, we should remember to impress the thought that only the outlines of the Divine character and plan may be clearly discerned and appreciated by those not spirit-begotten.

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and heights and depths of the Divine arrangement.

On the other hand, we might reason that, since Satan is scripturally termed the "Prince of the power of the air," it would be quite in line with his disposition to seek to destroy Jesus and the church, represented by the apostles. He might have thought thus to nip in the bud the Divine arrangement which Jesus had outlined; namely, His crucifixion in fulfillment of the scriptures. At all events, Jesus when awakened did not hesitate to use the power He possessed from the Father to quell the storm—to turn aside the mischievous designs of Satan.

"And There Was a Great Calm."

We read that when awakened, Jesus first reproved His disciples for insufficiency of faith, as manifested in their doubt that with Him present with them they would be entirely safe from all powers of wind and water and the adversary. Then He rebuked the storm, and it quickly subsided; and there was a great calm.

What could these things mean anti-typically? What lesson could we gain from them along spiritual lines? The lesson is that the storms of life which have beset God's people throughout this gospel age have undoubtedly been chiefly under the administration of the evil one. He was unsuccessful as respects the Lord, whose faith triumphed, lived unto death. Satan has since tried, however, to wage a bitter warfare against the followers of Jesus, through persecution, slander, misrepresentation and falsehood. But in all of these he has only fulfilled the Lord's prediction, saying, "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. But now ye are not of the world, because I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you."

Throughout the gospel age it has been sought to keep the church pure by keeping the world out of it, even though wave after wave sought to fill the boat with the undesirable qualities and to swamp it. Throughout the ages it was the proper course for the church to realize that the Lord was with her in all her afflictions, even as He had promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Remembering this, the Lord's brethren have had full confidence, nothing doubting.

The extremity of the disciples in calling upon the Lord for aid seems to imply that at the close of this age there will be a special stress upon all the followers of Jesus, causing them to cry out for deliverance from the overwhelming powers of the adversary. Then the Master will seem to awaken, as though He had not previously noted the condition of affairs. Then He will arise, and bid the storm to cease; and there will be a great calm.

Storm of Trouble is Near.

Bible students are more and more convinced that the great storm of trouble upon the church is very near. Of just what character it will be we need not try to prophesy. We are to remember, however, that the majority of the storms upon the church have come from professed people of God, rather than from the world. It was the scribes and pharisees and doctors of the law that really crucified Jesus. It was they who excited the mob to cry out, "Crucify Him!" Release unto us Barabbas!" They, and not Pilate, were responsible for Jesus' death; they, and not the Roman soldiers, really crucified Him; St. Peter declares, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life!"—Acts 3:14, 15.

Our expectation would be that similarly the body of Christ, the church, in the end of this age will have its most trying experiences not from the world, but from professed brethren. Do we not indeed see a preparation along these very lines at the present time? The formation of church federations has indeed a sincere and innocent look, but is not this really a dis-

guise?

What the purpose and object of the Federation rather to fortify and defend sectarianism and to hinder any one outside their own pale of influence from letting shine any light of truth upon God's word? Should we not expect really that when the federation shall gain the measure of political influence and power that the symbolic book of revelation indicates will be the case, then those holding a simple faith in God and His word, and striving to walk in the narrow way and to uphold the banner of God's love, will be evilly spoken of, misrepresented, traduced, slandered, "roasted," and eventually hindered from any part in the Master's service?

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Next, the World's Tribulation.

The Lord seems to indicate that His special royal priesthood will be persecuted on the heavenly plane before the world's tribulation shall break upon it in fullest fury. We read, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things coming on the world, and to stand before the Son of Man." True, the escaping of the world's trouble may be in the sense of being enabled to live above it on a higher plane, as not affected by it, but we think not. We believe that the church will have passed into glory before the culmination of the world's day of wrath, just as at the first advent all the Jews who were Israelites indeed, we believe, were called out into the new dispensation before the wrath of God came upon their house from the social and political quarter. But no matter! The Lord's will be done, whether His people will be with the world in the midst of the world's trouble, and yet be protected from that trouble by virtue of their ease of mind, or whether they shall be first delivered, before the trouble comes.

Other scriptures seem to indicate that the church will have something to do with the authorizing of the trouble of the day of wrath, saying, "This honor have My saints, to execute the judgments written, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron." In any event, the Lord's people will be quite content, knowing that all things are work-

ing together for their good, and ultimately for the glory of our Heavenly Father and of Him who redeemed us through His own precious blood.

Soon the time will come for the Lord to arise and say to the raging elements, "Peace; be still!" Then will follow a great calm, the great rest from the evil one for a thousand years, during which he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are fulfilled.

Then will come the eternal rest of heart to all who are now in the ship with the Lord, and who will then have the blessed opportunity to be co-laborers with Him in the great and glorious work of blessing the world.

"He Leaves us not when the storm is high."

And we have safety, for He is nigh. Can that be trouble, which He doth share?

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