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→ SERMONS ←

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## THE CONDITION OF CELESTIAL KINGSHIP.

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*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne.*—REVELATION iii., 21.

THIS is the promise of the ascended, victorious, crowned and almighty Saviour to men whom He would have imitate and reproduce the life which He lived while upon the earth. This promise implies that life is a struggle with foes which assail it for the mastery. This truth has its illustrations in all forms and spheres of life. The little creatures which people a drop of water and float in the sunbeam, too small to be seen by the naked eye, contend among themselves for existence. In their struggle for the prize of life, which mirrors in miniature the conflict of the ages, some overcome, some are overcome. Pass into a higher sphere. How many enemies, the countless forms of disease to which flesh is heir, meet the infant at the threshold of the world, challenge his right to life and contest every step of his progress. And of those thus opposed and assailed how many are overcome. How many of the human race die in childhood! Is not earth's crust honey-combed with the graves of infants? And even when in this battle they advance beyond infantile life, their victory does not always mean strength, physical completeness and beauty. Look into the asylums, hospitals and almshouses which dot the land and see how many in disease-eaten, mutilated and emaciated bodies are wearing out a painful existence of misery.

not that father, a church member, who utterly neglects or chillingly rushes through this holy service, have some misgivings when he thinks of meeting his dishonored God and Saviour? What can a Christian father be thinking of, when he sets before these immortals committed to his special charge, such an example of disrespect to Him, in whom we live and move and have our being?

O ye, to whom this admonition may apply—should it reach you—be entreated, for the sake of your own character and influence, for the sake of the Church of God and a world lying in wickedness, for the dear sake of Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, to profit by this fraternal exhortation, written in sorrows, and yet with some hope that it may not be *utterly in vain*.—*Christian Mirror*.

## Christian Edification.

### The Blessings of Head-Winds.

By REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

The worst calamity that could befall us short-sighted creatures would be for God to let us have our own way. In the voyage of life we should choose nothing but smooth seas and fair winds and full cargoes, and "quick trips" and safe harbors. God is wiser than we are, and He no more consults us than I consult my grape-vines when I send a gardener to prune off the surplus branches.

When Christ directed His disciples to cross the lake of Galilee on a certain night, He did not give them the control of the weather. He knew that a storm was coming, but He did not tell them. They found it out for themselves before they had gone very far; and Peter, who was an "old hand" on that lake, had never known a rougher night or a surgier sea. The wind is right in their teeth, and the waves hammer the bow of their fishing-smack like iron sledges. With all their sturdy pulls at the oars they make but little headway. They are learning some lessons that night; and so are some of my readers who are just now passing through storms of trouble and enveloped by the darkness of a mysterious Providence. They are learning the blessings of head-winds.

(1) Prosperity breeds self-conceit, both in a Christian and a church and in a nation. We take to ourselves the credit. When we are "hard up," we are apt to

call upon God for what we want; when we have got it, we are equally apt to set it down to our own skill or our own industry and seamanship. Prosperous churches congratulate themselves on the eloquence and popularity of their pastor, the skill of their officers and the liberality of their contributions. When the children of Israel had things to their liking, they forgot God and turned idolators; when calamities overtook them, they were driven back to God, and cried lustily for His delivering arm. One of the subtlest forms of sin is self-direction. We ignore God and set up a will and choose a way of our own. He is too wise and too loving to allow this, and sends a stiff gale into our faces for our chastisement and correction. Whom He loveth, He chasteneth; the stiff-necked and rebellious He allows to go on the rocks.

(2) Head-winds strengthen the sinews and develop character. Nearly every American who has attained to the highest mark of honor and usefulness was "seasoned" in his boyhood by sharp adversity. As Joseph was prepared by a pit and a prison for the premiership of Egypt, so Abraham Lincoln was educated for his high calling by splitting rails, and eating the tonic bread of poverty. If he had been born in a brownstone mansion instead of a log-cabin, history might never have heard of him. Probably the best part of George Washington's training for his destiny was his rough experience in the frontier wilderness. Silver spoons

and soft raiment are turning too many of our young men into wretched pulp. Smooth seas and gentle breezes never make a sailor.

Adversity brings out the graces and the beauties of the noblest Christian character. As a fine mansion is concealed amid rich summer foliage, but stands out in all its beauty when wintry winds have stripped the trees bare, so I find that many of my flock show their graces to better advantage when God has let loose the tempests on them. The furnace of affliction is heated up for gold, not for gravel-stones. Then, too, the seasons of trial make us more watchful. In smooth weather the sailor may swing in his hammock; but a piping gale brings all hands on deck, and sharpens the eye of the "look-out" at the bow. David never fell during his seasons of severe trouble; it was the warm, sunny days of prosperity that brought out the adders. Noah weathered through the deluge of water nobly; it was the deluge of wine that drowned him. Ah, brethren, I suspect that when, in another world, we examine the chart of our voyagings, we shall discover that the head-winds—trying and disagreeable as they were at the time—gave us the most headway towards Heaven.

(3) The crowning blessing of all such

adverse experiences is that they teach us our utter dependence on God. The poor prodigal forgot his father while he was among the harlots; but he began to think of him when he got down to the husks. Danger sends us to our knees. The hour of our extremity is the hour of God's opportunity. When the disciples were at the very crisis of the storm, lo! the welcome form of Jesus appears on the waves, and the welcome voice of Jesus is heard through the tempest. "It is I; be of good cheer; be not afraid!" As soon as He sets foot in the boat, the tornado dies into a calm. Dear friends you may find that it is a blessed wind that brings Christ to you. Welcome Him into your vessel. No craft ever foundered with Christ on board. No struggling soul, no afflicted Christian, no sorely-trying church has ever gone down when once the Son of God has come to their relief. Jesus can pilot you through. The fiercest head-winds and the angriest waves obey His voice; and so He will bring you at last into your desired haven.

"As a mother stills her child,  
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;  
Bolsterous waves obey Thy will  
When thou sayest to them, 'Be still!'  
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,  
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!"

—*Christian Intelligencer.*

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## QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

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**The State, the Church, and the School.**

BY HORACE E. SCUDDER.

We have referred to the contribution which America is making to the conception of Christianity in its separation of the functions of Church and state, in its heroic use of the voluntary system, in the enlargement of religious freedom. Yet no one can take note of this momentous fact without observing also the existence in the United States of an ecclesiastical power which in its history, its official utterances, and its alliances stands opposed to the interpretation of Christianity which is denoted by American

Protestantism. The Roman Catholic Church has thriven under the enormous advantages which our liberty has given it. No state alliance could afford it such an impetus as it has received from occupying the same privileges with other religious bodies in America. It lies within the great circle of American religious freedom, but by the very charter of its organization, so to speak, it is a protest against the life which nourishes it.

It is inevitable that in one form or another a conflict should arise between this body and American Protestantism, nor is it strange that the conflict should appear first and most emphatically in the