

Our Contributors.

THE HELP OF HEAD WINDS.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

Human life is a voyage, but our heavenly Father does not give us the control of the weather. If he did, we should be apt to choose nothing but smooth seas, fair winds, full cargoes, and secure harbors. God is wiser than we are, and he no more consults us than I consult my grass-plot as to when I shall use the mower, or my grape vines whether I shall prune away the surplus branches.

On a certain night we are told that Christ Jesus directed his disciples to cross the lake of Galilee. 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 an angrier 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 were learning some of my lessons that night; and so are some of my readers who are now passing through storms of trouble and are enveloped by the darkness of a mysterious providence. They are learning the blessings of headwinds, and what spiritual help they bring to us.

Prosperity very often breeds self-concern both in a Christian, in 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 need; when we have got it we are equally apt to set it down to our own skill or our own seamanship. Prosperous churches congratulate themselves on the eloquence and popularity of their pastor, on the inflow of people to their pews and of money into their contribution boxes. When the children of Israel had things to their liking, they forgot God and turned idolaters; 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 he often sends a stiff gale into our faces for our chastisement and correction. Whom he loveth he chasteneth; the self-willed and the rebellious are left to go on the rocks.

Headwinds strengthen the sinews and develop strong characters. Many of our Americans who have attained to the highest work of honor and usefulness were "seasoned" in their youth 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 severe study of a few books in a log cabin, and by eating the tonic bread of a laborious poverty. If he had been born in the brown-stone mansion of a great city and reared in luxury, his biography would have read very differently, and perhaps history might never have heard of him. Probably the best part of George Washington's training for his

destiny was his rough experiences in the frontier wilderness. I seriously doubt whether the luxurious style of life in some of the highly-endowed and fashionable present-day universities turns out as stalwart a type of intellectual manhood as was produced in the plain uncarpeted rooms of the old-fashioned primitive-looking colleges. Silver spoons and soft raiment are not the regimen for heroes, smooth seas and gentle breezes never make a sailor.

The same truth applies to the spiritual experiences of God's people. The great purpose of our heavenly Father in this school life on earth is to develop a vigorous godly character. "Count it all joy, my brethren," said the Apostle James, "when ye fall into manifold trials, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Afflictions often come upon bad people for their sins; but God sometimes sends afflictions upon good people to make them still better. That hard rowing in the night storm on Galilee proved the disciples' pluck and gave new fibre to their sinews. They were learning to "endure hardness," and were rehearsing their subsequent experiences in the teeth of persecuting Sanhedrins and blood-thirsty Herods.

Adversity brings out the graces and the beauties of the noblest Christian character. As a fine mansion is often concealed in rich summer foliage, but stands out in its architectural beauty when wintry winds have stripped the trees bare, so we find that many Christians 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 "lookout" 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 headwinds—trying at the time—gave us the most headway towards heaven.

The crowning blessing of all such adverse experiences is that they teach us our utter dependence on God. The poor prodigal forgot his father when 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 hushes 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-tried church has ever gone down when once the Son of God has come to their relief. The fiercest headwinds and the angriest waves obey his voice; and so will he bring you at last into your desired haven.

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

A UNION SERVICE IN MONCTON.

The union service held by the Baptist and Free Baptist congregations in the First Baptist church, Sunday evening, (4th inst.), marks an important step in the movement in the Maritime Provinces to unite the two Baptist denominations into one body. Sunday night's union service is the first one of the kind held in Canada in furtherance of the movement and there was a large congregation present. The pastors of the two churches, Rev. D. Hutchinson and Rev. G. Swim, and Rev. R. M. Bynon, Baptist, conducted the services, and the choirs of the two churches united in the singing. The scripture lesson was read by Rev. Mr. Swim and Rev. Mr. Bynon offered prayer.

Rev. Mr. Hutchinson preached an able sermon on union, taking his text from John 17: 21.

The sermon concluded with these words: "From the consolidating of the different Methodist bodies into one, and the different Presbyterian bodies into one we have an illustration of the blessing which we may expect to attend the union of our two bodies. More effective work for God will be done within the borders of our own province and we shall have more money and more men than we ever before have had for the work of Manitoba, the Northwest, British Columbia and India. And now may the prayer of Jesus become the prayer of each one of us—That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

At the close of Rev. Mr. Hutchinson's address a union communion was held, the pastors and deacons of both churches taking part. At this service a special offering was taken for Rev. Mr. Swim, who has been compelled to retire from active ministerial work for some time on account of ill health. The handsome sum of \$151 was donated, and this amount was presented to Mr. Swim by Rev. Mr. Hutchinson on behalf of the congregation as an expression of their sympathy for the retiring pastor of the Free Baptist church, and for the good work he has done during his residence in this city.

Mr. Swim replied very feelingly to the presentation thanking the friends of the Baptist church for their kind expression of sympathy and the cheering words spoken by Pastor Hutchinson.—*Moncton Times.*

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