

BE STILL

James Smith

THIS most precious Psalm has been a source of blessing to many of the Lord's people. It is in general the language of one deeply taught of God, living in close communion with God, and therefore exercising strong confidence in God. Rising above second causes, God is seen working, supplying, and making his people happy. The most terrible convulsions are supposed, but faith remains firm. An invitation to behold the works of God is given, especially His victories over his warlike foes.

Then the Lord himself interposes, he appears in his majesty, he speaks with authority, he commands silence, he says – "BE STILL." He will be known, acknowledged, and exalted. His glory shall cover the heavens, and the earth shall be filled with His praise. Let us hear God speak, and seek grace to profit by His words.

"BE STILL." That is, *fret not*. Do the wicked prosper, do thy enemies increase, do thy foes prevail? Are thy circumstances trying, perplexing, and painful? "Fret not thyself." There is no cause for it. There is no good to be gotten by it. Thy God knows all about it. He wisely orders it. He intends to glorify Himself by it. It is for trial, for the trial of your graces and principles.

"BE STILL." *Complain not*. Israel in the desert met with sore trials, with great privation, with painful mortifications; but we read that "when the people complained, it displeased the LORD." And as the Lord was displeased with complaining Israel, so will He be displeased with thee; and if displeased He will hide his face, withhold His comforts, and perhaps close His hand.

They had little cause to complain if they looked back to what they were in Egypt, or forward to what was before them in Canaan. Just so with us, what cause can we have to complain? What were we? Where are we? What should we have been but for the grace of God? Complain! Nothing can be more unseemly. Nothing can be more ungrateful.

"BE STILL." That is, *kick not against God's dealings*. His purposes are like mountains of brass, on them we can make no impression, but we may greatly injure ourselves. His providence is a great deep; we may sail over it, but we can never fathom it, or divert its course. Art thou wiser than God? Would you counsel Him whose understanding is infinite? Resistance is folly. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

"BE STILL." That is, *yield thyself unto God*. Bow to His sovereignty. Submit to His rule. Acquiesce in His will. Be not like dead matter, or a lifeless corpse. But submit yourself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead.

"BE STILL." That is, *be silent before the Lord*. The Psalmist said, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it" (Psalm 39:9). This was wise. This was becoming. Look at Israel's priest, his two sons were slain by one stroke, by from the Lord, "And Aaron held his peace" (Leviticus 10:3). Deeply did he feel. Nature in him was the same as nature in us, and

therefore when Moses afterwards reproved him for apparent neglect, he said, "Such things have befallen me" (10:19). Such things! Such uncommon things! Such painful, such distressing things! Yet he replied not. He held his peace. Believer, whatever loss you sustain. Whatever cross you are called to bear. Whatever rivers of trouble you may have to wade through, be silent. Keep thy mouth as it were with a bridle. Utter not one word of complaint or repining, but bow like the pliant willow branch to the breeze.

"BE STILL." That is, *wait*. God will not be hurried. He will not have His work hastened. Lay thyself at His feet. Watch at the posts of His doors. Say with the tried Church of old, "I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him" (Isaiah 8:17). The Lord will appear. Circumstances will change. It will be all right in the end. Lay thyself at the Lord's feet. Watch the Lord's hand. Expect the fulfilment of the promise, and all will be well.

"BE STILL," for *God is working*. He is the great Agent, whoever and whatever may be the instruments. He leaves nothing to chance. There is no contingency with Him. He works according to a settled plan, and with a fixed end in view. While God is working, you are to be still, be silent; it will end better than you expect, as well as you could wish.

"BE STILL," for *God will overrule*. The things that appear most against you, will be overruled for your good. The end will crown the whole. God would not order this if He did not intend to benefit you, and get glory to himself. His hand turns the wheel. His eye watches the whole of the machinery. His wisdom will bring sweet out of bitter, light out of darkness, and good out of evil.

"BE STILL," for *God will explain*. He says to you, as Jesus to his disciples, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). Now we are to believe, to walk by faith, not by sight. The promise is to be our stay, and the presence of God our solace. Eventually every dark cloud will be dispersed, every mystery will be explained, every difficulty will be cleared up. "Now we know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Then shall we know, even as also we are known." Let us then be still. God commands us, assured that He seeks our comfort, and will make all things work together for our good.

Whatever storms may gather, whatever foes may arise, whatever may befall you, whatever difficulties you may meet with, hear the words of the Lord, "BE STILL." Precious Lord Jesus, who didst command the winds, and the waves on the lake of Galilee, speak to my troubled tempest-tossed soul, and say, "Peace, be still," and there shall be "a great calm."