

Always be True.

Be true to yourself, in the battle of life, My lad with the laughing eye, Look the world in the face with a fearless gaze, Neither telling nor acting a lie: Be ready to help a friend in distress, As you'd have that friend help you; Be a champion brave in a righteous cause, But whatever you are, be true!

"Like unto ships far out at sea, Outward or homeward bound are we."

And we sing hymns and read poems which speak of life as a voyage. It is in this way I want to speak, and to give you as well as I can some steering directions.

THE RUDDER.

Let me say something first of all about what St. James noticed on a ship. I do not suppose he knew much about ships, for Jews were not very good sailors—though we know of one Jew who sailed a great deal and was shipwrecked three times. That was St. Paul, and the chapter in the Acts of the Apostles describing his adventures is the most interesting chapter in St. Paul's life, to most young readers. What St. James notices about a ship is the rudder. He says that though a ship is so great, and the wind so strong, yet a very small helm turns the ship wherever the captain wants it to go.

The rudder we require is called Resolution. If you have no strength of resolution, you are like a ship with no rudder—the sea and the wind do what they like with the ship. Exactly as foolish and wicked companions make people who have no resolution do foolish and bad things. Many of you have resolution, that goes right for a while, and then breaks down as the rudder of a vessel at sea sometimes gives way. Often at sea a vessel is endangered and delayed through the steering-tackle falling, and skilled men on board have to mend the rudder gear before progress can be made. In one part of St. Paul's sea story it says that the sailors committed themselves to the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands. That is what a great many people do, they let their resolution go loose, and are at the mercy of the tide.

The rudder of our resolution ought to be tight and strong. One way to make it so is to give some attention to the lives of great men who have made themselves great by having good resolutions. I wish that you would read John Foster's essay on "Decision of Character." Boys sometimes read that when I was a boy. It would make your heart leap, as the band at the head of a regiment stirs the hearts of men on march. Macaulay's Essays on Clive and Hastings do something like that, and you all know that when you hear the poem of Horatius, with his resolution keeping the bridge, you feel what a grand thing it is to be resolute.

STEAM RUDDERS

But I believe you will have to do more than read for a good resolution. On some of the great ships one man's strength can do nothing with the rudder. I have been on a small steamer when two or three men were required at the wheel, because the sea was so strong. On very large ships the rudder is connected with the engines, and all the steersman has to do is to touch a handle, and put the engine's power on to the helm. That is like connecting our resolution with the strength of God. We can give ourselves to God, and by prayer gain this strength to help us to be firm. That is the secret of steering well.

THE COMPASS.

Near to the rudder there is a brass box, with something in it that guides the man who steers. It is a mariner's compass. The compass has a circle, on which the cardinal points are marked, as hours are marked on a clock face. The needle is magnetised, and points to the north. It is like a finger pointing to the north star. For before the compass was invented the sailor had to steer by that fixed star, which you all know how to find out, by looking at the Great Bear in the sky, and drawing a line through the two end stars up to where the Polar star is shining. The advantage of the compass is that when no star can be seen it points out where the north is.

Now, conscience is the mariner's compass, and right is the Polar star to which it points. Nobody invented that compass. God made one each for everybody, and put it somewhere in our nature, and we call it conscience. We do not quite know what it is. We only know that it is what every one has to steer by to be safe, and that if we take care of it conscience always points to the Polar star of right.

A rudder with no compass, or no Polar star, would not be of much use. And a resolution may be very strong, but set the wrong way, for we read of bad men, who had strong resolutions, and were all the worse for that, as they did the more mischief to themselves and to other people. And there are self-willed people to-day whose resolutions are set the wrong way, and who are going adrift and rushing to shipwreck.

There is a verse by Pope, the poet, which I wish you would learn:

"What conscience dictates to be done, Or warns me not to do, This teach me more than hell to shun, That more than heaven pursue"

THE LIGHT IN THE COMPASS-BOX.

But it is the same with a compass as it is with a rudder. The compass may be damaged. The compass wants rectifying. And God can give us a light within, which is like the light that hangs in the compass-box, and shows the steersman how to read his compass, and know truly where the north is. It is such a happy thing for us that in all these great things God will help everybody who asks him. Nobody who wants to do right is left to himself. God's Holy Spirit is in the hearts of all who love him. If you want to steer well through life, God will show where the Polar star of right is shining.

THE CHART.

But beside the rudder and compass the sailor has a chart for his use in guiding the vessel. Once a captain spread his charts on the floor and explained them to me. They were just maps drawn the wrong way. The land was a great bare space, and it was the sea that was marked with lines, and dots, and figures, and names. Charts are maps of the sea, telling distances and depths along the shore, and all things that sailors want to know about dangerous places, lighthouses, harbours, and ports.

I am sure you can see in a moment that the Bible is our chart. In that Book God has mapped out the sea of life. There we learn of life's deep and shallow places, of its rocks and whirlpools, and points of danger, and of the happy heaven, which is the great harbour to which every one wants to go. More especially the life of Jesus—the Gospel of our Lord is our chief sailing direction. Some one has said that if you want a simple rule of life, take this: "Let me so live that Jesus Christ would approve of my life." Or you may put it in this way: "What would Jesus do if he were in my place?" If you often ask yourself that question you cannot get far wrong.

We must do that often, and that is why in all our religious worship we read what we call "Lessons" from the Bible. We read some words of God's Book together because we can never know it well enough—just as a sailor can never know his charts too well. If it were only "an interesting book" we should all love the Bible, for it is the most interesting of all books. But besides being that, it is the great sea-chart for this wonderful adventurous voyage of our lives. An adventure as wonderful as that of Columbus or Captain Cook.

FAIR WINE.

God make you good sailors, and give you a pleasant and safe voyage and fair winds. For what can the steamer do without steam, or the sailing-ship without wind? What can we do without God's help? If you stood on the deck of a vessel, and told me that you could push the ship along by leaning hard against the mast, I would not believe you. And I do not believe you can do good, and be good, and sail well through life, by leaning on your own resolution, and trying to do without God. None of us can do without his good Spirit, which once came like a rushing mighty wind, and which often comes like a wind and bears us along through temptations and difficulties. So God give you good help.

"In spite of rock and tempest's roar, In spite of false lights on the shore, Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!"

MARJORIE'S CARAMELS

"Can you make caramels, Marjorie?" asked her little friend Alice one day. "Yes, two kinds," answered Marjorie. "Come over at two o'clock, and I'll show you how." Alice came on time, and she and Marjorie went down into the big kitchen and began to work. "I grated the chocolate this morning," said Marjorie, "so we wouldn't have to wait. I'll call these caramels number one. First, I put a little butter into this white saucepan to keep the things from burning. Then I add one cupful of milk, one cupful of sugar, one cupful of chocolate, and one cupful of molasses. As soon as it boils and strings like candy, I pour it into a buttered tin, cut it into squares, and let it cool." "Caramels number two I make in this way: I first drop a piece of butter about half the size of an egg into this saucepan. Then I put in half a cupful of molasses, half a cupful of milk, one cupful of sugar, a quarter of a pound of grated chocolate, and a half-teaspoonful of flour. While caramels number one must boil slowly, these must boil hard.

But when this strings, I turn it into a buttered pan just like the other.

"I can make another kind, too," went on Marjorie. "It's just like the first, only you must boil it for one hour and put in more butter. Instead of being soft like the other kinds, it's so brittle it snaps like glass. Now, while the candy is cooling, let us go and play hide-and-go-seek."

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE. PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MARCH 7, 1897.

The children crying Hosanna.—Matt 21. 15.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

There are several interesting incidents recorded in connection with this wonderful event. Christ was near Jerusalem. Bethany was a resting-place which he often visited. You remember a family consisting of one brother and two sisters who resided here. Please give their names!

THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

Do you know why this feast was instituted? Tell us. What institution in Christianity resembles this feast? We remember Christ and his sufferings. We should feel our hearts full of gratitude when we remember what Christ has done for us, and should sing,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

We would advise all our young friends to commit this verse to memory.

THE ERRAND OF THE DISCIPLES.

Verses 2-5. Some think that the two disciples were Peter and John. Why was such an animal selected? Kings were fond of pomp, but here the King of kings, and Lord of lords selects the most insignificant animal for his use. Does he not teach us that he can use the meanest creatures, when he sees fit to do so, and that we should never despise anything which God hath made. Perhaps he made this selection to let them see that the kingdom which he would establish was different in every respect from the kingdoms of this world. But in this acting he fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, made respecting him.

THE POPULARITY OF CHRIST.

Verse 8. A great number of people, called "a very great multitude," were so jubilant that they spread their garments, and cut down branches of the trees, and spread them on the ground. It is worthy of remark that this is the only instance in which Christ allowed the people to honour him, and no doubt what the people did, they felt that they were not doing more than their duty.

CHRIST CLEARING THE TEMPLE.

Verses 12-14. The house of God should never be made into a place of commerce. Men should never seek to become religious for the sake of worldly gain. When Christ was upon earth, the temple service had become greatly polluted, so that he, who was all meekness, executed vengeance upon those who had become so flagrantly wicked, by driving them out of the temple.

HIS BENEVOLENCE TO THE SUFFERING.

Verse 14. In the midst of the excitement of applause, he manifested his power on behalf of the suffering. Let us learn from this to be always ready to do good to those who are needy. "To do good, and communicate, forget not," is a command of high authority.

HOSANNA.

This is a quotation from Psalm 118. 25, which means "save now." It may, however, be regarded as equivalent to gratulation, and, as used here, it signifies that those using it regarded Christ as deserving the highest praise. He is worthy of all praise and adoration. The angels in heaven sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." So we should adore him with all our strength, preparatory to our employment in heaven.

A lady who lived near one of the Holiday Homes of the London Ragged School Union, invited the little visitors to tea. She says that she found that some of them had never seen a field of green grass before; had never known that apples grow on trees, and potatoes in the ground; had never seen a rabbit-warren. Nor had they ever seen horses or cows at large in the open fields. The common things of rural life were mysteries to them—the birds in the trees, the butterflies in the air, the stagbeetles on the banks, the fish in the pond, and the wild flowers.—In His Name.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 27, 1897.

HOW TO STEER A SHIP.

BY REV. SAMUEL GREGORY.

"Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth."—James 3. 4.

FROM "CORACLES" TO "OCEAN STEAMERS"

Horace, the Latin poet, says that the man who first ventured out to sea in a ship must have had a heart made of oak and brass. But though the first sailors were bold, they were not bold enough to venture far. If you look out of a railway carriage window, when passing near the river Severn, you will see now one of the earliest kinds of ships. People by the Severn still use "Coracles," as ancient Britons did. The early men made a big round basket, fastened over it the skin of a bullock, and put a seat across the middle. Boats like those would keep one man afloat, and could be carried on the back of a fisherman to and from the water. In their first ventures on the water sailors had no rudder or compass or chart. Gradually boats were improved. Men looked at fishes, and saw what a good shape fishes are for moving through water and how they can steer with their tails, and strike along with their fins, and so boat builders began to make things the shape of a fish. Then they looked at birds, and saw how wings catch the air, and took a hint about sails, and very gradually the boat-building trade went on. Then men learned to guide themselves by the sun and stars, and in time some one invented the mariner's compass. Next charts were made of the sea coasts, and at last steam was used to propel vessels. In this gradual way ship-building and seafaring have come to be what they are to-day. A ship in full sail is a grand thing to see, and an object which interests everybody. But it also teaches us some very grand lessons about life. Longfellow says: