

GOOD ADVICE TO BOYS OLD AND YOUNG

Whatever you are, be brave, boys!
The lar's a coward and slave, boys:
Though clever at ruses
And sharp at excuses,
He's a sneaking and pitiful knave, boys!

Whatever you are, be frank, boys!
'Tis better than money and rank, boys:
Still cleave to the right,
Be lovers of light,
Be open, above board, and frank, boys!

Whatever you are, be kind, boys!
Be gentle in manners and mind, boys.
The man gentle in mien,
Words and temper, I ween,
Is a gentleman truly refined, boys!

But whatever you are, be true, boys!
Be visible through and through, boys;
Leave to others the shamming,
The "greening" and "crimming,"
In fun and in earnest, be true, boys!

—Henry Downton, in Leisure Hour.

THE TWO SHIPS: FAITH AND UNBELIEF. — A VISION.

BY REV. JOHN WAUGH.

I had a vision of the ocean of Life—a sea upon which all mankind must sail for either a longer or a shorter period. As I looked I tried to discover some outlines of land, but none were discernible by the naked eye or with the telescope. Yet, though I could not see any shore, look where I might, I felt an assurance that one shore of this sea must be in Time and the other in Eternity, inasmuch as the voyage of life has a beginning, and so must have an end. Yet where the limits were I could not see, nor where could be that other sea into which the present leads, which I knew must exist. How deep either sea might be, no geographer had sounded to ascertain.

On this wide sea I saw a ship with full sails spread, yet different from any other vessel upon the bosom of the deep. I was told that she was very old, yet she exhibited no signs of age, combining in herself all the advantages of steam and sail, of wood and of iron, of compass-lights, of mechanical improvements, of speed with the utmost safety. Her flag was a cross arched above by a rainbow. Her name was Ship Zion, and could be read by her stern-lights in the darkest night. In all her voyages she had never suffered wreck, or even serious injury, her helm readily obeying the commands of her captain; nor could I learn that any one on board of her had been lost who had obeyed the rules of the vessel. Her terms were such that none were rejected through pecuniary inability, and I could not learn that any were admitted as mere passengers, all being required to work their way under certain well understood regulations. Her cabins contained the best books, her saloon spread the best table, and on her rolls could be found the names of earth's best people, who had accounted it their greatest happiness to perform daily duties on board of her, and to contribute to the well-being of the whole.

I saw, too, that the ship had a history entirely unlike any other. She was designed by the Architect of the universe, commenced her voyage when men began to multiply in the earth, and had been enlarged and improved under the several dispensations of the patriarchal, Mosiac, prophetic, and Christian, meeting every want, yet ever advancing toward perfection. She had sailed in all the seas of Time, and had encountered terrific storms by the winds of persecution from Paganism, Judaism, and Infidelity, yet none of her bulwarks had been swept away, neither had her flag been struck in any of her hard-fought battles. War-ships sailing under false colours had often tried to board her, but with invariable defeat, the winds and waves combining to her aid.

There was another ship within the reach of the telescope, too pretentious to avoid observation, having high decks, but with little ballast, and very evidently drawing but little depth of water. She carried a flag with various mottoes, such as "Mental Liberty," "Free Thought," "Age of Reason." Strange as it was, her captain, who bore the name of Skepticism, with many aliases had no confidence in the compass, never took any celestial observations, and regarded all previous charts, surveys, and sailing-directs as vulgar pretensions. The crew, passengers, and commander seemed mutually agreed in opinion, that as to the voyage and its destination nothing could be known,

but that every one must take to himself the largest liberty, and meet all events as they happened to arise. I saw that the vessel herself had been under different names, and sailed under different colours and names, being called "Deism," "Atheism," "Rationalism," "Pantheism," "Illuminatism," or "Agnosticism." She had no protection against fire, was never able to get any insurance, and no passenger who was reckless enough to come on board of her could obtain any insurance on his life.

As these ships were sailing on the highway of nations I saw that they came within speaking distance, and the captain of the Ship Zion, whose name was Faith, taking out his speaking trumpet, proceeded to question the rival vessel thus:

"What is your name?"

The commander of the other craft, whose name was Skepticism, promptly answered:

"Agnosticism," adding, with a loud voice, "we are all believers in absolute freedom of thought."

I perceived that when the captain of the Zion heard this, he said:

"Truly, a strange name for an ocean navigator. Do they mean to exercise free thought about the points of the compass? Will their free thought change the location of icebergs, rocks, and reefs?" Then, raising his trumpet to his mouth, he asked, "Where are you from?"

To which Skepticism replied:

"We do not know. How our ship came into existence, and how we came into being ourselves, are subjects upon which nothing can be known."

"Who built your ship?"

"We have substantially told you already. We have no reason to suppose that she ever was built. She grew, we think, from molecules."

"Whence are you bound?" was sounded very clearly across the waters.

The response was:

"We do not know. We are aboard of a great ship. We do not know what port she left, or whither she is bound. She may go down with all on board, or she may reach some sunny port. We do not know."

Faith then, in a very clear voice, asked:

"Why do you proceed upon your voyage?"

"Because we are in for it; we know not why. We do not know whether the voyage is worth the taking, the expense meet for the port, or, whether there be any port. All these matters we relegate to the Unknowable."

"To whom do you expect to give an account for the cargo and your success?"

"We do not know, but we believe in all good deeds, and mean to be governed by our own social compact."

"What hope have you as to the future of your ocean travel?"

"Our answer to that is, whether in mid-sea, or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and of all. Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry."

When Skepticism had thus delivered himself, seeing that his position was not very enviable, he proceeded to question the other ship thus:

"What is the name of your vessel?"

"Her name is Zion."

"Who built her?"

"The Captain of Salvation, together with all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, who were moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."

"Where are you from?"

"We are all from the land of Condemnation, and directly from the port of Destruction, where we found ourselves in want of all good things."

"To what country are you bound?"

"We seek a better, even a heavenly country."

"How do you know there is such a land?"

"Because it is revealed by Him who cannot lie. We feel at times its power. We scent its odours and catch glimpses of it."

"Whom have you on board?"

"All those who are persuaded of better things to come."

"What have you for the supply of your wants?"

"We have bread from heaven, pure water from the river of Life, honey from the Rock, and the grapes of Eschcol."

"Do you know where you are?"

"Most certainly. We have an infallible chart and true compass, and, having taken our celestial observations, we know that we are near the eternal shores. Come thou with us and we will do thee good. The Lord hath promised us all things, and we know that except we abide in the ship we cannot be saved."

Now, I saw that after this conference the captain of Agnosticism was exceedingly perplexed, and, throwing down his trumpet, walked into his cabin. The prow of his ship being turned, she proceeded on her way. I heard a confusion of tongues from her passengers, and among the uttered words I could catch such as "Superstition," "Fanaticism," "Priestcraft," until she was out of sight.

When I looked again, the two vessels were approaching the eternal shores. The multitude in the good Ship Zion were in expectation of landing, but the passengers of the other vessel were filled with surprise and fear. They had disbelieved in such a country, had made no preparation to land, neither were they ready to give an account of themselves to its Ruler. They were nearing the shores which they had refused to consider; darkness and storms were around them. To them the coast was a rocky one; they had no chart, no pilot, and no means of introduction to the inhabitants. Their ship had been built only for fair weather and smooth seas. When their anchors of Vain Hope and Speculation were let down into the angry waves they dragged over the bottom. So they asked one another, "Where are we?" and were answered, "We do not know." Some said, "Hold on!" while others answered, "We can find nothing to hold upon." Some had said, "Suppose that all that has been said about a judgment to come should be found true? We have said we would walk up like men and say we were mistaken."

I saw this was mere bravado; they found their mistake was presumptuous wickedness, and the furies of the storm laughed at their ruin. Many exclaimed, "What fools we were not to consider our latter end!" Others fell on their knees and tried to pray, and above the raging of the tempest many voices were heard saying, "Behold that Ship Zion: How grandly she comes into port with all her sails spread! Their ship is not as our ship; let us confess our folly and shame."

When the ship carrying the flag of Redemption came near the Golden City, the captain took out his spy-glass and said:

"The spires and shining gates are in full view; let us all be in readiness to meet the King in His beauty."

I saw, too, when she reached the land, that many of the King's courtiers came on board, and a vast company of those who had for a long period been inhabitants of the country came to receive their relatives and friends; nay, the King himself came and conversed with many of them.

While the sea sparkled in the beams of the sun of Righteousness, I heard them singing:

"Oh, happy harbour of God's saints!
Oh, sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow can be found,
Nor grief, nor care, nor toil."

—Pres. Board of Publication.

REST AWHILE.

You are wearing out the vital forces faster than there is any need, and in this way subtracting years from the sum total of your life. This rush and worry, day after day, this restless anxiety for something you have not got, is like pebbles run in machinery; they grate and grind the life out of you. You have useless burdens; throw them off. You have a great load of useless care; dump it. Pull in the strings; compact your business; take time for thought of better things. Go out into the air and let God's sun shine down upon your busy head. Stop thinking of business and profit; stop grumbling at adverse providences. You will probably never see much better times in this doomed world; and your most opportune season is now; your happiest day is to-day. Calmly do your duty, and let God take care of His own world. He is still alive and is the King. Do not imagine that things will go to everlasting smash when you disappear from this mortal stage. Do not fancy that the curse of heaven, in the shape of the vain talk of writing up a disjointed earth, is imposed upon you. Cease to fret and fume; cease to jump and worry early and late. The good time is coming, but you can never bring it. God can, and will; take breath, sir; sit down and rest, and take a long breath. Then go calmly to the task of life, and do your work well.—Dr. T. Taylor.