

the angel, self, but God's out."—Henry, at all disciples Lord before all among the sons judges himself a

"Man is im- Paul's career is testimony for Roman realm. had doubtless ived assurance ay be thankful

asy to believe to rest on the

sult is revealed, hat Island Paul od was guiding te to some land ecy have their

Even the pris- our must aid in the weight of

in many days the stars were lost their bear- taken away. despaired—save they were being

teen fathoms—rs, realizing the secretly prepare s to their fate.

in in which the ! It was a time quality of their at time came to lest of them all, ship nor the cen- n—; but a Jew- n—a prisoner.

n. He seems to his composure. ith in God. He at he was to ap- ould wreck the ng reminds us of ing disciples on ur faith?"

Verses 22-25.

This, too, arose out of his faith. He knew how that all things, even storms, would work for the good of them who love God.

Note (3) his commanding influence. From the very beginning of the voyage he impressed Julius the centurion. Verse 3.

He restored the failing courage of the crew. Verse 22. His word prevented the desertion of the sailors. It really seemed that he became the recognized Master both of the ship and the soldiers. Such was the ascendancy of a dominant personality. That picture alone is a justification of this lengthened narration of the shipwreck.

But there is another reason for this account. The relation of nature's forces to the kingdom of God is one that has perplexed thoughtful men and one of which Paul himself had frequently spoken. The apostle's profound teachings in Rom. 8 and elsewhere on this subject are beautifully illustrated in this narrative and it helps us to a clearer conception of its principles.

1. Nature is of God, made for and subservient to man.

2. By the fall, disorder came within the realm of nature. It is unequal to the purpose for which it was made, like the plant whose buds are pinched.

3. Within limited bounds it is the sphere in which Satan works. Hence he is called "the prince of the power of the air." The storm on Galilee Jesus "rebuked" as though he traced it back to Satan as its cause. For this reason the wickedness of men is the triumph of disease, storms, plagues, etc., etc.

4. Nature aspires to its original glory. Hence all creation groaneth, etc., waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body.

5. God, the author of nature, will and does turn all things, even the machinations of Satan, to the furtherance of his redemption purpose.

This storm, furious and protracted, seems directed to crush the faith of Paul and so defeat his divine mission. As we read history, the failure of Paul's faith on this occasion would have been the loss of all, ship, crew, himself, and the hope of the Gentiles.

As it was, its very fury has only verified the providence of God and confirmed the faith of believers through all subsequent years.

Thoughts for Young People.

Lessons from the Storm.

1. Storms befall God's people while they are in this life, just as they befall sinners: but the people of God have comforts in trouble which others know not of. Verse 14.

2. When death stares men in the face their

true character is revealed. Nothing in Paul's history shows his sincerity more clearly than his conduct in the storm. Verse 21.

3. Men will throw overboard everything to save their lives, and so should they sacrifice everything to save their souls. Verses 18, 19.

4. In all the storm God's eye was on that tossing vessel, and so in all our trials God is watching over us, and caring for us, even while we know it not. Verses 23, 24.

5. See what a blessing in trouble one good, trusting man can become! Through one godly, believing man a whole ship's company are saved. Verse 24.

6. In times of trouble we should think of others, and try to help and comfort them. Verse 25.

By Way of Illustration.

Paul in a shipwreck. There is never a place where men feel so helpless as on the sea in a storm. Mr. Moody's experience on the *Spre* when the great shaft broke and the ship began to drift helplessly out of the path of ocean travel is well known. While men and women were well nigh insane with terror and despair, Mr. Moody was calm and steadfast. He proposed a prayer service to which the terrified people flocked, irrespective of their theological belief, and while they were praying help came.

A missionary in an earthquake. One of the lady missionaries of the Woman's Missionary Society, was in Japan during the terrible earthquake. When she found herself in a city full of homeless, dying, suffering people, and knew that she was without food or shelter or refuge of any sort, having narrowly escaped being crushed under her own falling house, she was terribly frightened. Surrounded by a crowd of native Christians and heathen who had instinctively turned to her, she knelt upon the ground and told the Lord how afraid she was, and asked him to strengthen her. Into her heart came a wonderful peace and calm. She arose to encourage the fearful, to minister to the crushed and dying, to be an angel of mercy in all those awful experiences.

"*Fear not, Paul.*" "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me," sang David in the twenty-third Psalm. Said John Wesley when dying. "The best of all is, God is with us." "There is no one so suitable to lead me through the dark as He who first found me in the dark," said Christmas Evans. And whether the valley of the shadow of death is the darkness of affliction or tempest, or the wilderness of temptation, or death itself, "Thou art with me."