

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

PAUL A PRISONER—THE VOYAGE.*

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

This purpose, v. 13. A pilot, to be of any real service, must know the port to which he is to bring the ship under his charge. Let him be ever so well acquainted with the art of seamanship and ever so skilful in handling the wheel, unless he knows where the harbor to be reached lies, and the way to it, no one would entrust to his direction a vessel with its precious cargo of passengers and freight. All voyagers over the sea of life wish to reach the port of heaven. There is one Pilot who knows where that port lies, and the way thither. Those who trust their lives to the guidance of Jesus, will surely reach, at last, the haven of eternal peace and joy: He will not suffer them to lose their way.

A tempestuous wind, v. 14. Many a young man, who has just left the safe harbor of a sheltered home, to launch out upon life's uncertain sea, knows what it is to have the fierce storm of temptation to sweep down upon him with a force that threatens to destroy him. Every one so tempted may learn a lesson of courage and constancy from one who, early in life, was thrown amongst temptations many and strong, but he came through them all unscathed and unspotted. At the close of a useful and honorable life, he said that he had been saved and kept from evil, by having constantly before his mind, the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." No young man's motto is better than this.

Could not bear up into the wind, v. 15. Botanists tell us that the fruits on the trees would have developed into new twigs and branches, only some force of nature interfered to prevent this. They were checked on their way, and their growth was stunted. But the life in the tree turned this to marvellous account. Out of the thwarted developments it brought forth the beautiful and delicious fruit. So God causes the disappointments and hindrances of life to work out for His children something far better than they would have obtained had everything gone smoothly. If we only knew how much we owe to the seeming ills of life, our complaints would be turned into songs of gratitude.

They used helps, v. 17.—Early in the present year, the passengers and crew of the steamship Republic, sailing out of New York harbor, were saved by the wonderful invention of wireless telegraphy, which enabled the operator to summon to the assistance of the distressed vessel other ships from miles away. In Paul's day mariners had only the sun and moon and stars to guide them, when land was out of sight. When these heavenly bodies were hidden, they had no human means of directing their course—not even a compass. But, in modern, no less than in ancient days, does safety at sea depend upon God. For He gave men the power to invent and improve the compass and to discover wireless telegraphy. He works through these "helps" and makes them effective. They all, in some way, reveal His power.

Be of good cheer, v. 23. It is said that an artist, when on his deathbed, called for his greatest picture. The scene was a shipwreck with dark clouds and raging seas, while the only light was a lurid one that added to the terror. "That cloud," said the dying artist, "is too dark; I must make it

*S.S. Lesson, October 31, 1909—Acts 27: 13-26. Commit to memory vs. 23-24. Study Acts 27: 1-26. Golden Text—Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.—Psalm 37: 5.

brighter." And with the last touch of his brush, he used a gleam of light to illumine the darkness. There is never a dark cloud in our lives but is brightened by some precious promise of God. There is always the light of hope and joy in His pictures.

I believe God, v. 25. People believe one another, or the business of life would be impossible. For example, the merchant takes in exchange for his goods a little piece of printed paper. He does so because on the bill is the promise of the Government or of some bank to pay to the bearer in gold the amount named on the bill. But Governments have sometimes been unable to pay what they have promised, and banks have not seldom failed. But from the beginning until now not one of God's promises has failed. We can believe Him with the firm assurance that we shall never be disappointed.

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

Sweetest thoughts shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go;
But our human needs, they will not alter;

Christ no after age shall e'er out-grow.

Yea, amen! O changeless One, thou only

Art life's guide and spiritual goal!
Thou the light across the dark vale lonely.

Thou the eternal haven of the soul!
—John Campbell Sharp.

WANTED: A WORKER.

God never goes to the lazy or the idle when He needs men for His service. When God wants a worker, He calls a worker. When He has work to be done He goes to those who are already at work. When God wants a great servant He calls a busy man. Scripture and history attest this truth. Moses was busy with his flocks at Horeb.

Saul was busy threshing wheat by the wine press.

Saul was busy searching for his father's lost beasts.

David was busy caring for his father's sheep.

Elisha was busy plowing with twelve yoke of oxen.

Nehemiah was busy bearing the king's winecup.

Amos was busy following the flock.

Peter and Andrew were busy casting a net into the sea.

James and John were busy mending their nets.

Matthew was busy collecting customs.

Saul was busy persecuting the friends of Jesus.

William Carey was busy mending and making shoes.

Perfection is not produced by pruning alone, unless there be growth after the pruning. But pruning is intended to promote growth by concentrating the power of growth into the parts that need it most. When God prunes our lives and parts us from some unlovely trait or some unbecoming growth, his purpose is that we may be brought nearer to perfection. God's ways are good, even when they cause us pain.

"O Lord and Master of us all,
What e'er our name or sign,
We own thy way, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."
—Whittier.

If you have failed in your efforts to bring a friend to Jesus, keep on trying. Persistent faith is stronger than persistent unbelief.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Wind—The prevailing wind in the eastern Mediterranean is from the northwest. This wind, which blows nearly all summer, and usually clears in August to the south, had continued longer than usual and hindered them. The autumnal equinox, a dangerous season for ships of that day, was at hand. Yet when the northerly wind ceased, and a light breeze sprang up from the south, the sailors though their purpose was accomplished, and they immediately set sail. But without a moment's warning the wind shifted, and a regular typhoon came down from the east by northeast seizing the ship and whirling her round, so that it was impossible for the helmsman to make her keep her course. These sudden hurricanes, which are still well known, are now called "Levanteers."

Undergirding—Consisted in passing stout hawsers around the ship, and then tightening them by twisting poles or spars into the slack of them. This is called among English sailors "frapping," and is still sometimes employed. Several waterlogged Canadian timber vessels have been saved at different times by being frapped. In Paul's ship the single mast caused a great strain on the centre. To lessen this, the great yard was lowered near the deck, and enough of the sail exposed to bring her as near the wind as possible.

MISPAPH.

"The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another" (Gen. 31, 47)

Two men, a heap of stones and a covenant vow, a compact of which God abiding between them was called to be the witness and seal forever. The suggestion, the need and the test were prompted by an immediate separation to be. The incident remains as a token to the Christian hearts today who would have all earthly separations a true Mizpah of His presence and comfort.

There are separations from which love is banished in exile; separations between lives at variance by hatred and strife, diverging ways in the social sphere where the print of a humble Saviour's feet is not found; divisions between souls where no blood-bought covenant can avail nor peace and trust find place. Between these, no Mizpah seal, for God abides not. His watchtower of protection rises not out of the midst in those separations where the will of His kindly spirit does not rule.

Wherever are set our Mizpah seals in the separations of life, in patient waiting in travel or in service let us not be far removed from the beacon of our Father's watchfulness, that His abiding love between us may span all chasms, heal all wounds, bridge every division, unite in Him all souls and make our hours apart from each other seasons of blest communion before one mercy-seat by grace and provision of one Master and Lord who fills all voids by the mighty reaches of His unflagging interest.—Selected.

A neglected Bible means a starved and strengthless spirit; a comfortless heart; a barren life; and a grieved Holy Ghost. If the people, who are now perpetually running about to meetings for crumbs of help and comfort, would only stay at home and search their Bibles there would be more happiness in the Church, and more blessing in the world. It is prosaic counsel; but it is true.—F. B. Meyer.

By the error of others the wise man corrects his own.