

[ORIGINAL]

The Voyage of Life; or, The Gospel in a Shipwreck.—ACTS 27.

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THE voyage is about to be taken. At the outset a man of God—taught by God, and as a messenger of God, gives warning that the voyage will be one of danger. (v. 9) "Paul admonished." He knew things of which they were ignorant (v. 10) "I perceive." They, however, prefer



to listen to the advice of others. Surely old sailors like "the Master and Owner" know better than this *old Christian*! So young people will listen to men of the world in preference to God's messengers. The reason they were so ready to take the "master's" advice is given in (v. 12) "Haven not commodious to winter in." They had a desire to get into more comfortable quarters—to better their position. Thus present surroundings and a desire for advancement have much to do with leading men to turn a deaf ear to God's warnings. But they never reached the desired harbor. "South wind blew softly." (v. 13) Just the wind needed. No doubt they taunted Paul, called him a croaker, "see how you made

a mistake," &c. So sinners seem to prosper, even after rejection of warning. (13) "Supposing." (14) "But not long after." Changes come quickly. "A tempestuous wind." A *north-east wind*. From directly an opposite quarter, and *against* them. So in life, sudden reverses and difficulties come from an unexpected quarter. "Ship driven,"—"could not bear up." (v. 15.) R. V. "We gave way to it." Trials and temptations come down suddenly, and the unprepared rejector of warning is unable to stand. He gives way, and, like the sailors, "let her drive." In their extremity "they used helps." (v. 17.) So with the sinner. When trouble or sickness comes. He thinks he will try some "good works." Will say his prayers more frequently. Will go to church. Will contribute to some charity, &c. But these helps (?) do not bring peace, for, like the sailors, he will be "fearing the quicksands." Then he will "strake sail," or take in sail. He won't go quite so fast in business or pleasure. Yet all the time the storm is beating, and he is "driven." The next step is to "lighten the ship." (v. 18.) Reformation is tried. He will leave off drinking, or swearing, or some other besetting sin. Still the storm is not stayed. Now he casts out with his own "hands the tackling of the ship." (v. 19.) No sacrifice is too great. No works too arduous if peace can only be obtained. But Works, Reformation, Sacrifices are of no avail. All is dark. "Sun nor stars in many days appear." The storm sweeps him on, and "all hope that we should be saved was then (R. V., now) taken away (v. 20). All hope gone, so far as regards self or works. But, blessed be God, there is yet HOPE. Paul, the man of God, reminds them of their folly in not listening to him (v. 21). So God, by His messengers, reminds man of his folly in having refused advice, and with this reminder comes also the assurance that yet there is hope (v. 22). The messenger speaks not on his own authority, but states that his message is based upon the unfailing Word of God (vs. 23, 24), and he expresses his own personal faith in that Word (v. 25), assuring them at the same time, they must meet with trials (v. 26). Hope now dawns upon the once hopeless one (vs. 27, 28). That hope, however, is mixed with anxieties and fears, and there is a heartfelt longing for light (v. 29.) At this point there is danger, lest in the desire for safety, there be the adoption of plans which are not God's. (v. 30.) There must be no compromise (v. 31). It must be faith in the Word of God, and the work of salvation must be God's, as stated (v. 24), or else certain death will ensue. Realizing this, there will be acceptance of God's terms, and a cutting off of all hope from anything in ourselves (v. 32). When this has been done, we are prepared to listen to the promises of God (v. 34). [It will be