

## *Moral Navigation*

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### Scripture Lesson

The part of Acts 27 that describes St. Paul's voyage from Asia to Malta, where his ship was wrecked.

#### Excerpts from his Address

The master of this ship was long on action and short on endurance. Tempted by the appearance of still water, he "slipped" the anchors that had held him during the night and would have held him until the storm would have passed by. He took a chance and lost all.

Benedict Arnold made such a run as this and met the same fate. However, the rest of the fleet which Arnold accompanied "hung on" until it "blew out" as the flag that waved over West Point remains. The skipper had no chart. Arnold did, but heeded it not. With the same result, both were shipwrecked. "Deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God" -- this is also the standard course to guide mankind across life's sea.

Now the navigator's chart is not just a theory to be regarded or disregarded to suit our convenience. Neither is the great chart of human life just a theory. The Bible is just as real to the human soul that is guided thereby. Its "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" mark the safe course pursued by those who succeed, and the danger points where human wrecks abound -- where the wind, the waves and the sea birds sing a requiem o'er the lost. So sure am I that this is so that I will waive all claim of Divine authorship. Give it only human authority same as the navigator's chart -- it still remains man's only tried and sure guide across life's sea.

If St. Paul's skipper had been an owner of a chart, he never would have tried to reach still water over an impassable reef. Millions and millions of people in the past and today have tried and are trying to accomplish the same impossible task. The conduct of a young man in the country brings on a storm of reproach. He slips his anchors, seeks water in the city and ordinarily finds twenty years in prison or death by the gun shot route. What's the matter? Was the Bible read in the school he attended? No. Was there one in his home? Perhaps "up garret." Of course he might, like Arnold, have known and heeded not the warning sound coming from the buoy that covered the rock on which he was wrecked.

Then there is the drifting class. The Bible is of no use to them. In fact, the Bible is of little use to anyone who is not interested in trying to get somewhere, who has never felt that satisfying thrill that comes only to those who overcome and accomplish something worthwhile. We will never know the torrent of thoughts that thrilled the bosom of Washington when, with Valley Forge behind him, he laid aside the sword to nurse the offspring of his soul -- his only child, the constitutional government of these United States. And in answer to all his critics let me say, "His fame stands on a foundation more enduring than time for he dealt justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with his God."

(The inquirer observes), "Yes, perhaps this is all true, but I don't know who wrote your Bible."

"Neither do I know who wrote my chart. Yet for a quarter of century, I have navigated by this chart whose authorship to me was unknown, and during all that time I have never lost a man or a dollar's worth of freight, or suffered shipwreck, simply because I was guided by the aids of navigation displayed on the chart."