

SAFETY AND SHELTER IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Jacob Chamberlain was a missionary in India. In the year 1863 he planned to take a twelve hundred mile journey into a country where no missionary had ever gone. An English vessel had promised to meet him and his company part way, on a certain date. In the last part of their journey they came to a terrible flood. While they were planning what was best to do, two huntsmen came running as fast as they could to reach a place of shelter for the night. Mr. Chamberlain stopped them and asked them about that part of the country ahead of them. They told him that he could not possibly cross the streams as he had expected, and that the back waters were thirty feet higher than usual.

In this great difficulty, Mr. Chamberlain called his guides and other native companions and tried in every way to get them to give him some idea what to do, but no one could give him any advice. Then Mr. Chamberlain told them to march on, and he rode behind them.

Dark clouds were gathering, and the way was growing dark. The men could hear angry tigers roaring in the jungle. Mr. Chamberlain knew that in this time of need he could tell his troubles to God; so as his horse walked along the marshy path, the missionary lifted his heart in prayer. He said, "Master, was it not for Thy sake we came here? Did not we promise Thee that we would go on this journey? Have we not faithfully preached Thy name the whole way? Have we drawn back from any danger or any foe? Hast Thou not promised to be with us? Now we need Thee. We are in great danger this night. Only Thou canst save us from this jungle, these tigers and this flood. O Master, Master, show me what to do!"

Then Mr. Chamberlain listened for God to answer his prayer, and He did answer. The Holy Spirit spoke in his heart, saying, "Turn to the left, to the River Godavery, and you will find safety."

The missionary quickly rode forward and overtook his guides, and called out, "How far is it to the Godavery?"

"A mile," they answered.

"Is there any village on its banks?"

"No; not one within many miles."

"Is there any mound or rising ground on which we could camp out of this water?"

"It is all low and flat like this," the guides answered as they pointed to the ground on which they stood.

Mr. Chamberlain again gave orders to march, and again he dropped behind to pray; and again the answer came as before, "Turn to the left to the Godavery, and you will find rescue." Again the missionary called to the guides, and said, "Are you sure there is no rising ground by the river, where we can pitch our tent? or is there no boat of any kind that we could use?"

"None, none," again the guides answered.

"How long would it take us to reach the river by the nearest path?"

"Half an hour, but it will be time lost, for we would have to come back here and cut our way through the jungle, and then climb the bluff."

"And how long would it take us to cut our way through the jungle?"

"At least six hours, and darkness is now upon us."

"Then what shall we do for the night?" asked Mr. Chamberlain.

"Only God knows," answered all his companions, and their faces showed that they had no hope of finding shelter.

Again Mr. Chamberlain prayed, and received the same answer. "I cannot doubt that this is God's answer to my prayer," he said, "and I must act quickly."

Then as he hurried forward to the guides, he cried "Halt! Turn sharp to the left; show us the shortest way to the Godavery!"

The guides pleaded that it would be useless, but Mr. Chamberlain shouted, "Obey! and march quickly, or night will come before we reach the river."

They came upon a path leading directly to the river. They went down the path and when about half a mile from the river Mr. Chamberlain spurred his horse on, and passed the guides. He did not feel anxious, but fully expected help. When he came out of the bushes near the river bank, there, right before him was a large flat boat tied to a tree at the shore, and two men were on the boat trying to keep it afloat on the rising and falling current.

These men were greatly frightened when they saw Mr. Chamberlain. They thought he was a British officer to whom the boat belonged, and they began to tell him why they were there. "Oh, sir," they said, "don't be angry with us! We tried our best to keep the boat from coming here. We have tried all day, but an hour ago we gave it up, and let the boat float here, and have tied it up for safety."

"All right, my men," replied the missionary when they had told him this; "I will take charge of the boat now, and will give you a letter, so that the owner will not blame you."

In speaking of this afterward, Mr. Chamberlain said, "Who had ordered that tidal wave that morning, which had torn the boat from the place where it was tied, and driven it so many miles down the river to the right spot where we should reach the river? Who but He who sent us to carry His Gospel, and who had said, 'I will be with you?' He knew our great need at that very hour, and had clearly answered prayer in saying, 'Turn to the left, to the Godavery, and you will find rescue.' And as we obeyed, we found this boat which He had provided for our use. I bowed my head and thanked God for His clear answer to my prayer."

"When the guides came in sight, and saw the boat, they wondered how I had known that the boat was there. None of them had known anything about it. I said, 'God heard our prayers.'"

"Yes," they said, "God led us here. We shall never again doubt Him."

The boat was just what they needed. They pitched their long, low soldier's tent upon it, and tied the eaves to the boat railing. This made a safe shelter for the night. The rain stopped just before they found the boat, and did not begin to fall again until they were safe under shelter. Mr. Chamberlain sat on one end of the boat, holding a pistol, ready to shoot any tiger that might try to spring upon them.

There was not room for the men to lie down to sleep; they had to sit up, but before they went to sleep they read the ninety-first Psalm, and prayed with thanksgiving and praise to God who had led them, and whose watchful care was over them.

The next morning they floated to the British steamer, finished their journey, and two months later returned home.—Evangelical Christian.

WHY THE SHIP SANK.

In a storm one night the prow of a ship struck a small ledge of rock. When the blow came no one thought it a very serious matter. But it would not have been so, had it not been for the fact that when the ship was made, the piece of timber which was placed just where the point of rock struck the vessel was weak. Through its fine grains a timber worm had bored its way. Seeing the little piles of white dust at the opening of these holes, a man with a skilled eye had said:

"Don't use that stick of timber."

"And why not?" came back the question, somewhat impatiently.

"Because it is not strong enough. It has been weakened by a worm. Follow these crooked holes and you will find at the end a tiny worm. Throw the timber away and take one that is sound."

But the workman thought he knew better about that; so he replied:

"That timber is just the one I need for this place. I will run the risk of the worm holes hurting it!"

And yet, that ship foundered and was lost because that one piece of timber was weak.

A man needed a clerk for his office.

"I know of one that I think would please you were it not for just one thing," one gentleman said to him.

"And that thing?"

"He has one bad habit," and the gentleman leaned forward and whispered the secret in the ear of his friend.

"That is enough. I cannot afford to risk it! My business needs a man that is absolutely clean!"

And would you blame him for that? If a worm-eaten stick of timber would sink a ship, what might not one evil habit do toward ruining a great business house?

Edgar L. Vincent, who tells these stories in an exchange, thus points a moral with them. A habit that is not quite right is a sure sign of weakness that may prove fatal to character. Are there any such in your life? Stop now and ask yourself that question most carefully. If you find that you cannot say no to the question, let no day go by when you do not try most earnestly with the help of God to rid yourself of that habit. It is not safe to keep a wrong thing in your heart. Root it out. It will sink your ship! It will cause you to lose your soul!—Selected.

"Botanists tell us that trees are often branched above ground in exact proportion to the root system below ground. Our external influences is always in exact proportion to the depth that our lives are rooted in the hidden life of God."

The habit of looking on the bright side of things is worth a thousand pounds a year.