



LESSON X.—JUNE 7.

Acts xxvii., 33-44.

Golden Text.

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.—Psalm cvii., 28.

Home Readings.

- Monday, June 1.—Acts xxvii., 33-44.
- Tuesday, June 2.—Acts xxvii., 1-12.
- Wednesday, June 3.—Acts xxvii., 13-20.
- Thursday, June 4.—Acts xxvii., 21-32.
- Friday, June 5.—II. Cor. xi., 23-30.
- Saturday, June 6.—Ps. cvii., 23-31.
- Sunday, June 7.—Jonah i., 4-16.

(Arranged from Peloubet's Notes.)

33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34. Wherefore I pray you take some meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any one of you.

35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

37. And we were all in the ship two hundred, three score, and sixteen souls.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made towards shore.

41. And falling into a place where two seas met they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast and remained immovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape.

43. But the centurion willing to save Paul kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land:

44. And the rest, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship, and so it came to pass, that they all escaped all safe to land.

Paul's party consisted of himself, Luke (the author) and Aristarchus. These were old and tried friends. The other prisoners were under the charge of a centurion named Julius, with a soldier guard of the Augustan band.

They reached Fairhavens, on the south of Crete, about the 25th of September, the season of storms on the Mediterranean. At this point Paul advised the sailors not to continue their voyage until spring. Note how Paul's wise advice, though not accepted at the time, gave the sailors increasing confidence in his advice a few days later (v. 21).

Hardly had they set out again when there arose a squall from the east-northeast. In their efforts to save the ship they passed ropes around the vessel to relieve the mast from the strain of the great sail, they lightened the gear, they lightened the ship of some of its freight, and tackling or furniture. The casting over-

board of the latter was of little practical value, but, as Ramsey remarks, 'they were eager to do something, and this makes a striking picture of a growing panic.'

The storm had continued nearly two weeks without sight of sun or stars, which in those days, before the invention of the compass, were the only guides to sailors who were out of sight of land. They were almost in despair, when one morning Paul, standing among the sailors, soldiers and passengers, told them of a message of cheer God's angel had brought him in the night (a message which, from its wording, had evidently come in answer to prayer). Therefore let all take courage, for while they must be wrecked, everyone would safely reach the shore.

Contrast Jonah in the storm with Paul. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom; Potiphar and the Egyptian jailer were blessed for Joseph's sake.

At the end of fourteen days the ship drifted near to land. 'The sound of breakers, probably the white lines of foam seen through the darkness, gave rise, we may believe, to this impression' (Plumptre). They anchored by four anchors from the stern, and longed for dawn.

During these two weeks they had had no regular meals, their cooking apparatus had been thrown overboard and they had only such scraps of food as they could pick up. Now Paul desires them to sit down and eat a good meal with the assurance that every one of them shall reach land. He then takes bread and gives thanks. A spirit of hope and happiness comes over the whole crew and they too begin to eat.

They now lightened the ship for the third time, their object being to approach nearer the shore for safety, the wheat, the main cargo, being retained as long as possible. The sailors cut the cables and committed, not themselves, but the anchors, 'to the sea,' and loosed the rudder bands; ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. These were secured by lashings, when drifting or at the time of anchoring; these were now cut so that the paddles could be used for steering.

Then they came to a place where two seas met (it has been thought that this was the channel between the island of Salmonatta and Malta), and the forepart of the ship struck (probably in tenacious clay) while the hinder part was lashed by the waves.

The soldiers were answerable with their lives for the detention of their prisoners, and suggested that all these prisoners be put to death in case they escaped. But the centurion, wishing very much to protect Paul, dissuaded them, and commanded all to swim to shore.

Next week our lesson is about Paul at Rome. Acts xxviii., 16-24, 30, 31.

C. E. Topic

Sunday, June 7.—Topic—Modern lessons from the Rechabites. Jer. xxxv., 1-6, 18, 19.

Junior C.E. Topic

YOUR FAVORITE BIBLE PROMISE.

Monday, June 1.—Strength. Isa. xl., 31.

Tuesday, June 2.—Eternal life. Titus i., 2.

Wednesday, June 3.—Joy. Ps. xxxii., 11.

Thursday, June 4.—Guidance. Ps. xxxii., 8.

Friday, June 5.—Power. Rev. ii., 26.

Saturday, June 6.—Heaven. John xiv., 2, 3.

Sunday, June 7.—Topic—What is your favorite Bible promise, and why? I Kings viii., 54-56; Ps. xxxvii., 3.

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A Fight Against Odds

(Kate Anderson, in the 'Union Signal.')

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER I.

[Mr. Kilgour, a railway conductor, is killed in the wreck of his train caused by the blunder of a drunken engineer. His son Ralph takes a position as clerk in a hotel and the second son, Willie, is offered the place of assistant, but refuses from a nameless fear of having anything to do with the 'thing' that caused his father's death.]

CHAPTER II.

Somehow it reached the ears of Mrs. Wilson, a neighbor, that Willie Kilgour had refused a position offered him by the city magnate because of his temperance principles—which the reader knows was not a precisely correct account of the matter. However, this news gladdened the heart of the good old lady, who was prominent in the very struggling and little appreciated local W.C.T.U., and she lost no time in imparting the intelligence to several of her sisters in the work.

Thus it came round to the ears of the Methodist minister, and Willie suddenly found himself, without apparent cause, the subject of special friendliness and cordiality from the church members.

The Baptist minister's wife, who was president of the union, called on his mother, and cornered him while she talked sweetly and earnestly on many things. Mrs. Maxwell, wife of a prominent Presbyterian elder, and an enthusiastic temperance worker, stopped him on the street to shake hands with him and invite him to a young people's rally to be held at her home. Mr. Drake, the 'pillar' among the Methodists, suddenly discovered that he needed a young man in his big furniture warehouses during the slack summer season, and engaged Willie at a good salary, and a commission on all carpet sales.

Willie, with his quick sympathies and ardent nature, especially softened and responsive in his grief, soon found himself forming new friendships, new interests, new views of life far different from those of the careless past.

Need it be told that ere many weeks had passed the boy had found his Saviour and was rejoicing in a wonder of divine bliss in sins forgiven and a heart cleansed?

In August a blow fell on the Kilgour family group. Claude, the brilliant, Claude the seemingly invincible, had failed in his examination. In vain were the lists scanned for the missing name. It was not there.

'Some mistake,' observed Ralph; 'the kid never failed. Why, it was the easiest half of the two-part "exam" which he took. He could almost have taken the entire course in a year if we had let him. No trouble for him to learn anything.'

In one sense Claude's failure was not regarded as a serious matter. The child was barely thirteen years old and had plenty of time before him, but it was a sore shock to their confident pride in the boy.

However, the lists were confirmed by the principal, who called the next day with Claude's report, showing a wretched failure in arithmetic and physics, with very low marks on the other subjects.

Of course, Claude received nothing but love and sympathy from his family. It was true, as his mother said, that Claude had not been himself for several months. He had taken his father's death terribly hard; indeed, the boy had given way to an almost unnatural abandonment of grief. For a time it had seemed that his very mind would give way to a half-crazed