

xx, 4. His first course was to Sidon; here he had liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself and obtain help for his wants on the voyage. Thence he sailed under Cyprus—that is, under the *Isle of Cyprus*. The direct course would have been south of this island, but the prevailing west wind compelled them to go north of it. He next came to Myra, in Lycia, a district of Pamphylia. Here his Adramyttium ship came to anchor, or went farther on her homeward way up the *Ægean*. Paul was now transferred to a larger ship from Alexandria bound for Italy, built not for coasting-trade so much as for the open sea. This ship sailed west with difficulty, taking several days, owing to the west wind, to sail one hundred and thirty geographical miles from Myra to *Cnidus*, a large sea-port on a projecting peninsula on the coast between Cos and Rhodes, at the very entrance to the *Ægean Sea*. Then, being prevented from sailing farther westward (xxvii, 7), this merchant-vessel from Alexandria struck southwardly and sailed under *Crota*, over against *Salamina*, on its eastern promontory; thence under the lee of its southern coast to *Fair Havens*, a place midway on the island, on its southern coast. Here they were sheltered by Cape Matala, lying a little to the west, from the full force of the west wind and sea. The month was now October, the season of the fast or festival of atonement, regarded as too late in the year to be safe for a long voyage. Paul admonished Julius the centurion of the danger, but he took counsel rather from the master or the pilot of the vessel, who, not liking *Fair Havens* as a place "to winter in," owing to its exposure to southerly winds, favoured Phenice, a town to the west of *Fair Havens*, easily reached in good weather in a few hours. When the south wind blew softly, they supposed that all was ready for a quick sail to Phenice. It was only forty miles away. But instead of making this port on the island of Crete, they were turned from their course by a north-east storm; and being driven before the wind, they gave up further endeavor to work to windward, and were borne along to the south-west to the island of *Claudia*, running under the lee of its southern shore. (Our lesson confines us chiefly to the *Levante*, the vessel now encountered, and to some of the means that were employed to control the vessel in the storm. Let all, by maps familiarize themselves with the places touched or passed by Paul on his voyage thus far).—*Baptist Question Book*.

EXPLANATORY.

V. 14. Not long after. Probably while the vessel was still off the southern coast of Crete. Tempestuous wind. In Greek, "a typhonic wind," with whirling eddies and sudden changes in direction. Euroclydon. One of the most furious storms still common on the Mediterranean, and known as a "Levante." So in life, "the gentle south wind of duty may be followed by a storm to-morrow."—*Starke*.

V. 15. The ship was caught. Being whirled helplessly in the changing blast, could not bear up into the wind. Literally, "could not eye the wind," from the fact that a pair of eyes were generally painted on the prow of ancient ships. We let her drive. As the vessel could not face the storm, it must needs be swept on by it.

V. 16. Running under. That is, under the lee or shelter of. A certain island . . . called *Claudia*. A small isle near the southwestern extremity of Crete. Much work to come by the boat. Found it difficult to hoist on board the little boat which was towed astern. These little details show that an eye-witness wrote the history.

V. 17. Under-girding. By passing strong ropes tightly round the vessel to aid in holding it together. The quicksands. Two large sand-banks off the coast of Africa, called the Upper and Lower Syrtis, and greatly dreaded by navigators.

Strake sail. Lowered the rigging, in order to free the ship.

V. 18. Lightened the ship. By casting overboard all articles not absolutely necessary.

V. 19. With their own hands. A work in which not only the sailors, but also the prisoners and passengers took part.

V. 20. Neither sun nor stars. Thus they could neither take observation, nor reckon whither they were drifting at the mercy of the gale. "Yet one star shone for Paul, the promise, 'Thou must bear witness at Rome.'"—*Beiser*. Many days. We learn from verse 33 that the gale lasted a fortnight, an uncommon, though not unprecedented, period for a *Levante*. All hope . . . taken away. Hope clings to the last blessing; when that leaves, despair alone remains.

"The strain both of mind and body, the incessant demand for labour, the terror of the passengers, the hopeless working at the pumps, the labouring of the ship's frame and cordage, the driving of the storm, the humbling effect of the cold and wet, make up a scene of no ordinary confusion, anxiety, and fatigue."—*Compbeare and Howson*.

V. 21. Long abstinence. Probably not only, but partial; from the difficulty of preparing food, the constant need of labour, and the general dejection of spirits. Paul stood forth. In times of trial true character comes to the front. Dangers and distress which conquer common men, only inspire great souls. Ye should have hearkened unto me. He reminds them of this, not as a rebuke, but to impart confidence in his present word.

V. 22. Be of good cheer. Not only is the believer himself cheerful, but he carries cheer to other troubled hearts.

V. 23. These stood by me the angel. "Paul knows where to find him out."—*Henry*. God, whose I am. Would that all disciples might thus boldly confess their Lord before all men. Whom I serve. Noblesse among the sons of men, Paul proudly acknowledges himself a servant.

V. 24. Brought before *Cæsar*. "Man is immortal till his work is done!" Paul's career is not complete until he has borne testimony for Christ before the highest in the Roman realm. God hath given thee all. He had doubtless prayed for their safety, and received assurance of an answer. Even sinners may be thankful that saints are in the world.

V. 25. I believe God. It is easy to believe God's word in prosperity, but to rest on the promises in adversity tests faith.

V. 26. A certain island. The result is revealed, but not the particular plan. What island Paul knew not, though he knew that God was guiding the shattered barque over the waste to some land of rest. Inspiration and prophecy have their limits.—*Sunday School Journal*.

EXPOSITORY.

"This must be in bare outline, presenting only the points on which the teacher may profitably dwell; the suggestions will be readily filled out.

I. PAUL'S COMPANIONS. Luke is well known. *Arrianiacus*, probably one of the deputation conveying the *Mæcedonian* alms to Jerusalem. His office is not indicated. Paul tenderly calls him his 'fellow-prisoner.' So Paul had Christian intercourse on his voyage, as well as an audience to whom he could preach Christ.

II. PAUL'S JOURNEY. Carefully follow the plan of this voyage on a good map. Observe that there were *Alasani* days; then signs of danger, the prevailing winds being unfavourable; at last serious struggling with *prolonged tempest*.

Everything was done on board the ship; but even in the eagerness of trade the owner was willing to run very serious risks. So, often, prosperity in business is put over against imperilled lives. (Illustration: miners, fishermen, etc.).

III. PAUL'S VISION. He is the only man who is calm. (See the *Golden text*). He had a secret for his calmness amid such dangers. He lived in the faith of God. He had a gracious communication from God. In consequence he was enabled to quiet his anxious companions in the ship, to inspire them with his own confidence, and to preach the living God and Saviour to both passengers and sailors.

LEARN—1. That our goodness will affect all who have to do with us. Even Paul's jailer was moved to be courteous to him. (Compare John Bunyan in prison).

2. In time of trouble man may do everything possible, but God is the sure Defence.—S. S. Union Notes on Lessons.

DEC. 2. "The Deliverance."—ACTS xxvii, 33-44 A. D. 60. (Winter).

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He bringeth them unto their desired haven."—Psalm cvii, 30.

INTRODUCTORY:

The storm does not cease. The vessel still drifts in *Adria*, that natural division of the Mediterranean which Humboldt names the *Syrtic* basin, and which had the coasts of Sicily, Italy, Greece, and Africa for its boundaries. It is the fourteenth night after leaving Crete; but some of those indications that a sailor's eye detects so quickly—the roar of breakers and the like—give warning of land near, which the soundings confirm. Fearing to be driven on the rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and "longed for day." Here it is to be remembered that both ends of these ancient ships were alike. "Suppose a full-bellied merchant-ship of the present day cut in two, and the stern half replaced by one exactly the same as that of the bow, and we shall have a pretty accurate notion of what these ships were."—*Smith*, p. 147. The most powerful power of the world is carried—"the last hope," as it was called—was thrown last. See Heb. vi, 19. To anchor by the stern was common with the ancients, and was regarded as the best means for checking the course of the ship, and for preventing her from swinging round upon the rocks. The bay of *Matala* was regarded as good holding-ground, so long as the cables remained firm. Lord Nelson anchored his fleet by the stern at the Nile and at Copenhagen. After the latter battle he said he read the twenty-seventh chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*. The sailors were now getting desperate. They conspired to desert the ship by letting down the boat, on the pretence of letting more anchors out of the bow. But Paul interposed with words that furnish a marked illustration of the working of *homage effort with divine decrees*. "Except these abide in the ship," said Paul to Julius, "ye cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut the ropes by which the sailors were lowering the boat, and the last visible means of safety was swept away to the sea.—*See Smith's N. T. Hist.*, p. 483. The willingness of the soldiers, however, to sacrifice this boat shows what wonderful ascendancy Paul had gained over his companions. The best are the bravest.—*Baptist Question Book*.

EXPLANATORY.

All were now shut up to the unknown methods of escape predicted by Paul.

V. 23. Meat, as elsewhere, "food," having taken nothing, though with food on board, still, from fear and hard labour, taking no regular meals nor adequate nourishment.

V. 24. Not a hair of your head, a proverbial expression.—1 Kings i, 52; Matt. x, 30; Luke xxi, 18.

V. 25. Grave thanks. See Matt. xv, 36; Mark vii, 6; John vi, 11; 1 Cor. 3, 35, 31; 1 Tim. iv, 3, 4.