

✻ The Sunday School ✻

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurlbut's Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

PAUL'S VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK.

Lesson V. October 31.—Acts 27:13-26.

(Read chapter 27.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

Be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.—Acts 27:25.

I. THE HOPELESS CONDITION, VERSES 13-20.

13. WHEN THE SOUTH WIND BLEW SOFTLY—A lull in the storm and a change in the wind tempted them out of their nook of safety. "If they could only get around Cape Malta, five miles distant, this gentle south wind would send them in precisely the right direction, and Phenice was then but thirty miles farther." THEIR PURPOSE—Their hope to securely reach Phenice (the present Lutro), a harbor on the southern shore of Crete, near its western end. LOSING THENCE—The nautical phrase for weighing anchor. CLOSE BY CRETE—"For the south wind pressed them close to the shore."

14. NOT LONG AFTER—After leaving Crete, on their westward course. AROSE AGAINST IT—Rather, as in Revised Version, "beat down from it," that is, from Crete. A TEMPESTUOUS WIND—Literally, a "typhonic wind," a tornado with a whirl. Typhón was the Egyptian Satan, represented on the monuments as a female hippopotamus. EUROCLYDON—Better, Euragillo, that is, between Eurus (the east-south-east wind) and Aquilo (the north wind); so that the meaning is nearly east-northeast. This well-known gale in the Mediterranean is now called "a levanter." It drove Paul's vessel straight toward the African quicksands, from which the Gulf of Syrtis gets its name.

15. COULD NOT BEAR UP—Literally, "could not look the wind in the eye," that is, face the wind, as in Revised Version; a figure of speech more vivid because a large eye was often painted on each side of an ancient vessel's prow. Even yet sailors talk of sailing into the eye of the wind. WE LET HER DRIVE—"Giving away, we were driven." They were driven in a southwesterly direction.

16. RUNNING UNDER—Under the lee of the island, in order to be protected by it from the gale. CLAUDA—A small island, twenty miles from Crete, now called Gozzo. WE HAD MUCH WORK TO COME BY THE BOAT—"We were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat," which up to this time had been trailing behind the larger vessel. It was doubtless filled with water and hard to manage, so that passengers lent their aid to get it on deck.

17. THEY USED HELPS—"Any apparatus on hand for the purpose: ropes, chains, etc." UNDERGRIDDING—Modern sailors call this "frapping," winding cables around the ship to keep the planks from starting. Ancient ships were less firmly built than modern ships, and thus more liable to strain and founder. THE QUICKSANDS—The Greater Syrtis, one of two famous shoals on the African coast, between Tripoli and Barca. STRUCK RATHER, as in the Revised Version, "lowered the gear." It is uncertain what is referred to here. To strike sail, it is urged, would be a sure way of running upon the Syrtis, which they were trying to avoid. It is probably better to understand it generally of the gear connected with the fair weather sails. The storm sails were probably set. SO WERE DRIVEN—With lowered topsails, and creaking timbers, and probably a leaking vessel, the hurricane bore them onward, apparently toward the shoals, where they must inevitably be wrecked. God sometimes uses strange means to carry out his purposes.

18. LIGHTENED THE SHIP—By throwing overboard all bulky articles not absolutely necessary. The Revised Version—"began to throw"—intimates that the whole cargo was not cast overboard, and presently (verse 38) we find that the wheat was reserved to the last extremity.

19. THE THIRD DAY—Probably the ship was letting in more and more water. WITH OUR OWN HANDS—The prisoners, passengers and Luke himself doubtless assisting. THE TACKLING—Either the heavy spars and yards, or, as the margin "furniture," would imply, the beds, tables, chests and movable articles generally.

20. NEITHER SUN NOR STARS—The ancients had no compass, and hence were dependent upon the heavenly bodies for guidance. IN MANY DAYS—Perhaps during all the fourteen days between setting sail from Crete and stranding at Malta. ALL HOPE THAT WE SHOULD BE SAVED WAS THEN

TAKEN AWAY—As they saw the leaks gaining, the vessel more and more unmanageable and slowly sinking, and the storm still raging around them.

II. THE COMFORTING MESSAGE, VERSES 21-26.

21. LONG ABSTINENCE—In the crowded vessel no fire could be lit, and no food cooked, and in momentary fear of death no one desired food. PAUL STOOD FORTH—There is something emphatic in the expression "stood forth," as if to mark that Paul came to the front as the true commander in the crisis. YE SHOULD HAVE HARKENED—This was not to boast over his own foresight, but to give weight to his present counsel. NOT HAVE LOOSED FROM CRETE—This advice he had proffered in verse 10.

22. BE OF GOOD CHEER—Counsel not easy to follow in a foundering ship and a foaming sea; but the confident tone and the peaceful face of the apostle were doubtless their own warrant. NO LOSS OF ANY MAN'S LIFE—A bold prediction to hazard under such perilous surrounding. BUT OF THE SHIP—Paul had not received a complete revelation, but three facts were clear to him: the safety of the voyagers, the loss of the ship, and the casting upon an island.

23. THERE STOOD BY ME—This was a vision, such as had been vouchsafed to Paul several times in his history. THE ANGEL OF GOD—Revised Version, "an angel." The Book of Acts is full of angelic ministrations. The children of God have invisible servants and ministers around them. WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE—A fearless confession shows a disciple never ashamed to own his Lord. We should be ready before all men to proclaim our loyalty to God.

24. FEAR NOT—It would be instructive to search the New Testament for occasions when this heavenly "Fear not" was spoken. MUST BE BROUGHT BEFORE CÆSAR—The appearance before the emperor, which others on board were dreading, this man, conscious of integrity, looked forward to with joyful anticipation. GOD HATH GIVEN THESE—In answer to his prayer, for the generous heart of Paul made the troubles of others his own, even though they were cruel soldiers and selfish sailors.

* * * *

Arrows From a Hunter's Quiver.

Having been encamped for two years in the valley of the Annapolis, in which time quite a variety of game was secured, but not without many dangerous encounters at both short and long ranges, we "broke camp" and set out on an expedition which would last for eight months. Our course lay through an attractive country abounding in all things for both the weal and woe of man in which one of the lost tribes of Israel dwell, known as the Maritime Baptists. Could we have flown on eagle's wings we might have made more rapid progress, provided we had not been taken for wild geese and shot. Or could we have taken a balloon we might have soared into the clouds and startled the crowd by throwing a few sand bags on their heads, but as it was these means of transit were not available so we had to walk, drive ride and sail from place to place, carrying our ammunition and baggage with us all the while. To the left in our belt hung a quiver filled with the following arrows: "Church Life and Etiquette," "The Life and Fate of Absalom," "Harrison Illustrated," "Faith in God and His Works," "The Message of the Resurrection," "The Greatest Public Issue," etc., etc. To the right in the same belt we carried all sorts of ammunition, religiously speaking, of the character of that which the negro preacher said might be found "between the books of the Bible Generations and Revolutions." The former was to be used in week night long range engagements, the latter was to be reserved for Sabbath hand to hand encounters. Strapped to our back was a pack containing a big lot of immortal squibs entitled, "The Hero of the Drama of Genesis," which it is said displayed some fine works when they were shot off. It is needless to say that we found the game more plentiful in some places than in others, or that sometimes we had fifty to shoot at while at other times we had five hundred to bang away at

for an hour or so. It might be superfluous to say that some were afraid of being wounded or shot—and the wounded bird always flutters—and so would not come within range, while others came in flocks glad to see their feathers fly.

The keepers of the flocks, who occasionally draw the bow, strange to say were for the most part glad to have a huntsman with a few arrows having a smart in their points and who wanted to let them drive at all with fair aim. Of course a stray shot was all necessary sometimes, but often a broadside—we were a man-of-war just then—was let go and told to good advantage. And then just think of it some would say, "That's good, give them another." But you say, "What are you getting at anyway." Well we hope we are not like the brother who always spoke in prayer meeting of his good aim, to whom the pastor said, "It is all right to have a good aim, brother, but you must pull the trigger and shoot something." No, we are not like him, for all over the country we travelled, indicated by the following places, will be found some who say, "We were much helped, we were hit hard and even wounded but we are better now," remember this last is an echo from the woods. Bridgetown, Waderville, Granville Ferry, Stony Beach, Annapolis, Round Hill, Centerville, Paradise, Clarence, Hampton, Port George, Mt. Hanley, Middleton, Tremont, Two Brook, Harmony, Clementsvalle, Bear River, Smith's Cove, Digby, Centerville, Sandy Cove, Little River, Tiverton, Central Grove, Freeport, Westport, Weymouth, Plimpton, Barton, Yarmouth, Hebron, Ohio, Port Maitland, Beaver River, Tusket, Argyle, Pubnico, East and Head; Woods Harbor, Barrington, Lockport, Osborne, Mifflin, Brooklyn, Liverpool and Amherst; all in N. S. The following places, all in N. B., have been visited: St. John North, South and West, Fairville, Fredericton, Gibson, St. George, Second Falls, Hampton, St. Martins, Petcodiac, Havelock, Elgin, Salisbury, Hillsboro, Surrey, Hopewell Cape, Albert, Harvey, Roshea, Caledonia, Dorchester, Sackville, Port Elgin, Point de Bute, and Midgie. Sackville church was supplied several Sundays.

Of course, the above is dry reading, and if you wish, just put it in brackets for the present, with the thought that what Garibaldi promised his patriots, might be the lot of many of us, viz: Many long marches and a trench in the battle field. Hunting, working, or fighting, whatever it might be called—by means of the pulpit, the platform and the press through the places indicated—if a mixed metaphor might be allowed is more like bread cast upon the waters which returneth after many days than anything else. But it is known that upwards of fifty ducks i. e., Baptists Christians were captured, who, in turn no doubt will bring forth broods of their own; and it is also known that a large number of wild geese have lost a portion of their wings and are now quite tame. Then besides it is only right to say that the fish was caught which had the money in its mouth, which has paid considerable tribute. Grace, grit and greenbacks, are three essentials to Christian enterprises in these days, and it is hoped that they may be possessed in large measure by all who made pleasant and profitable the journeys and labors of one whose passions are like their own. By Oct. 1st (D. V.) our tent will be struck in Toronto, for the purpose of attending McMaster's school of the Prophets, where, we hope to point our arrows and replenish our ammunition for another expedition. If a stray arrow flies down from there don't dodge it, unless it should be more metaphorical than this.

Fraternally,

J. HARRY KING.

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