

Verse 25. Paul's Faith. "I cannot see how God can fulfil his promise," declared a young Christian. "You don't have to see how. You have to believe that he will and that is all the part you have in it." "I don't see how this prescription will cure me," says a sick man. "Never mind," says the physician, "your part is to believe in my word and do as I say."

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

And now, as if imprisonment, persecution, and all the rest which had befallen this brave, true servant of God were not enough, shipwreck must follow! Really it looked as if God did not take care of him at all. But Paul knew better. He had learned the best lesson one can learn—to trust God perfectly, no matter how things look. So when there was great confusion on the ship, some advised one thing and some another, and all were so frightened they could not eat, Paul was perfectly quiet and begged them to take food. "Do not throw yourselves into the sea," he said; "stay in the ship and you will all be safe, for He whose I am and whom I serve has told me I must go to Rome, and that all in the ship with me shall be saved. And I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.'" Isa. 26. 3. Moon and stars did not appear; the sea was high; the ship finally went to pieces. But Paul paid no attention to appearances, and went on believing God. So he has not only quiet himself, but he could cheer up others. It is blessed to believe God. It is the only way to keep a cheerful, courageous heart when things seem to be going to pieces as they often do, like a tempest-driven vessel.

One day Mr. Spurgeon came in, saying to his deacons, "Brethren, I am fresh from a struggle with doubts." "And why," said one of the deacons, "did you not tell us you were fresh from a struggle to keep from horse stealing?" "What do you mean?" asked Mr. Spurgeon. "Well, the same God that forbids your stealing a horse, also forbids your doubting. How dare you do the one more than the other?" "You are right," Mr. Spurgeon said, "I have no more right to doubt God than I have to steal a horse."

How should I feel if one of my class should question any promise I should make? You would not think of such a thing. Why, then, should you question anything which God has told you. Paul believed "even as it was told him," not as he thought it ought to be, or as it looked as if it might be, but as God said it should be. So we must believe his word. He says,

"Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished." I must believe even as it is told me, and never make light of sin. He says "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." I must believe even as it is told me, and not try to get rid of sin in any other way. He tells me he loves me. I must believe the love, and trust him as my Father. Like myriads of stars in the sky, the promises of God shine in his word. Let us believe even as it is told us, then we shall be happy, calm, and full of courage, and can say to the troubled, fearful ones around us, "Be of good cheer." What a comfort to have a man like St. Paul on board ship in a storm. How glad we are to meet men and women of faith when we are in trouble, doubt, or distress. If you would be helpful to others you must yourself "believe God even as it is told you." The faith of a little child blesses the world more than all the reasoning of men. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a map of the coast from Palestine, including the southern shore of Asia Minor, inserting Cyprus and Crete, and trace the course of the vessel.... Explain the expressions and words, "centurion," "Euroclydon," "ship was caught," "undergirding," "quicksands," etc., etc.... Show what were the troubles of the apostle, drawing them forth from the class as far as possible, and write them in a column on the blackboard. For example: (1) Prisoner; (2) Companionship with criminals; (3) The storm; (4) Danger of death, etc., etc.... Next show Paul's comforts in his troubles, such as, (1) His friends, Luke and Aristarchus; (2) Consciousness of innocence; (3) The care of God; (4) The ministry of angels, etc.... Then show the spirit which Paul manifested in his troubles: (1) Cheerfulness; (2) Trust in God; (3) Courage; (4) Sympathy with others; (5) Confession of Christ.

Before the Class.

Material needed. Map, pads, something that the teacher has made, and a small cross.

Introduction. Briefly recall the last lesson, and give a summary of verses 1 to 12, so that the class may understand Paul's present situation.

LESSON STORY.

1. *The gentle South wind blew.* This led the mariners to suppose that the storm was passed, and in spite of Paul's warning (verse 10) they set sail.

2. *Soon a tempestuous wind arose.* This was the Euroclydon or, better, the Euraquilo, an east-northeast wind.