



LESSON VI.—November 7.

Paul in Melita and Rome.

Acts xxviii., 1-16. Commit vs. 3-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'—Rom. viii., 28.

Home Readings.

- M. Acts xxviii., 1-16—'Paul in Melita and Rome.'
- T. Luke x., 1-20—'Nothing shall.....hurt you.'
- W. Mark xvi., 9-20—'They shall lay hands on the sick.'
- Th. Jas. v., 13-20—'The prayer of faith shall save the sick.'
- F. Rom i., 1-15—'Paul's great desire to visit Rome.'
- S. Eph. vi., 10-24—'I am an Ambassador in Bonds.'
- S. Rom. viii., 16-39—'Nothing separates from Christ's Love.'

Lesson Story.

The shipwrecked company all reached the shore safely. Fortunately the natives of Melita, the island they had come to, were friendly and kindly disposed toward them. They lighted a fire to warm and dry them and treated them with all hospitality.

A wonderful thing happened as Paul was helping to gather sticks for the fire. A viper or serpent, roused by the heat of the fire, sprang from the faggot and fastened on Paul's hand. Now the sting of this little reptile is most venomous, causing death almost instantly. Therefore the natives at once decided that Paul must be a murderer or some great criminal and that Providence had chosen this way of causing his death. Paul, however, shook off the viper into the fire without feeling any harm from it. When the people saw that the viper had not harmed Paul, they thought that he must be a god to work such a miracle.

Publius, the governor of the island, entertained Paul and his company for three days at his own house. The father of Publius was very ill with fever and dysentery; Paul prayed and laid his hands upon him, and he was healed. When the people of Melita heard of this, they brought many of their sick friends to Paul to be healed. After staying at the island for three months, the shipwrecked party took passage in a ship called Castor and Pollux. The Melitans provided everything they needed for the journey, and sent them off with 'many honors.'

After spending three days at Syracuse in Sicily, they went on to Regium, on the south coast of Italy. Two days later they landed at Puteoli, from whence the rest of the journey to Rome was by land. They spent a week with Christian friends at Puteoli, and going on, met Christians from Rome who had come as far as Appii Forum and Three Taverns to meet Paul.

With what joy and thankfulness Paul must have met these friends from Rome—Rome toward which his heart had so long yearned. The thought gave him fresh courage after all his hardships, and he thanked God that he at last was in sight of Rome. On his arrival at Rome the prisoners were given over to the captain of the guard, but Paul was allowed to live in a house by himself with us just one soldier to guard him.

Lesson Hymn.

Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears;
God shall lift up thy head.

Thro' waves and clouds, and storms,
He gently clears thy way.
Wait thou His time; so shall the night
Soon end in joyous day.

He everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might;
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.

When He makes bare His arm,
What shall His work withstand?
When He His people's cause defends,
Who, who shall stay His hand?

Thou comprehend'st Him not;
Yet earth and heaven tell;
God sits as Sovereign on His throne—
He ruleth all things well.

Lesson Hints.

Melita, or Malta—a little island about sixty miles south of Sicily and about two hundred miles from the northern coast of Africa. The island was governed by the Romans at that time and the inhabitants were of African origin. 'Barbarous people'—natives, not savages as the word implies now.

'Viper'—a venomous reptile with deadly sting. 'No harm'—God's servants are immortal till their work is done. Paul proved the truth of our Lord's own words. 'Signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; They shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.'—(Mark xvi., 17, 18.)

'Healed him'—God worked many miracles through Paul, that he might with power proclaim the gospel.

'After three months'—November, December and January.

'Castor and Pollux'—The Twin Brothers. A constellation supposed to be specially favorable to sailors.

'Syracuse'—a famous and wealthy city of Sicily. 'Fetched a compass,' took a round-about way.

'Puteoli'—on the bay of Naples, a busy commercial town.

'Appii Forum'—still over forty miles from Rome, but near enough to make Paul's heart throb with gratitude. 'Rome'—the capital at that time of all the civilized world.

Search Questions.

Tell how Paul was delivered from death on four different occasions.

Primary Lesson.

A ship to sail safely must have three things—a chart, a compass, and a pilot. A chart is a map or picture of the way to go, showing where the rocks and unsafe waters are, so that they can be avoided; and showing the quiet waters, the safe way for the ship to go. A compass points north and south, east and west, and tells in which direction the ship is sailing.

A compass would be useless without a chart or without a pilot who knows the way.

Our souls are like little ships on the great ocean of life. Our conscience is the compass that points out the way we are going. The bible is the chart that shows us which is the right way to go and how to avoid the rocks and other dangers. The Holy Spirit is our pilot and guide, teaching us the meaning of the chart and steering our ship safely along.

A great many people have tried to steer their own ships simply by their conscience. But the compass is useless without the chart—the compass may tell us that we are sailing north, but it does not tell us what dangers there are in the north and how to avoid them. It is not safe to sail without a chart, conscience alone is not a sufficient guide. A heathen may follow his conscience and yet be living a very wicked life.

Many Christians are trying to steer their own ships along toward heaven. They have the compass and the chart and they feel themselves quite safe. They know that they will reach heaven safely at last, even if they do run on a few rocks and get a good deal battered on the way. They are doing the best they know how, but they lack something. They lack the full understanding of the chart, they are sailing without the Pilot who knows the way and explains the chart. Our Lord has sent his Holy Spirit on purpose to guide us safely through life. If we let him take charge of our lives, all will come right, for he will lead us in just the way God wants us to go.

Those who try to steer by the compass without chart or pilot run into dangerous waters and generally come to grief on some rock or other. The only way we can be sure of keeping safely away from the rocks and dangers of life, is to ask God to guide us every day and all the time by His Holy Spirit.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Praise Him! Praise Him!' 'God moves in a mysterious way,' 'Oh, God, our Help in ages past,' 'When the storms of life,' 'Throw out the Life-line,' 'God will take care of you,' Search Questions.

Practical Points.

BY A. H. CAMERON.

Acts xxviii., 1-16.

While a man's life is in danger, his geographical position is not thought of. Verse 1.

The barbarians were courteous though ignorant and superstitious. Paul's hands ministered to his necessities, and the outcome of his miraculous faith struck terror into the hearts of the heathen. Verses 2-6.

They who receive God's servants in His name will in no wise lose their reward. Verses 7, 8.

'Whom Jesus has found you tell others the story.' Some will be attracted and won for the King and the reflex influence will be refreshing. Verses 9, 10.

Many a kind word has been said and many a loving deed performed of which the only record is in Heaven. Verses 11, 12.

How exhilarating to the weary pilgrim to find here and there on his upward path a fellow traveler with whom he may hold sweet communion. Verses 13-15.

Paul, though possibly small in stature and unattractive in his physical features, was the possessor of a gigantic intellect, strong convictions and deep spirituality. Hence, verse 16, also Acts 23, 24.

Tiverton, Ont.

Answers to Search Questions

The answers to these are very good this month. Some are so much better than others that we have again divided them into two classes. There are still those who send too many or too few answers for one month at a time. We would ask our friends to be careful about this, as it causes extra work and is apt to put them in the second list instead of the first. Some of the answers are clearly and beautifully written, others are almost illegible.

Among those who have sent in the best papers are: Emma Moore, Louis G. Hamilton, Mary Lydia Crisp, Violet Haley Goodwin, Leila Duffin, Lizzie C. Brown, Cora May Sider, James E. Gray, Etta M. Rogers, Helen Bentham.

HONORABLE MENTION.

Mrs. P. Harper, Kate H. Moorehead, Jennie Ross, Elizabeth Ann Craig, Helen de Witt Laurence, Ella C. Anderson, Maude Peach, Emma Killam, Grace D. Allan.

Grace D. Allan sent in a good paper for July; and Emma Killam one for August.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Nov. 7—Influence—why to get it, how to get it, how to use it.—Deut. 20: 1-9; Matt. 5: 13-16.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Nov. 7—How can we get influence and how should we use it? Matt. 5: 13-16.

Regarding Sunday-schools, says a Nebraska writer, I am far from echoing the cry, 'The old days were better than these.' That could not be, in any movement in which man is trying, however haltingly, to keep in step with the Almighty. But did not those days hold much which we have neglected to take with us? Notably, the practice of memorizing Scripture. A mind stored in childhood with God's very words is supplied against the needs of a lifetime with an armor of defence against the adversary, and the sword of the Spirit wherewith to resist him; strength in time of weakness, assurance in doubt, comfort in sorrow. These are God's children—these restless, irrepressible creatures—into each of whom he has breathed his divine life, and there, though hidden under levity or indifference, it sleeps, awaiting the awakening voice of its Father, heard through his Holy Word. No human utterances have this power which abides in the words of him who said:—'My word shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.'