



LESSON VII.—NOVEMBER 14.

Paul's Ministry in Rome.

Acts xxviii., 17-31. Commit vs. 30, 31.
GOLDEN TEXT.

'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.'—Rom. I., 16.

Home Readings.

- M. Acts xxviii., 17-31. — Paul's ministry in Rome.
- T. Eph. iii., 1-21. — 'Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.'
- W. 2 Tim. ii., 1-16.—'Wherein I suffer. . . Unto bonds.'
- Th. Acts xiii., 14-41.—'Reasoning out of the Scriptures.'
- F. Acts xiii., 42-52.—'Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.'
- S. Matt. xi., 33-46.—Christ's warning to the Jews.
- S. 1 Cor. i., 18-31.—The Gospel is God's wisdom.

Lesson Story.

Paul, who never lost an opportunity of preaching the gospel, was scarcely settled in his new abode before he invited all the chief Jews in Rome to a conference. When they came he set before them the reasons and the events which had brought him to Rome, saying that for 'the hope of Israel' he was bound with this chain.

The Jews replied that they had heard no harm concerning him, but that they would be glad to hear his opinion concerning Christianity. The new sect which was so much spoken against. So they appointed a day to come to hear him again.

On the appointed day great numbers came to hear him, and he expounded the scriptures, preaching Jesus from morning till evening. 'And some believed the things which were spoken; and some believed not.' They dispersed, after a solemn warning from Paul, who showed them how the prophet Isaiah's words to the rebellious people applied to their own unbelief. And how the gospel, rejected by the Jews, should now be proclaimed unto the Gentiles. These words caused much discussion among the Jews, doubtless many of them continued to come to Paul for instruction during the two years in which he dwelt in his own house, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.'

Lesson Hymn.

Jesus! and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine thro' endless days!

Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend?
No: when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away;
No tear to wipe, no good to crave;
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Till then—nor is my boasting vain—
Till then, I boast a Saviour slain!
And oh, may this my glory be,
That Christ is not ashamed of me.

Lesson Hints.

Paul was now quite an old man, about sixty years old. He had endured many hardships and trials for the sake of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was now in prison for the same reason, but he was not unhappy even in prison. He rejoiced that he was 'counted worthy to suffer' for the name of Jesus. He was not idle in his imprisonment, as soon as possible he began to teach the Romans about the Saviour of mankind. He proclaimed his gospel 'to the Jews first,' but when they believed not he turned to the Gentiles.

Rome was at that time the greatest city of the civilized world. It had over two mil-

lion inhabitants, of whom almost half were slaves. Rome was an exceedingly wicked city, and the Emperor, Nero, one of the most cruel, wicked men in history. However, Paul's prison life was comparatively quiet, and he had a good deal of liberty. He spent some time in writing letters to the churches he had founded in his missionary travels.

'The hope of Israel,'—the long promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

'We neither received letters'—There had not been time for them to hear from Jerusalem since Paul left, as he had sailed on the last ship before the winter. 'Spoken against'—by those who misunderstood, as well as by those who felt their lives condemned by the teachings of Christianity. 'Expounded and testified'—proving from the scriptures that Christ was the Messiah, and testifying from his own experience that Christ is a Saviour from sin.

Search Questions.

Name twenty of Paul's friends in Rome.

Primary Lesson.

Paul was 'not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.' If a little boy has a very good, kind father, whom he loves with all his heart, is he ever ashamed of him? Does he pretend not to belong to him? Does he try to do things that will make his father unhappy?

If a little girl has a beautiful, loving mother, is she not proud of her mother? Is she not anxious that everyone shall know she belongs to her? Does she not try hard to be like her beautiful mother, to act like her and look like her? Does she not tell her little friends how good and kind her mother is to her? Does she not try to please her in everything she does?

We cannot imagine a child being ashamed of a kind and good parent, and it is just as hard to imagine why anyone should be ashamed of the Lord Jesus, who loves us so. Sometimes we are ashamed because foolish persons make fun of our love to Jesus, they cannot understand it because they do not themselves love Jesus. But we must not be ashamed or discouraged on that account. Many foolish and wicked persons teased Paul, and made fun of him, but that did not make him ashamed of Jesus. They persecuted him in every way and put him in prison, but he rejoiced that all their persecutions could not make him ashamed of the gospel of Christ: 'for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.'

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Jesus bids us shine,' 'I'm not ashamed,' 'What a Friend we have in Jesus,' 'Take the name of Jesus,' 'I've found a Friend,' 'Thy life was given.'

Practical Points.

Acts xxviii., 17-31.

Paul's defence to the Jews at Rome, reveals his own innocence and the malice of his accusers. Verses 16-19. Also Matt., 10-24.

When the Christian realizes that he is persecuted for Christ's sake, 'stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage.' Verse 20.

Despise no sect simply because it is spoken against. Dead fish never float up the river. Verses 21-22. Also Luke vi., 26.

The apostle toiled incessantly to lead souls heavenward, and yet many preferred the vanities of time to the verities of eternity. Verses 23, 24.

He who resists the Holy Spirit always runs a tremendous risk. Verses 25-27.

It is easier to grasp Christ with the heart, than to search the Almighty with the light of reason. Verses 28, 29.

Paul's labors during the last two years of his life are unrecorded, but shall not be unrewarded. Verses 30, 31.

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Christian Endeavor Topic.

Nov. 14.—The blessedness of serving God. —Deut 28: 1-20, 45-47. (A meeting to be held by the pastor, or if your church has none, by some older Christian.)

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Nov. 14.—The joys of serving God. Deut. 28: 1-8.

A Successful Teacher.

There are not a few examples of how a teacher may build up and maintain a Sunday-school class. Here is one. A quarter of a century ago C. W. Osgood was appointed as teacher of a class of nine boys in the Congregational Sunday-school at Bellows Falls, Vermont. A little later a small class of girls was added, and the class has since been maintained as a mixed class, growing in numbers and interest. More than three hundred have been enrolled in twenty-five years, the present membership being more than eighty. A twenty-fifth anniversary reception to the teacher by the class was conducted in an admirable manner. An observer writes: 'Mr. Osgood, while busily engaged during these years as a machinist, has made careful use of his spare time in thorough and prayerful study of the bible, and in laying hold of all possible helps in literature, in art, in nature, and in science. In the preparation of a lesson his first and principal effort is to become familiar with the text of the lesson, the context, and all related passages of the bible. He studies the lesson with each individual member of his class in mind.' He is constantly watching for apt illustrations as he reads, journeys or converses. He has taken journeys and engaged in special studies and pursuits in order to obtain a more complete preparation for his work.' He also provides for social gatherings, reunions, special entertainments of a musical character or with the stereopticon, talks on interesting subjects on weekday evenings, and excursions to places of interest. Special effort is made to aid the Sunday-school, and to manifest a spirit of loyalty to all its work. On one occasion two hundred dollars was given by the class in one contribution for home missions. At another time a fine picture was purchased. The habit of systematic beneficence is cultivated, and the members of the class are accustomed to lay aside a portion of their income for the Lord's treasury. Mr. Osgood is a friend and counsellor for every member of his class, ready to give advice and to render assistance in every possible way. He corresponds with absent members. He is watchful for opportunities to minister to all in times of sickness, sorrow, or trouble. Of course, the members of the class, are deeply interested in their work, and receive great benefit from it.—S.S. 'Times.'

Children's Work.

I am glad to find how much the young people themselves can do for the benefit of missionary work. Here are some instances that have reached me:—

A lady writes: 'On Sunday afternoon I saw a little girl of about six or seven years standing outside a Sunday-school door, struggling to get something out of her glove. I asked her if I could help her. "Oh, no," she said, "it is only my halfpenny for the poor little children in India. I am going to send it to them to buy them some bread and a leaf of the bible, or if it will not buy a whole leaf, just a small bit of one, where they can learn that Jesus loves them. They don't all know that, and I am so sorry for them; aren't you? Here comes my halfpenny, and now I must run into school.'"

From another lady I hear of two children, aged eleven and thirteen, who, quite alone, arranged a little sale of work in their dining-room. All the work was done by themselves and their little friends, so that it was quite a 'children's sale.' And the money they gained by their efforts (£1) they sent to the poor starving children in India.

Another little girl, named Bessie, wanted to get ninenpence to put in her missionary box, and after talking about it with her mother, she thought perhaps she might get it if she could get up a little bazaar. So she asked two of her little friends, named Elsie and Dora, to help her, and they agreed to give up some of their playtime to making pin-cushions and little bags, which they filled with sweets, and to dressing two or three little dolls. One of them brought some roots of primroses, forget-me-nots, and pansies, and Bessie's mother gave some cakes for the refreshment stall.

The little girls sent out invitations to all their friends, and many of them came, so that at the end of the sale the little girls found they had taken twenty-two shillings, which so delighted them that they mean to try again next year.—'The Christian.'