

Before his appeal there was no reason why they should be specially informed, and afterwards there was no time to notify them. Paul was sent off almost immediately, and his ship was one of the last of the season. Perhaps, too, during his two years imprisonment his enemies had forgotten him (except those at Jerusalem) thinking him now finally disposed of.

22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against—"We judge it right to learn from thee," the last word is emphatic. There were christians at Rome, but no one so competent to explain christianity had ever appeared there before. "Sect" is the same Greek word as "heresy." It meant no more than party and was not considered an impolite term. They had heard something about "The Way," and professed to be willing to have their misapprehensions corrected.

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening—The word for "many" is in the comparative, "a greater number" than before, or than one would have expected. He expounded the teaching of the Old Testament regarding the kingdom of God, the Messianic dispensation, and argued convincingly that Jesus of Nazareth alone, and he fully, met the requirements of the case, and fulfilled all the O. T. statements regarding the Hope of Israel."

24. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers—Very likely they disputed violently as the Jews at Jerusalem had done. The quotation is from

Isaiah 6: 9. The same passage was applied by Christ for a similar purpose.

26. Saying, go unto this people, and say, (R. V. By) Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not (R. V. in nowise) understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not (R. V. in nowise) perceive—They would hear the words but, having no heart for the message, they would not understand their meaning. A willing heart is necessary for the reception of the gospel.

27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest (R. V. haply) they should see (R. V. perceive) with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted (R. V. turn again), and I should heal them—The heart was regarded as the seat of the emotions and affections, it is said to "wax gross" or "fat," when the spiritual faculties become indolent and dull. It is not meant that God was unwilling to save, but that his people had hardened their own hearts against him, so that they could not turn unto him and be healed. Sin is a disease. Christ, the Great Physician, alone can heal it. Those who obstinately reject him cannot but perish.

28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the (R. V., this) salvation of God is sent unto the gentiles, and that they will hear it (R. V., they will also hear).

29. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. This verse is omitted in the Revised Version.

30. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house (R. V. dwelling), and received all that came (R. V. went) in unto him.

31. Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence (R. V. boldness), no man (R. V. none) forbidding him.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

In whose custody was Paul placed? How was he guarded? Where did he reside?

17. For whom did Paul send, and why? Of what did he declare himself innocent? Did he assert his innocence from the first?

(ch. 24: 12, 13; 25: 8). How did he come to be a Roman prisoner? (ch. 21: 33).

18. How often had Paul been examined and found innocent? (ch. 24: 24, 10; 25: 8; 26: 31). Why was he not set free?