

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON IX—February 28th, 1897.

The Disciples Dispersed. Acts 8: 1-17.

(Commit to memory verses 5-8).

GOLDEN TEXT: "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."
Acts 8: 4.

PROVE THAT—The Gospel brings joy. Acts 8: 8.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Question 90. *How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?* A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 169, 168, 174, 73.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The disciples dispersed. Acts 8: 1-8. *Tuesday.* The disciples dispersed. Acts 8: 9-17. *Wednesday.* The gift of God. Acts 8: 18-25. *Thursday.* Persecution foretold. Matt. 10: 16-23. *Friday.* Partakers with Christ. 1 Pet. 4: 12-19. *Saturday.* Joy in the city. Neh. 8: 5-12. *Sabbath.* Samaritans believing. John 4: 27-30, 39-42. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. The stoning of Stephen was the signal for a general persecution of the Christians. But like those who would extinguish a fire by scattering the burning brands on every side, their enemies only compelled a wider diffusion of the gospel, for those who were "scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

LESSON PLAN. I. The Seed Scattered. vs. 1-5. II. The White Harvest Fields. vs. 6-13. III. Showers of Blessing. vs. 14-17.

1. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles—The R. V. reads "on that day" as if the mob went directly from stoning Stephen to do violence to christians throughout the city. The apostles stood bravely at the post of duty while others obeyed the general instructions of our Lord in such a case (Matt. 10: 23). It was necessary to maintain an organized centre of authority and influence at this metropolis of religion.

2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him—These "devout men" were probably pious Jews who honored the good man although they were not christians (2: 5; Luke 2: 25). The word for "carried to burial" occurs here only in the N. T. It is commonly used of carrying corn to a barn or granary. (Hervey).

3. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and

haling men and women, committed them to prison—The word for "made havoc" is used of the ravages of wild beasts in a vineyard (Ps. 80: 13). The language denotes a reign of terror in Jerusalem for the christians (Read Acts 22: 4, 19; 26: 9-11; 1 Tim. 1: 13; also 1 Cor. 15: 9; Gal. 1: 13; Phil. 3: 6).

4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word—The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. The converts may have wandered as far as Rome for Andronicus and Juina were disciples before Paul's conversion (Rom. 16: 7).

5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them—Philip was one of the seven deacons (6: 5). At Sychar close by Jesus had gained followers (John 4: 5). The Samaritans looked for the Messiah as did the Jews (John 4: 25) and Philip told them that Jesus was he (John 4: 42).

6. And the people (R. V. "the multitudes") with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hear-