

LESSON VII.—November 14th, 1897.

Paul's Ministry in Rome. ACTS 28 : 17-31.

(Commit to memory verses 30, 31).

GOLDEN TEXT : "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Rom. 1 : 16.

PROVE THAT--Some reject the gospel. Acts 28 : 24.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?* A. In the second petition (which is, *Thy kingdom come*) we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

LESSON HYMNS. Nos. 14 (Psalm 23), 442, 64, 132. (Old Hymnal, Nos. 95, 69, 65, 37.)

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Paul's ministry in Rome. Acts 28 : 17-22. *Tuesday.* Paul's ministry in Rome. Acts 28 : 23-31. *Wednesday.* The words of Isaiah. Isa. 6 : 5-10. *Thursday.* Christ in the Scriptures. John 5 : 39-47. *Friday.* Hearing without profit. Rom. 10 : 13-21. *Saturday.* Hinderance of unbelief. Heb. 3 : 7-19. *Sabbath.* Shut out. Heb. 4 : 1-11. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. During his imprisonment at Rome Paul wrote four Epistles : *Philemon*, *Colossians*, *Ephesians* and *Philippians*. After his release he visited Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, and perhaps Spain. *I. Timothy*, and *Titus*, belong to this period. In the spring of A. D. 68 he was a second time made prisoner. This was during the first great persecution by Nero. While in prison he wrote *II. Timothy*. He was beheaded in May or June, A. D. 68.

LESSON PLAN. I. Preaching to the Jews. vs. 17-24. II. Turning to the Gentiles. vs. 25-28. III. An Ambassador in bonds. vs. 29-31.

17. **After three days**--Paul lost no time in preaching the gospel to his fellow countrymen. 18. Both Felix and Agrippa declared him innocent. 19. Paul did not appeal to Caesar in order that he might lay a complaint against the Jews, but only to avoid their wicked plans against his life. 20. **The hope of Israel**--The expectation of a Messiah. 21. The Jews speak very cautiously. 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, thinking him now finally disposed of. **Any harm**--Anything morally bad. 22. **We desire**--"We judge it right to learn from thee"; the "thee" is emphatic. There were Christians at Rome, but no one so competent to explain Christianity had ever appeared there before. **Sect**--Same 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. **Many**--R. V. "In great number." The adjective is in the comparative; "a greater number" than before, or than one would have expected. **Testified**--He expounded the teaching of the Old Testament regarding the kingdom of God, the Messianic dispensation. **Persuading**--Ar-

guing 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." 25. **Agreed not**--Very likely they disputed violently, as the Jews in Jerusalem had done. **Esai'as**--Greek for *Isaiah*. Paul here affirms the inspiration of the book of Isaiah. Christ had quoted this same passage against the Jews (Matt 13 : 14). 26. **By hearing** (R. V.)--They would hear the words, but having no heart for the message, they would not understand their true meaning. A willing heart is necessary for the reception of the gospel. 27. **The heart**--The seat of the emotions and affections. **Gross**--"Fat." Their spiritual faculties had become indolent and dull. **Should be converted**--R. V. "Should turn again." This does not mean that God does not want to save the Jews, but they had hardened their own hearts against Him, so that they could not turn to Him and be healed. **Heal them**--Sin is a disease. Christ, the great physician, alone can heal it. Those who obstinately reject Him cannot but perish. 28. **This salvation of God** This way of salvation through a crucified and risen Redeemer, which he had proved from Moses and the Prophets to be God's plan. They will hear it--R. V. "They will also hear." Paul merely intimates that having unfolded the divine plan to the Jew first, he must also tell it to the Gentile.

LESSONS. 1. We should try to conciliate our enemies. 2. We should be willing to listen to both sides. 3. It is a pleasure to read and tell about Jesus. 4. A willing heart is necessary to the saving reception of the gospel. 5. God answers prayer in most unexpected ways. Paul longed to preach in Rome, but never expected to be "an Ambassador in bonds."