

LESSON IV—July 25th, 1897.

Paul Preaching in Athens. Acts 17: 22-34.

(Commit to memory verses 24-27. Read verses 13-21).

GOLDEN TEXT: "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4: 24.

PROVE THAT—Christ will be our Judge. Acts 17: 31.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 85. *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?* A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 4, 8, 14, 69.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The new doctrine. Acts. 17: 16-21. *Tuesday.* Paul preaching at Athens. Acts. 17: 22-34. *Wednesday.* The mighty God. Isa. 40: 9-17. *Thursday.* Incomparable. Isa. 40: 18-26. *Friday.* The true God. Jer. 10: 1-12. *Saturday.* God is a spirit. John 4: 19-26. *Sabbath.* Judgment by Christ. 2 Cor. 5: 1-10. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. So bitter were Paul's enemies at Thessalonica against him that they came to Berea and excited another disturbance. It was therefore deemed prudent that he should continue his journey by sea rather than by land. Accompanied, therefore, by devoted friends, for he never seems to have travelled alone, he set sail for Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy to pursue the slower journey by land. Arrived at Athens he discussed the prophecies in the synagogue with the Jews and in the market place exposed the fallacies of heathen philosophy. His words made so much impression that he was invited to expound his doctrines at greater length before the chief court of the city, that which met on Mars' Hill, or the Areopagus. Time A. D. 52.

LESSON PLAN. I. God our Creator. vs. 22-25. II. Man our Brother. vs. 26-29. III. Christ our Saviour. vs. 30-31.

22. Stood—The expression conveys the idea of courage and confidence. Took his stand boldly before the august tribunal. **Mars' Hill**—The name is derived from the fable that on this spot Mars (or Ares) was tried for the murder of a son of Neptune (Greek "Areopagus"). **Too superstitious**—Better "pre-eminently a divinity-fearing people." Paul compliments them on being "very religious" after their own manner. **23. Your devotions**—R. V. "the objects of your worship" or reverence. **To an unknown God** (R. V.)—There was more than one altar of this kind in Athens. They were erected in order that no deity might punish them for not worshipping him, even although they did not know his name. **Whom therefore**—"What, therefore, ye piously worship without knowing him, the same I am 'setting forth' unto you." Their worship was genuine but misdirected and blind. **24. Dwelleth not in temples**—These were brave words. There were countless temples all around and right over against Mars' Hill stood the Acropolis with its Parthenon crowned with the colossal brazen statue of Minerva, the "Champion," the guardian deity of the city (ch. 7: 48; Isa. 66: 1-2). **25. Worshipped**—"Served by human hands" (Ps. 50: 8-13). **Needed anything**—That we

can give him (Job 35: 6-8; Ps. 16: 2; Isa. 40: 14-18), seeing he is himself the source of everything. **26. One blood**—All men are therefore brethren. **Times before appointed**—R. V. "their appointed seasons." God has appointed beforehand the rise, glory and decline of each nation. **Habitation**—Every nation has settled where God has led it. He is the Governor among the nations (Ps. 22: 28). **27. Feel after him**—Like a blind man groping in the dark (Isa. 59: 2). God is near, for he is everywhere, but only those who seek him find him. **28. Your own poets**—Several have uttered this sentiment. **29. Forasmuch then**—Our own nature is a proof that graven images cannot represent God (Isa. 40: 18). **30. God overlooked** (R. V.)—Did not visit with marks of his displeasure (Rom. 3: 25; 2 Pet. 3: 9). **Impenitence** is aggravated disobedience. **31. Because**—This command to repentance comes now because the day of judgment is approaching. **By the man**—Therefore a merciful and sympathetic judge (Rom. 2: 16; John 5: 27). **Some mocked**—The Greeks believed in immortality but not in the resurrection of the body. **34. Areopagite**—A member of the court of Mars' Hill before which Paul delivered this discourse.

LESSONS. 1. We should pity the blindness of the heathen. 2. There are idols in men's hearts still. 3. God is very merciful and long-suffering. 4. If we are his offspring we should love and trust him. 5. God commands us to repent.