

back rebel hearts and lives to their rightful king, arrived at Rome, not only without pomp, retinue, or force, but without any prestige attaching to his name which should induce crowds to meet and welcome him. A few friends had escorted him into the city, but the hundreds who saw the party pass along saw only a Jewish prisoner proceeding with others on his way to the soldiers' quarters. Yet this man came as a delegate from the King of kings, to offer a priceless gift to those who would accept, and thus to win back alien hearts, and bring light and peace where darkness and terror had reigned. Now ask,

2. *To whom was it offered?* There is a company of men assembled in the lodging which Paul is allowed to occupy with the soldier who has charge of him. Paul's first act on arriving has been to beg a visit from the principal men of his own nation. They have heard that he belongs to a sect everywhere spoken against, called Nazarenes, and they are not unwilling to hear an explanation of the doctrines held by this sect. But it is not a mere explanation that Paul has to give. He has a distinct and precious gift to offer them. Ask,

3. *What was the gift?* The Golden Text tells us. It was "the salvation of God." To see what Paul expounds and testifies—the truth "concerning the kingdom of God." That is not a strange expression to them. They are looking for the kingdom, but looking the wrong way. They look for Messiah to come and make their nation great and glorious, and subject other nations to them. Paul tells them something very different—how that all have sinned and come astray, and all, even themselves, need a Saviour—and how that Saviour has come and suffered (comp. chap. 13. 26-39) for them, has risen again, and claims the fealty of his chosen nation. And he offers them in the name of Jesus forgiveness of sins, justification, peace, favor with God, and a glorious prospect for the future.

Some are convinced by his arguments, some are not. But not one accepted the offer.

4. *Why was it refused?* Why did they close the eyes and ears of their soul, and seal up their heart (ver. 27) against the gifts put before them? For the same reason that, as we have seen, the Mahdi refused the robes of honor from the emissary of Egypt and of England. The reception of that gift meant submission. What Paul had written before about his countrymen had proved true in this case: "They . . . going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10. 3. They could not acknowledge themselves sinners. They could not acknowledge the insufficiency of the law to obtain for them justification and peace. They could not bow before the crucified One. They were the children of Abraham, and though looked down upon, and often persecuted, by the Gentiles around them, they retained their pride of ancestry, and looked forward to a return of more than their former glories in the future. And so they refused pardon,

peace, and eternal life, in rejecting the "salvation of God."

Thus every-where, from Jerusalem to Rome, the Gospel had been first preached to the Jews. Chap. 1. 8; Luke 24. 47. And every-where they had, as a nation, rejected it. The gift of God—the wonderful salvation wrought out through Christ Jesus was despised and scouted. But the gift is sent to others—offered freely—offered widely—to whoever will have it. For two years Paul preached it to the Gentiles at Rome, and afterward to many in other lands. It means now what it did then, peace with God, power, and honor, and blessing. But it means also submission—the confession of guilt and unworthiness, and the surrender of the heart to its Lord and Saviour. Who will take this gift—the "salvation of God?"

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Begin with some account of Rome, and its importance, showing a picture of some of its buildings, or drawing a map of the city, etc. . . . Show the manner in which Paul entered Rome. (See General Statement.) . . . Paul's condition in Rome—what was it, wherein free, wherein under control. . . . How did Paul seek opportunities of doing good in Rome? . . . How did he use them? . . . There are three aspects in which we may consider this lesson: 1. What God did for Paul at Rome; 2. What Paul did for the Gospel at Rome; 3. How Paul's efforts for the Gospel were received. . . . Notice in this lesson how to preach the Gospel. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.) . . . See the Thoughts for Young People for a line of teaching. . . . ILLUSTRATION. In the cellars of the palace of the Cæsars, where the slaves dwelt, was recently found on the wall a rude picture, evidently of very early date, which represents a man showing reverence to a cross on which hangs a human figure with an ass's head. Around is written, "Alexamenos is worshipping his God." This may illustrate the contempt for Christianity in heathen Rome.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 16: Prisoners chained, 831.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

#### LESSON THOUGHT. *Salvation a Gift.*

INTRODUCTORY. Make, with flat crayon, something like a road, and at its end print "Rome." Ask what traveler we have been studying about, to what city he had been wanting to go, who had promised that he should go to that city, and what were some of the difficulties which he met on the way. Did Paul want to go there for pleasure? Tell that it was a beautiful, gay city, but that very few there believed in Jesus. Tell that Paul went there a prisoner, chained to a soldier, but yet carrying a gift which gold could not buy. To be taught: 1.) What Paul came to give to the Romans; 2.) What Jesus wants to give to us; 3.) How this gift may be received.



1. Make a heart on the board, within the heart the dim outline of a cross. Recall the story of Paul's conversion. Tell that once Paul's heart was cold and hard and unloving, but after he saw Jesus it grew warm and tender. Speak of the cross, of what it recalls, its power over