

LESSON VII—February 14th, 1897.

The Prison Opened. ACTS 5: 17-32.

(Commit to memory verses 29-32).

GOLDEN TEXT: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5: 29.

PROVE THAT—The Holy Spirit witnesses for Christ. Acts 5: 32.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Question 88. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption?* A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 161, 145, 132, 122.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The prison opened. Acts 5: 17-32. *Tuesday.* Rejoicing. Acts 5: 33-42. *Wednesday.* Jonah's prayer. Jonah 2: 1-9. *Thursday.* Fearless obedience. Jer. 26: 8-15. *Friday.* Suffering for Christ. 1 Pet. 3: 8-17. *Saturday.* Blessed in trial. Luke 6: 17-23, *Sabbath.* Boldness for truth. Dan. 3: 8-18. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. Notwithstanding the censure of the venerable sanhedrim the apostles continued their work of preaching and working miracles of healing just as Jesus had done. This proved that his spirit was with them and crowds flocked to them as to their Master. Again the rulers tried persecution and the apostles were a second time arrested and imprisoned.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Apostles Imprisoned. vs. 17-20. II. The Apostles Preaching. vs. 21-28. III. The Apostles Witnessing. vs. 29-32.

17. The high priest—Annas is no doubt meant although his son-in-law Caiaphas actually filled the office at the time (4: 6; John 11: 49; 18: 13). Rose up—Proceeded to take measures against the apostles. Indignation—They were indignant at the contempt of their authority shewn in continuing to preach, and they were "jealous" (R. V.) of the success of the new teaching. 18. The apostles—All seem to have been arrested. Common prison—R. V. "public ward." 19. The angel of the Lord—One of an order of beings whose very existence was denied by the Sadducees (Heb. 1: 14). This encouraged the apostles to feel that their enemies could not do anything to them beyond what God permitted. 20. Go, stand and speak in the temple—They were not to hide like jail-breakers but to go on with their work and leave the rest to God. The words of this life—The spiritual life which believers have in Christ. It includes life in every sense (John 10: 10; 6: 68; 17: 3; 1 John 1: 1-3; 5: 11). 21. About daybreak (R. V.)—The morning sacrifice was offered at sunrise. The senate—These were probably associate, or honorary members of the sanhedrim who attended on special occasions (Acts 22: 5). 22-23. The officers—Some of the levite temple guard. And the keepers standing—The doors were bolted, and the guards unaware that their prisoners had escaped. The occurrence was clearly a miracle. 24. The captain of the temple—The commander of the Jewish temple guards. The chief priests—The heads of the 24 courses into which the priests were divided. They were much perplexed concerning them—They were puzzled to know how the apostles had escaped, and anxious about the effect on the excitable people. Whereunto this would grow—They began to fear that dealing harshly with them was a more serious matter than they had thought. 25. Standing—They were doing as they had been told, calmly and fearlessly preaching the gospel. 26. They feared the people—There was no resistance on the part of the apostles and any violence would have been unprovoked. The Jews were very apt to resort to mob violence (John 7: 45; Luke 20: 19). 28. Straitly—Strictly. The high priest seems afraid to inquire about their escape and avoids mentioning the name of Jesus. The only charge against them is disobedience to the command not to preach (ch. 4: 18). 29. Peter had made this answer before (ch. 4: 19). 30. Raised up Jesus—Christ came in accordance with God's promises to the fathers (Deut. 18: 15). Hanged on a tree—Crucified. "Tree" here means "beam of wood," as in "cross-tree," "axle-tree," &c. (Acts 10: 39; 13: 29; Gal. 3: 13; 1 Pet. 2: 24). 31. His right hand—By the exercise of his power (Exod. 15: 6; Ps. 98: 1). A Prince and a Saviour—Christ is exalted because he is a Saviour (Phil. 2: 9; Heb. 2: 10; 12: 2). 32. There were two witnesses—the apostles and the Holy Spirit. The former told what they saw and knew, the latter wrought miracles as a sign that God was with them.

LESSONS. 1. God's people are always in his safekeeping. 2. Our part is to do our duty, God will take care of us in danger. 3. The gospel is a message of life. 4. We ought not to obey commands that are opposed to God's word. 5. We too may have the Holy Spirit with us.