

LESSON XI—December 12th, 1897.

Paul's Last Words. 2 Tim. 4: 1-8, 16-18.

(Read verses 1-22. Commit to memory verses 6-8.)

GOLDEN TEXT: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim. 4: 7.

PROVE THAT—We should preach the gospel at all times. 2 Tim. 4: 2.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 106. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?* A. In the sixth petition (which is, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil) we pray, That God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

LESSON HYMNS. Nos. 53 (Psalm 73), 545, 334, 340. (Old Hymnal Nos. 40, 31, 192, 205.)

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Paul's last words. 2 Tim. 4: 1-18. *Tuesday.* Last words of Moses. Deut. 31: 1-13. *Wednesday.* Joshua's exhortation. Josh. 23: 1-11. *Thursday.* Holding fast the truth. 1 John 2: 18-25. *Friday.* Looking for mercy. Jude 17-25. *Saturday.* Looking upward. Phil. 3: 13-21. *Sabbath.* The crown of life. Jas. 1: 1-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. At the close of the *Acts* we left Paul in prison. Soon after this he was released. But in three or four years he was rearrested and brought again to Rome. He was not now allowed to live in his own apartment with his guard, but lay in the cold, dark, filthy dungeon of the Mamertine prison. He was lonely, for timid friends had deserted him. Faithful Luke was his sole companion. He was daily in expectation of death, for that monster, the Emperor Nero, was casting Christians to the wild beasts, or, wrapping them in sheets of pitch, used them as torches to illuminate the imperial gardens. On the verge of eternity, Paul writes these noble words of lofty courage, unflinching faith, and sound, practical wisdom. Time, shortly before his martyrdom, A. D. 66. Timothy was at Ephesus.

LESSON PLAN. I. Watching for souls. vs. 1-5. II. Waiting for Martyrdom. vs. 6-8. III. Witnessing for Christ. vs. 16-18.

I. The quick and the dead—Those who are alive at the judgment day, and those who rise from the dead. **2. Instant—"Press on,"** "be urgent"; not in preaching only, but in the whole work of the ministry. In season, out of season—At all times, whether your hearers want to listen to you or not. Do not be timid in speaking for fear that others will deem your words unseasonable. **Long suffering—**When you reprove do it with patient forbearance and kindly. **Doctrine—**R. V. "Teaching." Show the reasonableness of what you say, and its authority from the Bible. **3. Sound doctrine—**Literally, "healthful teaching," teaching that contributes to the health of the soul. **After their own lusts—**According to whim and fancy, not because they do them spiritual good. Long pastorates would cease to be popular. **Itching ears—**They would regard more the taste of the medicine than its curative properties. They would want preaching that pleased the ear, rather than improved the heart. **4. It is easy to call a doctrine false if we find it disagreeable, but rejection of the truth is generally followed by belief of some foolish and hurtful error.** Many who reject the true doctrines of the church believe all the nonsense of spiritualism and fortune-telling. **5. Watch thou—**R. V. "Be thou sober." Show clear-headedness and wise prudence in all you say and do. Let

your ministry be approved for its self-denial and faithfulness. **Make full proof of—**R. V. "Fulfill," "fill up the measure of thy ministry." Leave nothing undone that should be attended to. **6. To be offered—**R. V. "Already being offered." Literally, "poured out as a drink offering." He represents himself as on the way to shed his blood for the cause of Christ. Martyrdom was very near. **Departure—**"A loosing" or "untieing"—the words used of casting off the cable when a ship sets sail, or of unloosing the tent ropes when a camp is broken up. **8. The crown of righteousness—**Which is the reward of righteousness. But the righteousness referred to does not belong to Paul, but to the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ—(Phil. 3: 9; Rom. 3: 21, 22; 5: 1.) **16. My first answer—**His first trial, of which we have no account. He felt keenly the desertion of his friends when on trial for his life. He would remember One, all whose disciples "forsook him and fled." **17. In what way Jesus made His presence known we cannot tell, but Paul knew He was near. The mouth of the lion—**The imminent danger which threatened him from fierce and blood thirsty enemies. **18. This verse reminds us of the sixth petition and conclusion of the Lord's prayer.**

LESSONS. 1. We should never correct or reprove others harshly. 2. The truth is best even if it is not pleasant. 3. Try to do good to others whether doing so makes you popular or not. 4. To what reward may all faithful servants of Christ look forward. 5. Though all forsake us, Jesus will stand by us if we are true to Him.