

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON I—January 3rd, 1897.

Christ's Ascension. ACTS I: 1-14.

(Commit to memory verses 7-9.)

GOLDEN TEXT: "While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24: 51.

PROVE THAT—Christ Jesus will come again. Acts I: 11.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Question 82. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?* A. No mere man since the fall is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 54, 55, 56, 57.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Ascension. Acts I: 1-14. *Tuesday.* The parting blessing. Luke 24: 44-53. *Wednesday.* To the Father. John 16: 1-11. *Thursday.* For us. Heb. 9: 23-28. *Friday.* On the Throne. Heb. 10: 1-13. *Saturday.* Head over all. Eph. 1: 15-23. *Sabbath.* Alive for evermore. Rev. 1: 9-13 (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. Our lessons for this year cover the history of the founding of the Christian church together with the inspired writings which contain its doctrinal belief. The Gospels record the ministry of Jesus, the Acts and Epistles, that of the Holy Spirit in organizing and instructing the church. The Book of the Acts was written about A. D. 63 and its history covers a period of 30 years, or one generation. Its writer was Luke, probably a gentile (Col. 4: 11, 14), born at Antioch and a physician by profession. Tradition says that he was also a painter.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Father's Promise. vs. 1-8. II. The Son's Departure. vs. 9-11. III. The Spirit's Coming. vs. 12-14.

1. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.—The "former treatise" referred to is the Gospel by Luke. This is proved, not only by the fact that they are addressed to the same person but also their similarity of style and the use of peculiar words and phrases. According to tradition Theophilus was a prominent man at Antioch. The name means "Lover" or "Friend of God," and the title "most excellent" (Luke 1: 1) is indicative of rank, like our "excellency," or "my lord." See similar cases (ch. 23: 26; 26: 25). (R. V.) Some see here a hint that Luke's Gospel contains but the beginnings of our Saviour's work and the Acts are the continuation of His activity. A perfectly true thought (see page 3).

2. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen—The Gospel of Luke closes with an account of the Ascension. It took place 40 days after the resurrection. "Three things are stated in this verse: 1, the apostles were chosen by Jesus; 2,

he gave a command, or commission to them (Luke 24: 44-49); and 3, the command was given through the Holy Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit was the Medium through whom the apostles received or understood the command" (Rice). The divine appointment of the apostles as the supreme and inspired organizers of the Church could not be more plainly stated.

3. To also whom he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God—"Passion" is an old English word for "suffering." Jesus was seen very often by his disciples after his resurrection under a great variety of circumstances so that there could not be the least doubt of the reality of his being the same person. The word for "proofs" means "proofs that convince." His teaching during those 40 days is not recorded but doubtless it concerned the true nature of the gospel dispensation. It may have included the form of organization which the church was to take. (1 John 1: 1-3; 2 Pet. 1: 16; Luke 24: 39).

4. And being assembled together