

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

Select notes on International S. S. Lessons
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LESSON I. APRIL 2, 1876.

THE ASCENDING LORD. ACTS I : 1-12.

[A. D. 33.]

1. The former treatise is no doubt the Gospel according to Luke, which is addressed to the same person, written in the same style, and exactly corresponds to this description. "Former treatise" might be more exactly rendered 'first book or discourse.'

2. Until the day. The ascension was properly the termination of the gospel narrative. Luke had recorded this event (Luke 24 : 50, 51) and Mark also (Mark 16 19), though neither of them had been an eye-witness of it. Matthew and John, although they had been witnesses of it, do not record it, while they use language which implies it.

3. He shewed himself.—The resurrection of Jesus was the great fact, on which the truth of the gospel was to be established. Hence the sacred writers so often refer to it, and establish it by so many arguments. As that truth lay at the foundation of all that Luke was about to record in his history, it was of importance that he should state clearly the sum of the evidence of it in the beginning of his work.

4. Being assembled together.—The reasons appear to be (1) Because of the prophecy (Is. 24) (2) Because there would be the greatest assembly of persons to witness this great miracle and to be worked upon by it. (3) Because it was most fit that this great work of Christ's power should be there displayed where had been his greatest humiliation; that those who were not convinced by the resurrection might be convinced by this miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. Christ repeated this unto his apostles out of John's own words: "John was sent to baptize with water;" he fulfilled his function as it became the servant of God.

6. At this time restore the kingdom.—Their inquiry indicates an established faith in him as the Messiah, but betrays at the same time an expectation that his kingdom would be to some extent a temporal one, that it would free the nation from their dependence on the Romans, and restore to them their ancient prosperity and power.

7. And he said, etc.—God has uniformly re-proved a vain curiosity on such points. (1 Thes. 5 : 1, 2. 2 Pet. 3 : 10. Luke 12 : 39, 40)

8. Power.—Those high spiritual endowments necessary to the discharge of their apostolic office, including a perfect knowledge of Christianity, zeal and perseverance in the propagation, and unshaken constancy in the profession of it.

9. The ascension of our Lord is now recorded more in detail than in Gospel narrative by Luke. The ascension itself is just what we might expect from his resurrection; for he would scarcely have been miraculously raised from the dead, except to ascend bodily.

10. They were gazing earnestly toward heaven, while He was departing thither.—The cloud seems to have continued visible for a time. They were full of amazement, and as the term signifies, they were earnestly looking up with fixed attention so that there was every evidence of the miraculous fact. He did not ascend while they were asleep, or gazing elsewhere. They may even have continued gazing after he had passed out of view.

21. Why stand ye?—There might have been an impropriety in their earnest desire for the mere bodily presence of the Lord Jesus, when it was more important that it should be in heaven. We may see here also that it is our duty not to stand in idleness, and to gaze even towards heaven. We as well as the apostles have a great work to do, and we should actively engage in it without delay.

LESSON II. APRIL 9, 1876.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST. ACTS 2 : 1-11.

[A. D. 33.]

1. All. This includes such as may have assembled, besides the one hundred and twenty, and doubtless there were many Christian disciples who had come to the feast.

2. It was when this first day of Pentecost was fully come that the apostles (and probably the disciples) were assembled at their usual meeting place, when the sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, filled all the house where they were sitting.

3. And there appeared upon them tongues distributed, among them, and one sat upon each of them.—So most of the later critics as well as some of the older. According to this view the