

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

A. D. 68.]

LESSON X. GOD'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON.

[June 7.

Heb. 1. 1-8; 2. 1-4. [Commit to memory verses 1. 1-3.]



1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets;

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person, and upholding all things

by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

General Statement.

Among the books of the New Testament there stands one whose inspiration is stamped upon every page, but whose authorship is involved in impenetrable mystery. "Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews?" is a question which has been debated from the earliest ages of the Church until now. In our version, but in none of the ancient manuscripts, it bears the name of Paul, and we may rightly call it his epistle, for it has his thought and his theology, though its rounded, rhetorical periods are utterly unlike his impassioned language. Some one who had become imbued with the teachings of the great apostle has expressed it in his own words, whether Luke, or Apollon, or some unknown writer. This

mighty work was the last appeal of Christianity to Judaism, before the final wrench came in the destruction of Jerusalem, which forever separated the two systems. Its theme is set forth in the opening verses, which declare that the new revelation was not independent of the old, but directly in line with it, though immeasurably superior; that the Being who brings in the Gospel is far above all those associated with the law, since he is the Son of God, and the effluence of his Father's glory; that the shadows of the Old Testament are brightened into glorious realities in the New, and that the Church of the tabernacle and the temple prefigured the Church founded on the blood of Jesus.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. At sundry times and in divers manners. This clause is expressed in Greek by two words and a conjunction. The first word means "in many parts," the second, "in many ways." The reference is to the Old Testament, having many writers and many forms of revelation, yet proceeding from the same Original. **In time past.** Literally, "in ancient time," as of events having taken place long before. The Old Testament was completed four centuries before the New Testament history began. **Unto the fathers.** Written to the Jews, this always referred to their ancestors. **By the prophets.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "in the prophets:" for the statement is made of the written word. The aim of this verse is to show the fragmentary and imperfect character of the Old Testament as compared with the Gospel revelation through Christ. (1) *How blessed are our ears which hear the joyful sound!*

2. Hath in these last days. Rev. Ver., "at the end of these days." In these days, at the culmination of the ages. The period ushered in by the coming of Christ is always regarded as the last epoch of the world's history. **Spoken unto us.** The writer elsewhere states that he was not one of the apostles, but had heard the word from their lips (chap. 2. 3); so that he speaks here in a general way, of the privileges enjoyed by all in the New Dispensation. **By his Son.** Other ages received God's message through men; we have received it from the Son of God in person, coming to be our Saviour. **Heir of all things.** An heir is one who inherits a possession by right of sonship; and Christ as God's only begotten Son is thereby Lord of all; not only of the visible, but the spiritual universe. **By whom he made.** Elsewhere in Scripture we learn that the Son of God was the active agency in creation. See John 1. 3; Eph. 3. 9. **The worlds.** The original word is not that used of the physical universe; but *aión*, which refers to "the ages" of the divine order. This clause seems to mean that all the successive developments of God's plan of redemption were ordered by Christ. (2) *Let us never forget from how high a throne he stooped to save us.*

3. The brightness of his glory. Literally, "the raying forth;" that is, that Christ was the manifestation in an individual of the glory of God, which no man can behold. **The express image of his person.** Rev.

Ver., "the very image of his substance." Christ is to us the representation of God; and when we honor the Son, we honor the Father also. **Upholding all things.** The Son was the Creator, and is now the controlling power in the material, moral, and spiritual universe. **When he had by himself.** God's great purpose in all his dealings with the world is the redemption of men from the power of sin. This work Christ wrought by himself, not through types and offerings as under the old covenant. **Purged our sins.** The Rev. Ver., "made old covenant," is better; for the statement is not that all sins are actually taken away, but that the act of redemption is wrought, to become effective as sinners accept it by faith. **Sat down.** The New Testament represents the ascended Saviour as sitting upon the throne, presiding over his Church. Of course, this is a figurative representation of his power and glory, which our nature cannot comprehend. **The Majesty on high.** The right hand of a king is the seat of honor and power; and the right hand of God represents the highest place in the realm of the infinite Ruler. (3) *Let us ever remember that it was our sins for which such noble blood was shed. (4) And let us see our honor in our Elder Brother's coronation.*

4. Being made. Rather, "having become" [Rev. Ver.]. So much better than the angels. "Better" here refers not to character, but to rank and position. **As he hath by inheritance.** That is, the place to which Christ ascended after his earthly state was as much above the angels as his name, "the Son of God," is above theirs. **A more excellent name.** The highest name and the highest place in glory are both his right as the only begotten Son of God. All this is given to emphasize "the great exaltation" which is the theme of this epistle, by showing that it comes through the highest channel to mankind.

5. Unto which of the angels. The rest of the chapter is occupied in showing that Christ was higher than the angels. He quotes from the Old Testament, passages which all Jewish expositors regarded as prophetic of the expected Messiah of Israel; though in some of them there was also a lower fulfillment in David or Solomon. **Thou art my Son.** A quotation from Psa. 2; referring partly to the seed of David, but with a larger accomplishment in Christ. **This day have I begotten**