

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: 9-18 (*The 1. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

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—The Gospel by Luke (Luke 1: 3). **Began to do and teach**—The gospel gives merely the beginning of the work of salvation. Jesus is still working and teaching through his mystical body the church (Eph. 1: 23). **2. Until the day—**The fortieth after his resurrection (verse 3). **Through the Holy Ghost—**With which he was anointed (Luke 4: 18; Matt. 12: 28). **The Apostles—**The name is the same as "the missionaries," but clearly refers to the eleven only, who held a special place in the church in virtue of Christ's appointment. **3. After his passion—**"Passion" here means "sufferings," literally "after he had suffered." **Infallible proofs—**There was no room to doubt the reality of Christ's resurrection (1 John 1: 1-3; 2 Pet. 1: 16; Luke 24: 39). **The kingdom of God—**Not heaven, but the whole christian dispensation. His teaching bore upon the doctrine, discipline, organization and progress of his church. **4. The promise of the Father—**The Holy Spirit (Joel 2: 28, 29; Acts 2: 17, 18). Christ had also promised him (Luke 12: 11, 12; John 16: 7-15). **5. Not many days hence—**Just ten days after his ascension the promise was fulfilled (Acts 2: 4; 11: 15). **6. Restore again the kingdom—**They still expected an earthly and temporal kingdom like that of David and Solomon (Luke 19: 11; 24: 21). **7. Times or seasons (R. V.)—**The fixed dates of future events (Deut. 29: 29). **In his own power**

—R. V. "set within his own authority." God has not seen fit to reveal his future plans further than is necessary for our guidance in the path of duty. He does not satisfy idle curiosity. **8. Power—**Spiritual power, ability to preach the gospel, courage to endure trials &c. (Mark 16: 17, 18; Luke 21: 15; 24: 49; Eph. 3: 16). **Witnesses—**Witnesses testify to facts (John 15: 27; Luke 24: 48). Their commission was world-wide (Luke 24: 47; Matt. 28: 19, 20). **9. While they beheld—**R. V. "as they were looking." He raised his hands in blessing and they prostrated themselves in worship (Luke 24: 51, 52). There could have been no deception, they saw him ascending. **A cloud—**The sign of God's presence (Matt. 17: 5; Ex. 13: 21; 2 Chr. 5: 13, 14). The Father receives the Son back into his bosom. **10. Two men—**Two angels in the form of men (Matt. 28: 2-5; Luke 24: 4). **White apparel—**Emblematic of purity and sinlessness (Rev. 7: 9, 13, 14). **11. In like manner—**He would come in his real person, visibly (Rev. 1: 7; Ps. 104: 3). **12. Olivet—**The ascension took place near Bethany (Luke 24: 50). **A Sabbath day's journey—**2,000 cubits, or about three-quarters of a mile. The distance which the Scribes permitted a Jew to travel on the Sabbath. **14. With one accord—**It was hearty and united prayer. **Mary—**Mentioned here for the last time in the New Testament. **His brethren—**They now believed on Jesus (John 7: 5).

LESSONS. 1. Jesus is still present with his people. 2. We need the Holy Spirit to fit us for serving Christ. 3. Except we are baptized with the Spirit as well as with water we cannot see the kingdom of God. 4. The Christian's duty is to tell others about Christ. 5. United earnest prayer will be abundantly answered.