

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

FEBRUARY, 1883.

NOTE—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [287] at the side.

A. D. 36.

LESSON V.—THE PRINCE OF LIFE.

February 4.

Acts 3. 12-21.

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own *a* power or holiness we had made this man to walk.

a 2 Cor. 3. 5.

13 The *b* God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, *c* hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

b Chap. 6. 30.—*c* John 7. 39; 12. 16; 17. 1; Phil. 2. 9.

14 But ye denied *d* the Holy One and *e* the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.

d Psa. 16. 10; Mark 1. 24.—*e* Chap. 7. 52; 22. 14.

15 And killed the *a* Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

a Or, author; Heb. 2. 10; 5. 9; 1 John 5. 11.

16 And *f* his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

f Matt. 9. 22; 1 Peter 1. 21.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance *g* ye did it, as did also your rulers.

g Luke 23. 34; 1 Cor. 2. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 13.

18 But those things, which God before had showed *h* by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

h Psa. 22; Isa. 53. 6; 13. 5; Dan. 9. 26; 1 Peter 1. 10.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom *i* the heaven must receive until the times of *j* restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

i Chap. 1. 11; Heb. 8. 1.—*j* Matt. 17. 11.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The scene is the eastern colonnade of the Court of the Gentiles in the temple. Beneath is the many-coloured marble floor; above, the arched roof of Solomon's Porch; the columns rise around like a forest. A throng of people have just poured out of the temple, and rushed down the steps of the enclosure. In the midst of them are three men, the centre of interest from all the throng. The bold, impulsive Peter,

and the thoughtful, silent John, are standing under the arches of the porch, each clasped by a hand of the newly-healed lame man, who for forty years has worshipped as a cripple without the gate, but to-day for the first time has leaped up the steps and passed within the sacred portals of the temple. There are eager voices of inquiry, of wonder, of praise, and of doubt, all mingled in one, until Peter is seen standing upon the pedestal of a column, and a hush sweeps across the crowd, eager to hear his words. He begins by modestly disclaiming any power in himself or his companion to work so great a wonder as they have witnessed, but tells the people that God has wrought the miracle to give honour to his Son, whom they a little while ago crucified as a criminal, but who was, and is still, the Messiah of Israel's hope; and the Redeemer of the world. They listen to the astounding words, because in their sight was rising the great altar smoking with the evening sacrifice, and a new conviction pierces their hearts that their hands are reddened with the blood of their Messiah. Peter comforts them with the hope of mercy, and points out the way of salvation through the Crucified, who can yet blot out their sins, and send a restoration of Israel's hope.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 12. Peter saw it. The gathering of the people in Solomon's Porch, around the healed cripple. He answered. The answer was to the inquiring glances of the crowd, and their words of wonder; though the expression is used of beginning any discourse. Ye men of Israel. The usual form of address, somewhat like our "fellow-citizens." Why marvel ye. As though such an event had never occurred before; since Jesus had wrought many similar miracles in that place. Matt. 21. 14. At this. "At this man," as in Revised Version, or "at this event." Look ye so earnestly. Peter desires to turn the thoughts of the people away from the two disciples, the instrumentalities of the miracle, to Christ, whose power has wrought it. 1. Every Gospel preacher should hide himself behind his Master. Said Chalmers, "Let my name be forgotten, and Christ's only be remembered." Our own power. As if the miracle had been wrought by some magical craft. Or holiness. Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "godliness." As if their piety was so great as to obtain this miraculous token of the divine favour. The miracle had been