

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 800. LESSON VIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED; or, The Gift of Power. Joel 2, 28-32. May 25.

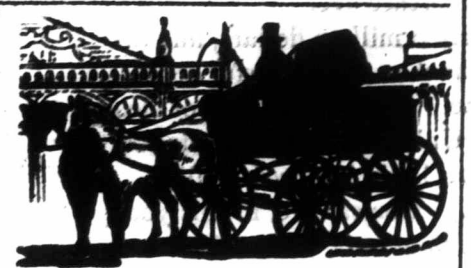
EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL.

Verse 28. Afterward. After the events predicted in verse 23-27, which were to follow Judah's repentance and return to the Lord, a cessation of threatened evils, and renewed prosperity. How long after these the fulfilment of the predictions in the following verses should take place is not stated, but they began with the events of the day of Pentecost, A. D. 29, nearly nine hundred years after the time of the prophet. 1. "How vast are the areas of time occupied in the plans of God." 2. "What was once the afterward has become the now." Pour out. A figurative expression, taken from the falling of the rain. 3. "Hitherto the Spirit had descended in drops, henceforth it was to fall in floods." My Spirit. A promise, not only of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, but of the Holy Ghost himself, with his divine indwelling, dimly foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but the special heritage of the new dispensation. 4. "How high is our privilege, to possess God dwelling in us." Upon all flesh. Though the immediate hearers of this prophecy, and perhaps even the prophet himself, would be apt to limit the application to the Jewish race only, yet we, with the light of history aiding us in its interpretation, can see that it points out the universality of the Gospel privileges. 5. "We, at the point of twenty-seven centuries after the prophet's day, can understand his words better than the people of his own time." 6. "The blessings of the Spirit are not narrowed down to any one people or race, or class." Your sons and your daughters. Indicating that in the gospel day the young people and even the children should receive a light of revelation comparable to that of the ancient prophets, and enjoy personal communion with God and spiritual enlightenment from on high. 7. "The Sunday School scholar of to-day enjoys a knowledge of God and his plans greater in some respects than that of the patriarchs and the prophets." [Teacher, show that with this high privilege God expects greater faithfulness than from his former people.] Shall prophecy. The word here employed does not primarily mean to predict future events, for this was but one among the many functions of the prophets; but rather to declare God's word and to announce his will; to enjoy divine direction and spiritual insight, which is the privilege of all God's children. Dreams... visions. The one means divine manifestations during sleep, as in the case of Jacob and Joseph; the other, supernatural revelations while in a state of ecstatic trance, such as came to Ezekiel and Daniel.

29. And also. This is better translated "and even." Upon the servants and upon the handmaidens. This does not mean merely those who performed menial offices, but slaves, male and female. So abundantly should these gifts of the Spirit be bestowed, that even bondmen and bondwomen, the very lowest among the people, should possess them. So incredible did this appear to the ancient Jews that in the Septuagint translation they inserted the word "my," making it "my servants," etc., as it was repeated by Peter, from the version of the Scriptures in common use in his day. Acts 2, 18. 9. "God has other distinctions of society than those which are arbitrarily made among men. 9. "The Spirit sets free some whom the world calls slaves." 30. And I will show. Another transition is made at this point; and the prophet, having described the scenes which should take place at the opening of this new dispensation, now passes through the unknown centuries to the wonderful events which shall accompany its close. Wonders in the heavens. The predictions of these two verses have been referred by various expositors. 1. To the supernatural events which occurred at the crucifixion of our Lord. 2. To the strange incidents in connection with the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, and the destruction of the Jewish nationality A. D. 66. 3. To those which shall occur at the second advent of Christ, and the final day of this world. Probably all three events are mingled, since, though separated by long intervals of our reckoning, they all belong to one period in the "days of God." Blood and fire. Emblematic of slaughter and destruction. Pillars of smoke. The clouds which overhang scenes of devastation. For an account of some of the portents which foreshadowed the destruction of Jerusalem, see notes on lesson eight, third quarter, 1878, November 24, "Judah, Overthrown."

31. Turn...into darkness. If this points to the events accompanying the crucifixion, there is a reference to the darkness which overhung the land while Christ was on the cross. The great and terrible day. The word, "day" probably means rather a period or era, marked by war, calamity and destruction. Great, "because it marks the horizon between time and eternity;" terrible, because of the woes it shall bring to the guilty sons of men. It shall come to pass. The prophet cheers the hearts of God's people with the assurance that this day of doom shall have no terrors for them. 10. "Those who are on God's side have no cause to fear, either for time or for eternity." Whosoever. The one word which indicates the widest sweep of privilege. 11. "None need despair, for every one may count himself in the 'whosoever.'" Shall call. "Those who would be saved must themselves seek salvation." The call must be not a mere momentary cry, but the entire and submissive turning to God with heart as well as lips. Delivered. From calamity here and destruction hereafter. 13. "That word 'delivered' indicates danger from which men have need to escape. Mount Zion. Here used not in its local but spiritual sense, a type of the G. and the church of Christ. The remnant. Not all Israel accepted Christ, but only a small fragment of the nation, which constituted "the remnant according to the election of grace." Rom. 11, 5. 14. "Not all men are saved, though all may be." Whom the Lord shall call. The called of God are those who choose to accept his call, which is sent to all, though listened to by few.

GOLDEN TEXT: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Acts 1, 8. DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: The baptism of the Holy Ghost. The next lesson is Ezek. 26, 7-14.



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Your's with gratitude, ISAAC B. SPINNEY. Sworn to at Wilmot, before me, the undersigned, June 13th, 1878.

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