

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into E'gypt :

15 And was there until the death of Her'od : that

it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of E'gypt have I called my son.

#### THE LESSON PLAN

- I. The Guiding Star, 1, 2.
- II. The Troubled King, 3-8.
- III. The Infant Saviour, 9-12.
- IV. The Sudden Flight, 13-15.

#### HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—The infant Jesus honored, Matt. 2 : 1-12. T.—The promised child, Isaiah 9 : 1-7. W.—The virgin mother, Matt. 1 : 18-25. T.—The innocents slain, Matt. 2 : 13-18. F.—Jesus at Nazareth, Matt. 2 : 19-23. S.—The boy Jesus in the temple, Luke 2 : 41-52.

S.—The coming kingdom, Isa. 60 : 11-22.

**Primary Catechism**—*Ques. 116.* What is meant by the gospel? A. The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

**Shorter Catechism**—*Ques. 101.* What do we pray for in the first petition? A. In the first petition (which is, *Hallowed be Thy name*) we pray, That God would

enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known ; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

**Lesson Hymns**—Book of Praise : 390 (314), 45 (180), 538 (735), 33 (178), 535 (779), 31 (177). (The numbers of the Praise Selections in brackets are those of the new Book of Praise.)

**Special Scripture Reading**—Isa. 9 : 1-7. (To be read responsively or in concert by the whole School.) It is expected that each scholar will have his or her Bible, and so be prepared to take part in this reading which may form part of the opening exercises of the School.

**Lantern Slide**—For Lesson, B. 1553, *Worship of the Wise Men*. (Slides are obtained from PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATIONS, Church and Gerrard Sts., Toronto. Schools desiring slides made may procure them on short notice by sending negatives, prints or photographs. Slides are colored to order.)

### THE LESSON EXPLAINED

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

**Time and Place**—About B.C. 5 ; Jerusalem and Bethany.

**Lesson Setting**—The lessons for the next six months are "Studies in Matthew." This Gospel was written for Jewish Christians, as appears from the frequency of Old Testament quotations and from the absence of explanations of Jewish customs. It was meant to depict Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed of God to fulfil the divine purpose among men, the king for whom Israel had been taught to long. Matthew's Gospel fittingly stands first among the New Testament books, not because it was the earliest of them to be written, but because it contains the completion of the Old Testament revelation.

The "Studies" begin with the visit of the Wise Men. It seems probable that this visit should be placed after the circumcision of Jesus and his presentation in the temple recorded in Luke 2 : 21-38.

#### I. The Guiding Star, 1, 2.

V. 1. *Jesus was born.* See ch. 1 : 18-24 and compare Luke 2 : 1-20. *Bethlehem of Judaea*; now Beit Lahm, 5 miles south of Jerusalem. There was another Bethlehem in Galilee, which is identified with Beit Lahm, 7 miles northwest of Nazareth. Judea in Matthew's Gospel always means the southernmost division of Palestine, while elsewhere (see Luke 23 : 5 ; Acts 10 : 37 ; 26 : 10), it is

used to denote the whole of Western Palestine. The special mention of Judea here is intended by Matthew to emphasize the fact that Jesus, as the Messiah, was born in the territory of the tribe of Judah (compare Heb. 7 : 14 ; Rev. 5 : 5). *Herod the king.* Herod I., called "the Great," (B.C. 37 to B.C. 4, Hastings' One Volume Bible Dictionary) a foreign usurper from Idumaea, a country south of Judea, who got the Romans to appoint him king of Judea. A man of wonderful power, who murdered any rival, however closely related to him. He enlarged the kingdom, but introduced many heathen practices, and was hated by the Jews on this account, and because of his great cruelty. Matthew apparently wishes to contrast the birth of the true king of Israel with the power of the false king who has usurped the Jewish throne. *Wise men*; literally, "Magi." These were astrologers, who believed that the appearance of a brilliant new star in the sky pointed to the birth of a great man. The legend that they were kings probably goes back to Isa. 60 : 3. That they were three in number would be suggested by their triple offering. The legend gives to them the names, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. *From the east*; probably from Babylon, where astrology had been cultivated from a very early period. *To Jerusalem*; for this was the Jewish capital, where the new king would be supposed to be born.