

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from the Bible School Notes.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson III. July 15. Matt. 2: 1-12.

VISIT OF THE WISE MEN.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"They saw the young child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him." Matt. 2: 11.

THE FACTS include simply the lesson. This story is recorded only in Matthew.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE BIRTH OF JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—V. 1. "Now when Jesus was born, Jesus the divine Son of God became man by being born of the Virgin Mary." In Bethlehem of Judaea, probably about Dec. 25, a. c. 5. "In the days of Herod the king," Herod died April 1, a. c. 4. (Lewin's Feast Sacri) at Jericho, at the age of 70, so that the visit of the wise men must have been a few weeks previous. This Herod was Herod the Great, founder of the Herodian family. Though alien by race, the Herods were Jews in fact, and from the time of their conversion remained constant to their new religion. He possessed energy of character, but an unscrupulous ambition, and was remorselessly cruel. He was made governor of Galilee at the early age of fifteen, and distinguished himself by his campaigns against the brigands, who infested the mountains. He rebuilt the temple in Jericho, which is consequently known in history as Herod's Temple, to distinguish it from Solomon's Temple. "The king" Herod was not absolute monarch, but subject to the Roman empire, much in the same way as some of the Indian princes are subject to the British government.

1. Was Mary born in the East? Search for Him.—V. 3. "There came wise men from the East." (Greek, Magi, sages). Originally a class of priests among the Persians and Medes, who formed the king's privy council, and who cultivated astrology, medicine, and occult natural sciences. They are frequently referred to by ancient authors. Herodotus speaks of them as a priestly caste of the Medes, and as interpreters of dreams. Afterward the term was applied to all Eastern philosophers. From the East, "Here is the plural, referring to the Eastern regions, probably Persia, since the Magi were the priestly caste of the Zoroastrian religion, the religion of Zoroaster, and hence were not idolaters, but worshippers of the one God under the emblem of fire. "To Jerusalem," the capital of the country, these strangers would naturally come to find the king of the Jews.

2. "Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" This inquiry more literally translated, "Where is the newborn king?" that is the newly born king of the Jews. We are informed by Tacitus, by Strabo, and by Josephus, that there prevailed throughout the entire East, at this time, an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that some powerful monarch would arise in Judaea, and reign dominion over the world. Virgil, who lived a little before this, owns (fourth Eclogue) that a child from heaven was looked for, who should restore the golden age, and take away all confusion in China, at least in C. 50, had prophesied the appearance of such a deliverer, and a depiction of his followers, going forth in search of him, were the means of introducing Buddhism into China. But the clearest of all these prophecies was one by Zoroaster, before a. c. 500.

WHENCE AROSE THIS EXPECTATION? Without doubt from the Jews who were scattered everywhere, and their Scriptures and their hopes since the Babylonian captivity. Daniel himself was a prince, and chief among this very class of wise men. His prophecies were made known to them; and the calculations by which he pointed to the very time when Christ should be born became, through the Book of Daniel, a part of their ancient literature.

THE GUIDING STAR.—V. 2. "For we have seen his star in the east." Seen by them in the eastern countries, or seen in the eastern sky. The first was certainly the fact, but the second is the probable meaning here. This must have been a miraculous star, for it went before them, and stood over the exact place where Jesus was with his mother.

WHY SHOULD THE STAR LEAD THEM TO THINK OF THE MESSIAH? (1) Such appearances were continually regarded by the sages of those days as signs of some great event. (2) The general expectation of the Great King at this time would cause the wise men to think of him when they saw the wonderful star. (3) They were doubtless pious men, looking for the hope of the world. (4) God may have made some communication to them, as we learn from verse 12 that he actually did afterwards.

the turning of their world upside down, the dethroning of their idols, the overthrow of their hopes.

4. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes." The chief priests were probably the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided (2 Chron. 23: 8; Luke 1: 5), but the term may have included those who had, though only for a time, held the office of high priest. The "scribes" were the interpreters of the law, caustic and collectors of the traditions of the elders, for the most part Pharisees. "He demanded" (rather inquired) of them where Christ, in the original The Messiah, the official title of the promised Deliverer, "should be born." What do your scriptures say? What is your expectation?

5. "And they said," i. e., the chief priests, etc. Their answer was to have been given without any hesitation, as a matter perfectly well understood, and settled by divine authority. "Bethlehem of Judaea." See above. "Thus it is written." What? "In the next verse." By the prophet (Micah, in chap. 5: 2).

6. "And thou Bethlehem." This is quoted freely from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament), just as such quotations are in the Bible at that time, for there were no Bibles in circulation, and quotations must be made chiefly as remembered from hearing them read. "Bethlehem, in the land of Judaea," in the original there is no "in the land of Judaea," "Bethlehem, land of Judaea," as we say "Chicago, Ill.," or "Newport, R. I.," "Princes" is according to a usual figure, put for the towns where the princes, or heads of the courses, lived. This position, of adoration, careful, firm ruler, who supplies the wants of his people while he controls them.

7. "Then Herod, in private" (privately) called the wise men, and said to them, "Where do you suppose he is born?" "In Bethlehem," they answered. "Inquired diligently" is derived from "akroa," a point. The idea is, he ascertained to the last point. "What time the star appeared." That he might know what was the exact age of the infant whom he wished to slay.

8. "He sent (or directed) them to Bethlehem," a short six miles from Jerusalem. "Search diligently." "So far as the mission became known, it would impress the people with the belief that he, too, shared their hopes, and was ready to pay his homage to the new-born king. It was a diplomatic lie based on the truth. It was something like the kiss of Judas.

9. "The king" (V. 9, 10: 9. "Lo, the star." Unexpectedly the star they had seen in the east, it was not now in the east, but in the west, and led them in the evening as they went toward Bethlehem. "stood over where the young child was" i. e., over the house, as implied by verse 11; not merely over the village of Bethlehem, but in Bethlehem, and over the guiding them, and pointing out the place. "They rejoiced." Because their journey was now ended, their search was successful.

10. "Every one of us needs a king. We need him for his kingdom as a whole, to bind it together in one aim and under the same principles, many parts in a great unity for mutual help and defense. We need a king in our own souls, to love, to love up, to guide, to bind in one our complex nature. Some king we must all have. These wise men were to seek the true King with all their hearts at all costs, as men seek the pearl of great price. Most probably we shall find him in some humble place, in doing common duties. We shall find him in seeking to do his will, in giving ourselves to him in faith, in studying his Word, in sincere praying.

THE KING WASHED.—V. 11: 12. "When they were come into the house." This could scarcely have been the stable where our Lord was born. Joseph and Mary remained for forty days in Bethlehem, and then in temporary lodgings. Hence the double blunder of the paintings which represent "the adoration of the magi" as taking place in the stable while the shepherds were present. "And fell down" in the oriental manner, showing homage and worship. "And worshipped him." The homage of the magi is the first and typical acknowledgment of Christ by those who hither-to had been "in error," and their offerings are symbolic of the world's tribute.

B. Y. P. U.

OUR OBJECT. The enlightenment of young people; their increased spirituality; their education in Christian service; their training in scriptural knowledge; their instruction in Baptist history and doctrine; their maintenance in missionary activity, through existing denominational institutions.

OUR FOLLOWERS. All Young Men and Women of whatever race in Baptist churches, and Baptist churches having no organizations are entitled to representation. We depend for our unity not upon any young people's name or method. Our motto: "Unity in the faith, in the full affirmation of whose teachings."

WE ARE OUR PEOPLE WITH OUR MISSION. Correspondence to this department should address their communications to Rev. J. J. HARRIS, St. John, N. B.

For the Week Beginning July 9th. TOPIC.—How God shields his own. Pa. 28: 7.

C. E. TREME.—"How are men helped by the Holy Spirit?" Jno. 16: 7-14.

The full programme of the Toronto Convention is in our hands. It names over thirty great meetings addressed by our best speakers. Among them are such men as Rev. B. S. McArthur, D. D., New York; Rev. D. McLaughlin, Detroit, Mich.; F. M. Ellis, D. D., Baltimore, Md.; Rev. B. L. Whitman, Maine; Rev. J. H. Carroll, D. D., Waco, Texas; W. W. Lawrence, D. D., Chicago; President J. B. Gambrell, Mercer University, Georgia; Mr. H. C. Vedder, editor of the Examiner, and J. B. Calvert, editor of Christian Enquirer, of New York; Rev. J. B. Cranford, editor of Baptist Standard, Waco, Texas; Rev. S. A. Northrop, Fort Wayne, Ind.

A fair example of the scope of the meeting may be seen in the "Seven Worker's Conferences" on Friday afternoon.

I. On New Members, at the Metropolitan Church.

II. On Prayer Meetings, at Knox Presbyterian Church.

III. On Instructions, at First Lutheran Church.

IV. On Tracts and Publications, at Bond Street Congregational Church.

V. On Missions, at St. James Square Presbyterian Church.

VI. On Temperance, at Cook's Presbyterian Church.

VII. On Social Work, at Jarvis Street Baptist Church.

Each one of these conferences is addressed by three speakers, followed by a question box or open conference on methods of work.

Where we had room to print the whole programme, it would be full of suggestions to our readers. Everywhere God is calling us to enlarge the place of our tent. We trust that our young Baptists in these provinces will discern the day of their opportunity, and move forward as the Lord calls. We are one people with one mission.

Our Lord and Master lived for thirty years in unvarying security, and died at the end of thirty three years with every appearance of failure; and you and I are reminded by this example of the Lord that we are not to seek great things for ourselves; that we are not to be concerned by what men think of us; that our sole concern is in God's sight to be judged fit to die by his clear judgment; and we have also learned that we are called upon to face danger and death, if it is in maintenance of what is right and true. We have the noblest example to all the world for turning away from every attraction of life and taking up our cross, rather than shrink the conflict. —R. F. Horton, M. A.

A young woman whose life was full of lofty ambitions found herself occupied day after day with disagreeable household tasks. As the future seemed to shut down hopelessly around these homely duties, the girl grew complaining and bitter. One day her father, who was the village doctor, said to her, "Do you see those vials? They are cheap, worthless things in themselves, but in one I put a deadly poison, in another a sweet perfume, in another a healing medicine. What more could the Pleiades do than obey? So with our duties, insignificant and worthless in themselves, but the patience, or anger, or high thinking, or bitterness which we put into them, that is the important thing, the immortal thing."

A celebrated Frenchman said: "Perfection consists not in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things with an extraordinary spirit." —Silver Cross.

In the gay, shifting markets of the East Gaunt and grotesque, the patient camels stand, Calm amid busy tumult, ugly, grand, With rough ridged form, and meek, uplifted face. Ready to bear a load in conscious strength To eat and thirst and labor, till at length The desert crossed, and won the resting-place. A master's hand shall lift the load away. O still, strong, human nature whom we meet.

Day after day, in adverse circumstance Serene and faithful! Have ye learned, probation, From these dumb heros of the East— O Robin, is it you, whose song comes up the hill? Trill upon trill, the song whose meaning I would fain follow, as the wind. Again as when a child, full wonderingly I listen, While over the sleeping grass the tears of April glisten; The old bird bend low in sorrow, Lo! the Robin, that you borrow Joy from the darkness day wherein to bill "Good morrow!" —Selected.

God has fulfilled every promise that he has made. Well may we declare with the apostle of the Hebrews, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for if man could only in a small measure fulfil his obligation to God he would be happy, but so many great occasions for neglecting the promise." —Christian World.

Perfection as the highest aim of what God has made. Well may we declare with the apostle of the Hebrews, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for if man could only in a small measure fulfil his obligation to God he would be happy, but so many great occasions for neglecting the promise." —Christian World.

Only the dead can tell what death has been. It may have been many times an ecstasy. —Mrs. A. D. Whitney.

Every character has an inward spring, let Christ be it. Every action has a key-note, let Christ act it. —F. W. Robertson.

Let the sinless throw! And the sinners went out, and the sold to sin no more. —George MacDonald.

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SERVICE.

Ah! grand is the world's work, and noble, for sooth, The doing one's part, be it ever so small! You, reaping with Boaz, I gleaming with Ruth, Are honored by serving, yet servants of all.

No drudge in his corner but speeds the world's wheels, No serf in the field but in sowing God's seed; More noble, I think, in the dust though he kneels, Than the pauper of wealth, who makes acorn of the deed.

Is toil but a treadmill? Think not of the grind, But think of the grit, what is done and to do, The world growing better, more like to you, By long, faithful labor of helpers like you.

The broom or the spade or the shuttle, that piles, Its own torest task in its own honest way, Serves heaven not less than a star in the sky.

What more could the Pleiades do than obey? So with our duties, insignificant and worthless in themselves, but the patience, or anger, or high thinking, or bitterness which we put into them, that is the important thing, the immortal thing."

A remarkable archeological discovery is announced from Treves. In excavating the old Roman walls close to the Moselle a complete Roman pottery establishment was discovered.

Harriet Hosmer the American sculptor, it is said, can wear as many medals as a hereditary grand duke. She has spent the last twenty years almost continuously in Europe.

In Crete a hoard of Mycenaean vases has been found in a grotto near Kamara on Mount Ida. They resemble some vases of the Island of Thera, and especially some lately found in Egypt.

A Little Daughter. Of a Church of England minister cured of a distressing rash, by Ayer's Sarsaparilla. Mr. RICHARD BIRKS, the well-known Druggist, 207 McGill St., Montreal, P. C., says: "I have used Ayer's Family Medicines for 40 years, and have heard nothing but good said of them. I know of many Wonderful Cures performed by Ayer's Sarsaparilla, one in particular, that of a little daughter of a Church of England minister. The child was literally covered from head to foot with a red and exceedingly troublesome rash, from which she had suffered for two or three years, in spite of the best medical treatment available. Her father was so great distressed about the case, and, at my recommendation, at last began to administer Ayer's Sarsaparilla, two bottles of which effected a complete cure, much to her relief and her father's delight. I am sure, were he here to-day, he would testify in the strongest terms as to the merits of

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