

The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR JULY.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Infancy of Jesus.* Matt. 2: 1-10.

We have just now passed the middle of the year, as every day has its noon, and every life has its mid-time. And happy are the signs that greet our Sabbath Schools at this meridian of the year. For we now enter on the study of the New Testament, in which our Lord and Saviour brings life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

And what a second chapter is this second chapter of St. Matthew? Do you not remember with what deep emotion and heavenly awe, you read it in your early childhood? Who can ever forget that early Eden of piety—that Paradise of peace—that Golden Age of every individual life? How blessed are the children who read of the Child Jesus, and who learn to seek Him early, and find Him, and give their hearts to Him! (Prov. 8: 11.)

Vv. 1-2.—In the fulness of time, before the sceptre had departed from Judah, did SURLOUT come in the flesh (Gen. 49: 10;) for Mariamne the wife of Herod, was of the royal Maccabean lineage still. Herod himself was a most wicked King, and the Jewish Church and nation had become almost as bad as Herod. It was needful at that awful crisis that the LORD should come in the flesh to save the world, while there was yet a remnant of good people left—such as Simeon and Anna—or else the Church and the world would have perished like Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9: 29.)

But wise men from the East received a heavenly notice of the Saviour's birth, by the vision of a Star. Thus God revealed His will to those Gentile Orientals, called Magi, as He did to the Jewish Shepherds by the vision of angels at Bethlehem (Luke 2: 8-18.) We are not told from what country the wise men came, nor are we told whether other people also could see the Star, or if the Magi only saw it by spiritual vision, like Balaam and Gehazi, (2 Kings 6: 17; Numb. 24: 15-17.) But we know that the knowledge of God and His ancient word was preserved by many great men among the Syrians, the Persian Magi, and other Gentiles of the far East and the utmost South; such as Balaam, Melchisedec, Job, and the Queen of Sheba. One can hardly study the mythology of the Orientals without finding many sacred allegories and traditions which doubtless were handed down from Noah and other Prophets of

God. Who knows but the Magi had that very prophecy of Balaam in their memory when the Star appeared their spiritual to vision? (Num. 24: 17.)

Vv. 3-4.—Herod is troubled for fear of a rival King, and plots cunningly to find him out and then to murder him. He knew that Christ was expected, and he decoys the Jewish priests, and the Gentile Magi to point out where and who He is.

Vv. 5-6.—The Jewish Clergy knew the prophecies of Christ's birth, and told Herod plainly where it should be. This is taken from Mich 5: 2. How divinely precious are these ancient prophecies! How blessed are they that have the Bible!

Vv. 7-10.—Herod next tries to get the help of the Magi to discover the infant Saviour, as if he wished to worship Him also; but Herod only wished to murder Him. What a serpent in cunning—what a wolf in sheep's covering is this Herod! Such is the selfish heart of man by nature in us all.

Guided by the Star, they discover with exceeding joy, the humble abode of the lowly infant, and His Virgin Mother. They worship Him, but not her. They offer Him the gifts which represent Love, Trust, and obedience. But God by visions delivers them and the infant Jesus from the treachery of Herod.

DOCTRINES.

1. Jesus is the only Saviour (Acts 4: 12.)
2. He has His hidden people in many dark lands, (Acts 10: 34-35; Mat. 8: 10-12.)
3. He is God manifest in the flesh (Isa. 9: 6.)

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Flight into Egypt.* Matt. 2: 12-23.

Vv. 13-15.—The infant Jesus is saved from the fury of Herod by Divine Providence. It is notable that no less than four Divine messages are given by four dreams in this single chapter, (Vv. 12, 13, 19, 22.) In old times while the Bible was incomplete, it was needful that God should reveal His will in this way. Read the whole of this blessed mystery in Job 33: 14-30.

There is a divine significance in this passage, as well as in every other passage of God's Word. Egypt was the land of Science or Naturalism; Canaan was the land of Religion. The Exodus from Egypt to Canaan was a type of conversion from the state of Nature to that of Grace. But when Religion became perverted, then the Jews and Herod became Antichrist, from whose Babylonish treachery the infant church finds a temporary shelter in the