

# For the Sabbath School.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON IV.—JULY 22.—MATT. II., 13-23.

(Flight into Egypt.)

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in." Ps. cxxi. 8.

God led the wise men home from Bethlehem "another way," thus defeating crafty Herod's murderous designs toward Jesus. Hardly had they left the holy Child when the Lord, knowing the secret in Herod's heart, commanded the flight to Egypt. There history silently leaves the Child in his mother's arms and under the "shadow of the Almighty," until Herod died. Almost the last act of Herod, five days before his death, was the murder of Antipater, the third son he had killed. No wonder such a fiend slaughtered the innocents at Bethlehem to crush out a supposed rival. "Herod's murderous face, glaring down on the Infant, was a sad prophecy of how the powers of the world would persecute him and cut off his life from the earth." (Stalker's Life of Christ.)

Probably Joseph had intended settling at Bethlehem, but he was divinely led to change his plan and to return from Egypt to Nazareth in Galilee, under the dominion of Herod Antipas, who was regarded as of milder temper than his cruel, treacherous brother Archelaus in Judea.

Here began the thirty years of the Saviour's quiet home-life, of which we know almost nothing. "What would we not give to know the habits, the friendships, the thoughts, the words, and the actions of Jesus during so many years? . . . But it has pleased God, whose silence is no less wonderful than his words" to deny us this.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING.**—I. The Flight into Egypt. Vs. 13-15. Begin with a glance at the last lesson. Especially bring out the means used by God to defeat Herod's plan. On how slender a thread the salvation of all God's people depended! An infant's breath—the life of a helpless baby! Who is there seeking to slay that child? "Herod the Great." Who can defend that child? Not the carpenter of Nazareth; nor his weak wife. Yet the universe combined could not have destroyed that infant. God is his helper. How could he deliver? An angel comes to Joseph in a dream. He tells of Herod's murderous design. He commands him to take the baby and mother and flee into Egypt. So God watches over every little baby.

How was this flight into Egypt and the return at God's command a fulfillment of Hosea xi: 1? Israel had been four hundred years in Egypt. Israel's Lord was an exile and a sufferer in the same strange country. Israel was called out of Egypt at the exodus. So Jesus was also called to come out of Egypt. In these particulars the spirit of the Word of God in Hosea was "fulfilled." Notice that even slight allusions in the Old Testament to the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus.

II. The Slaughter of the Innocents. Vs. 16-18. What enraged Herod? What did he order done? How many innocent babes were probably slain by Herod's executioners? It is estimated at twenty. Have the scholars read Jer. xxxi: 15, which describes a touching scene at Rama? There the captives to be carried to Babylon were collected before their departure. By a poetic figure the prophet represents Rachel herself, who had been buried at Bethlehem, as coming from her tomb and lamenting the woes of her descendants. So says Matthew, over these murdered little ones, "little blossoms of martyrdom," as they have been called, Rachel appears again to mourn. Yet these dear children have the honor of being the first of all martyrs for Jesus' sake.

III. The Home at Nazareth. Vs. 19-23. What proof have we that the days of the exile of the Divine Child in Egypt were few? We know that Herod's life of cruelty and of crime ended about April 1st, 750, of

the building of Rome. Very soon after his death the Holy Family returned. Bring out the fact that Joseph had two reasons for not going back to Bethlehem; first, his own fear of Archelaus; second the warning of God. Teach your scholars to take their very fears to God. Two difficulties arise. 1. What is the true meaning of the latter part of v. 23? This is nowhere stated in so many words by any prophet. But the prophets again and again describe the coming Messiah as despised and as insignificant in the eyes of the world. See Isaiah xi: 1; liii: 2. Now, to be a citizen of Nazareth was to be all this. 2. Why are there so many miraculous events surrounding our Lord's infancy? Angels come and go. An angel tells Zacharias of the birth of John; an angel salutes Mary as the mother of the Saviour; another comes to Joseph; a multitude of the heavenly host are heard by the shepherds; a star guided the Magi; dreams are sent by God. Yet these are just the events to be expected when the Son of God becomes the Son of man. These miraculous events indicate the fact that though his outward circumstances were most lowly and humble, yet Jesus was God as well as man.

## Christian Endeavor.

### Daily Readings.

First Day—Like Christ.—1 Pet. ii: 18-24.

Second Day—On the cross.—Luke xxiii: 32-43.

Third Day—Isaac.—Gen. xxv: 17-22.

Fourth Day—Moses.—Num. xii: 1-9.

Fifth Day—David.—2 Sam. xvi: 9-14.

Sixth Day—Lowly before God.—Isa. ii: 10-22.

Seventh Day—CHRIST'S LOWLINESS OUR EXAMPLE.—Isa liii: 1-12.

**PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, July 22.**—"Christ's Lowliness our Example," Isa. liii: 1-12. This passage is one of the most marvellous Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. It gives us a picture which for pathos and beauty is unexcelled, the divine man humbly submitting and ignoring his sovereignty beneath the purpose of his mission to sin accursed humanity. He came to lift the lowest to the highest, and to do so He came not as a king but as a lowly artisan.

Comrades in Christian Endeavor there is a lesson here for us. We will never save the world with kid gloves on. If we would lift the world nearer God, it will not do merely to beckon from above, we must get our shoulders beneath the burden, and energized by the Spirit, lift it heavenward. Lowliness, humility, sacrifice of pride in all things human is one of the first lessons a Christian must learn; pride is fatal to work for Christ. Scripture passages:—Matt. ix: 10-11, x: 24-25; Luke vi: 40; Jno. xiii: 3-17, xv: 18-20; Rom. viii: 17, xv: 13; Phil. ii: 3-8, iv: 11-12; 2 Tim. ii: 12; 1 Pet. iv: 12-19.

### Be a Christian.

I say to my friend, "Be a Christian." That means to be a full man. And he says to me: "I have not time to be a Christian. I have not room. If my life were not so full! You don't know how hard I work from morning to night. What time is there for me to be a Christian? What time is there, what room is there, for Christianity in such a life as mine?"

But does it not come to seem to us so strange, so absurd, if it was not so melancholy, that man should say such a thing as that?

It is as if the engine had said it had no room for the steam. It is as if the tree had said it had no room for the sap. It is as if the ocean had said it had no room for the tide. It is as if the man had said he had no room for his soul. It is as if life said it had no time to live, when it is life. It is not something that is added to life. It is life. A man is not living without it. And for a man to say that "I am so full of life that I have no room for life," you see immediately to what absurdity it reduces itself.—PHILIPS BROOKS.