

LESSON I—January 5th, 1896.

The Forerunner of Christ. LUKE I: 5-17.

(Commit to memory verses 15 and 16).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." Luke I: 76.

PROVE THAT—We should prepare for Christ's coming. Isa. 40: 3.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 39. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?* A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*. Nos. 248, 249, 26, 28.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday*. The Forerunner of Christ. Luke I: 5-17. *Tuesday*. A wondrous infancy. Luke I: 59-66. *Wednesday*. Prophecy of greatness. Luke I: 67-80. *Thursday*. Service of the altar. Ex. 30: 1-10. *Friday*. The Lord's Messenger. Mal. 3: 1-6. *Saturday*. Promise of Elijah. Mal. 4. *Sabbath*. Christ's testimony to John. Matt. 11: 7-14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. This Gospel was written by Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 14), who was the companion of Paul, and also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The first two chapters have been called "The Gospel of the Infancy," because they narrate events connected with the birth and youth of Jesus.

LESSON PLAN. I. His Godly Parents. vs. 5-7. II. His Birth Announced. vs. 8-14. III. His Character Described. vs. 15-17.

5. **Herod**—Herod the great. **Zacharias**—He was not the high priest. **Abi'a**—This was the eighth of the twenty-four courses into which David divided the priests (1 Chr. 24: 15; Neh. 12: 4). Each course served in the temple twice a year, one week at a time. 6. **Righteous before God**—They were truly pious people, not merely so far as men could see, but in the sight of God (Ps. 119: 6; 2 Cor. 1: 12). **Walking**—Their daily life conformed to God's law. **Blameless**—This does not mean that they were perfect, but that their lives were without reproach. **Well stricken in years**—They were of advanced age, quite old people. 8. **Before God**—In the temple which was God's house. He was said to "dwell between the cherubim" over the ark in the Holy of Holies. In the first temple there was a visible sign of his presence there. 9. **His lot was**—The priest who should offer incense was chosen by lot. It was offered morning and evening, and to perform this service was considered a high honor (Ex. 30: 7, 8). **Incense**—A compound of fragrant gums and resins which gave out a pleasant odor when burning (Ex. 30: 34). The altar of incense stood in the Holy place. 10. **Praying without**—The worshippers in the outer courts of the temple were engaged in silent prayer while the incense was being offered (Lev. 16: 17). **An angel**—Gabriel (verse 19). 12. **He was troubled**

—The natural feeling of one who finds himself in the presence of a supernatural being (Dan. 10: 8; Acts 10: 4; Rev. 1: 17). 13. **Thy prayer is heard**—The prayer of both priest and people was for the coming of the Messiah. 15. **Great in the sight of the Lord**—truly great according to God's idea of greatness. **Drink neither wine**—He was to be a Nazirite (Num. 6: 1-5), set apart by a solemn vow to God's service. Compare Samson (Judges 13: 5) and Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 12). **Filled with the holy Ghost**—From the day of his birth he was to be illuminated, guided, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Jer. 1: 5; Ps. 22: 9, 10; Gal. 1: 15). 16. **Shall he turn**—lead them to repent and forsake sin, and seek the Lord. 17. **Before him**—The Lord their God. Jesus was "Emmanuel," "God with us." He is here distinctly called "Jehovah." **In the spirit and power of Elijah** (R. V.)—The Jews expected that Elijah himself would return, but the prophet meant only (Mal. 4: 4-6; 3: 1) that one like Elijah would come—a great religious reformer (Matt. 11: 14; 17: 10-13). **Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children**—He would revive family affection by arousing both parents and children to a real anxiety about their salvation. **Prepared**—All would be ready to listen to Christ's offer of salvation when John had made them feel their need of it.

LESSONS. 1. Religion makes happy and beautiful every home in which it dwells. 2. God's angels are sent to minister to his people. 3. God will answer every prayer, so far as it is for his own glory and our good. 4. No one is too young to be filled with the Holy Spirit. 5. Repentance must precede pardon and acceptance with God.