

SECOND QUARTER—REVIEW.

SUBJECT

GOLDEN TEXT.

- 1. Josiah's Early Piety, 2 Chron. xxi. 1-8
- 2. The Scriptures Found and Searched, 2 Chron. xxiv. 14-22
- 3. Jeremiah in Prison, Jer. xxxix. 1-9
- 4. The Rehearsals, Jer. xxxv. 15-19
- 5. The Captivity of Judah, Jer. li. 1-11
- 6. The Captive in Babylon, Dan. i. 1-17
- 7. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, Dan. ii. 28-45
- 8. The Fiery Furnace, Dan. iii. 21-27
- 9. The Handwriting on the Wall, Dan. v. 25-31
- 10. Daniel in the Lions' Den, Dan. vi. 16-28
- 11. Messiah's Kingdom, Dan. vii. 9-14
- 12. The Decree of Cyrus, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22-29

- Ecd. xii. 1.
- John v. 39.
- Jer. xxxix. 8.
- Jer. xxxv. 10.
- Lam. i. 8.
- Palm. cxl. 10.
- Dan. ii. 28.
- Dan. iii. 17.
- Dan. v. 27.
- Dan. vi. 21.
- Palm. xlv. vi.
- Isiah. xl. 1.
- Isiah. xlv. 13.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

- July 7. Birth of Christ the Lord..... Luke 2: 8-20
- 14. The Childhood of Jesus..... 2: 40-52
- 21. Ministry of John the Baptist..... 3: 1-22
- 28. Jesus at Nazareth..... 4: 16-30
- Aug. 4. The Draught of Fishes..... 5: 1-11
- 11. The Centurion's Faith..... 5: 14-17
- 18. The Widow of Nain..... 7: 11-17
- 25. The Friend of Sinners..... 7: 40-50
- Sept. 1. Return of the Seventy..... 10: 17-24
- 8. The Good Samaritan..... 10: 30-37
- 15. Importantly..... 11: 1-13
- 22. Warning against Covetousness..... 11: 13-23
- 29. Review.

Prepared for the CHRISTIAN HELPER.

JULY 7.—Birth of Christ the Lord.— Luke 2: 8-20. B. C. 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 11.

IN THE STUDY.

For the next six months our studies will be upon the life, labours, sufferings and death of our Lord, as recorded by the evangelist Luke. It will not be amiss, therefore, for us to know something of the author of this record, and of the circumstances under which he wrote it. The evangelist Luke, Lucas or Lucanus, was a physician, *Col. 4: 14*, and according to Eusebius, a native of Antioch. He is first mentioned in his own works, the Acts of the Apostles 16: 11, "We," though it is probable that he was an attendant upon the ministry of Jesus, and an eye-witness of His miracles, *Luke 1: 3*. He speaks of himself as travelling in company with the great apostle from Troas to Philippi, where he seems to have travelled behind, and where he again joined Paul on his second tour of Greece, accompanying him to Jerusalem, thence to Caesarea, and finally to Rome, where he remained with him until the close of his life, steadfast through all the fires of persecution. *Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11*. It was during this long and intimate association with the apostle that he wrote his two works—the Gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles, probably under the immediate direction of Paul himself. The earliest traditions represent him to have died at Achaia, but there is no definite record of the place or mode of his death. His Gospel and the Acts are written in the most beautiful and correct Greek, revealing the man of culture, while his minute and exact descriptions of diseases that Christ healed reveal the hand of the physician.

The Time. The exact date of our Lord's birth cannot be fixed with certainty; some think that it was not later in the year than September, for the shepherds still kept their flocks in the open fields, while others hold it to be the traditional date. One thing, however, is generally conceded, and that is that it took place at least 4 years earlier than our A. D. 1. Herod died in

A. U. C. (the founding of Rome) 750, and Christ was born some time before Herod's death, but our A. D. 1 corresponds with A. U. C. 754. The date placed at the beginning of this lesson B. C. 4, that is four years before the beginning of A. D. 1.

The Place. Bethlehem—the house of bread—situated at the birth place of Him who was to be the "Bread of Life"—is six miles southwest of Jerusalem. Its ancient name, Ephrath (Gen. 48: 7), signifies, fruitful. It is situated on a ridge, 2,700 feet above the sea, and is surrounded with hills and valleys. Here David was born, B. C. 1050, and from this circumstance it was frequently called the City of David.

The Inn. "This does not mean a hotel kept by a landlord at so much a day. The inns or caravansaries of the East are large enclosures built at convenient distances along the road for the accommodation of travellers. They are for shelter and protection at night. The building is commonly of stone, built round an open square, with sheds or stalls for cattle; and over these, often, are chambers for the traveler."—*Jacobus*. The taxing, more properly enrolment or registration. The same Greek word is found in Heb. 12: 23, "written in heaven." It was a census for the purpose of taxing, and the actual taxing was carried out some years later.

The taxed rule then subsisting in Palestine had a remarkable influence on the fulfilment of prophecy. Had the census been purely Jewish, Mary need not have gone to register, the names of men only being taken. Had it been purely Roman, both might have been registered at Nazareth. The Roman law required her enrollment, the Jewish that it should take place at the hereditary city.—*Isa. 9: 6; Micah. 5: 2.—Stock*.

Genealogy. Jesus was David's son through Joseph, legally by adoption.—*Matt. 1: 1-17*. He was David's son through Mary, lineally by direct descent.—*Luke 3: 23*. And He was the Son of God by the conception of the Holy Ghost.—*Matt. 1: 20; Luke 1: 35*.

IN THE CLASS.

Questions. What great event are we to study to-day?

By whom was it foretold, and how long before?

How far was Bethlehem, and in what direction from Jerusalem?

By whose birth was Bethlehem first made famous, and who gave his name to the city?

What relation was Jesus to David?

How was He David's son through Joseph?

How was His son through Mary?

How was He the Son of God?

For what great purpose did Jesus come to this world?

Why was it necessary that He should be born in human flesh, and become a man?

Why was it necessary that He should be at the same time God as well as man, Divine as well as human?

How long had this great purpose been in God's mind?

With what feelings did the Old Testament saints look forward to this event?

What feelings ought it to produce in our hearts?

We have in our lesson, 1st. The Watch of the Shepherds, v. 8; and 2nd. The Heavenly Announcement, v. 9-12; 3rd. The Joy of the Angels, v. 13-14; 4th. The Shepherds' Visit, v. 15-16, and 5th. The Publication of the Good News, 17-20.

THE WATCH OF THE SHEPHERDS.

V. 8. And there were in the same country shepherds. The country in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem was partly agricultural and partly pastoral. The rough rugged hills and steep ravines, like the Highlands of Scotland, could be used only for grazing purposes.

Keeping watch over their flocks by night, to guard them from wild beasts, the incursions of enemies, and from wandering away.—*Gen. 31: 39; 1 Sam. 17: 34; John 10: 12*.

THE HEAVENLY ANNOUNCEMENT.

V. 9. And to the angel of the Lord, His messenger.—*Zech. 6: 11* (Gideon), *13: 10-23* (Manasseh).

And the glory of the Lord, the visible symbol of the Divine presence.—*Ex. 24: 16-17; Num. 14: 10*.

And they were sore afraid.—*Isa. 6: 5; Dan. 10: 7-8; Act. 9: 17; Rev. 1: 17*.

V. 10. Fear not. The message was not one of judgment, but of mercy. I bring. God is ever first in the salvation of the world. Christ came to us; His gospel, the message is sent to us.—*Rom. 10: 6-8*. Good tidings of great joy: the best news that ever came to this sinning, suffering, sorrowing world; the most blessed that God could send or man receive. Unto all people. Unto all the nation, and to all the world.—*Luke 24: 49*.

V. 11. For unto you is born. What joy gathers around a birth! How much of joy or sorrow, happiness or misery, may be in the future to the new born infant! An immortal soul launched upon the voyage of life. Christ the Lord was born, born of a woman, in all the weakness and helplessness of infancy, and yet mystery of mysteries, Christ the Lord, the JEHOVAH, veiled within that infant form, was there.—*1 Tim. 3: 16*.

V. 12. And this shall be a sign, a guiding sign, so that they might find Him, as the star to the wise men; and finding Him thus, see the truth of the announcement; a confirming sign.

Wrapped in swaddling clothes—an evidence of His weakness, lying in a manger of His humiliation.—*Phil. 2: 6-7*. So if we would find Christ we must seek Him by the marks of His humiliation, sufferings and death. Seek Him in the garden, on the Cross.

"Hath he marks that lead me to Him,
If He be my guide
In His feet and hands are wounds-printed,
And His side."

THE JOY OF THE ANGELS.

V. 13. A multitude.—*Heb. 1: 6*. Praising God. The exercise of heaven, heaven come down to earth, that earth might be won back to heaven. Oh, happy shepherds to hear the music of heaven! So hears every one, in his soul, who mysteries the Holy Child.

V. 14. Glory to God in the highest—in the highest strains, in the highest places, the heaven of heavens; for "His love displayed, His manifold wisdom made known, His law magnified, His faithfulness and truth proved, His alienated inheritance redeemed, Satan despoiled."—*Jacobus*.

"'Twas great to form a world from naught,
'Twas greater to redeem."

On earth peace.—between God and men.—*Rom. 5: 1*. In men's hearts.—*Phil. 4: 7*. Among men.—*2 Th. 1: 4, 5*.

Good will toward men, or, among men of good will, to whom God manifests His saving grace.—*Ezek. 33: 11; John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 1 John 4: 9*. The revelation of God's good will, and the communication of it by applying the saving virtues of Christ.

THE SHEPHERDS' VISIT.

V. 15. Let us now go—a prompt response; so ought every one to set out at once to seek Christ, and so ought we to exhort one another.—*Ps. 122: 1*.

V. 16. With haste, revealing their earnestness and intense desire to reply: by a personal experience in a sight of Jesus the truth of the message by which they had just heard.

And found—so it is with every one who