

opponents to search them. It is never replied "These lists do not exist;" (5) Augustus compiled a summary of the resources of the empire which must have been based upon such a census as this; (6) Josephus relates that there was much agitation among the Jews shortly before the death of Herod, but does not mention the cause. It may have arisen from opposition to this census as to the subsequent one mentioned in Acts 5; 37. 2. The first enrollment made—(R. V.)—This clearly points to a second (Acts 5; 37.) Other translations are made with a view of obviating the difficulty connected with the verse (1) "This enrollment was first made" i. e. did not take effect until Quirinus, etc. But this idea would have been expressed in a different manner; (2) "Before Quirinus was governor, etc." This is not an impossible rendering of "first" but is awkward and unusual. The difficulty lies in the fact that Quirinus was governor in A. D. 6 and there is no record of his having been governor in B. C. 4. A German critic, A. W. Zumpt, has shown that it is highly probable that he was twice governor. He was honored with a "Triumph" in A. D. 1 or 2, for conquering some hostile tribes in the province of Syria, and the war in which these victories were won must have occurred about B. C. 4. The general of the army would also be governor of the province. Syria—Although Judea was ruled by its own king, it was more or less under the oversight of the Roman governors of Syria. 3. His own city—In Palestine the Jewish method was followed. Each person repaired to the family head-quarters to be enrolled. 4. Bethlehem—"House of bread" called also Ephrath, or Ephratah, "Fruitful." 1 Sam. 16: 1; Micah 5; 2; John 7: 42. Galilee was the most fertile and prosperous part of Palestine. Nazareth was about 70 miles north of Jerusalem and Bethelam 6 miles south. Lineage—R. V. "family." The nation was divided into tribes, these into families, and these again into houses. See Matt. 1: 16; Luke 1: 27. 5. Mary, who was betrothed to him—R. V.—She was legally, but not actually, his wife (Matt. 1: 24, 25.) The law did not require Mary to go with her husband. She may have thought of the prophecy and desired to fulfil it, at any rate God overruled her actions so as to bring it about that her child should be born at Bethlehem. She too was of the "house and lineage of David." (ch. 1: 32.) 7. Firstborn—"Although this term may undoubtedly be used of an only child, such use is necessarily always connected with the expectation of others to follow, and can no longer have place when the whole course of events is before the writer and no others have followed. The combination of this consideration with the fact that brethren of our Lord are brought forward in this gospel in close connection with his mother, make it as certain as any implied fact can be that these children were the children of Mary herself." (Alford.) "The evangelists could not well have used this term of Jesus if they had known that Mary had no other children." (Schaff.) Swaddling clothes—lit. "she swaddled him." i. e. wrapped around the body and limbs a long strip of linen about four inches wide. Mary seems to have been without the attendance so necessary at such a time. Manger—Ancient tradition states that the stable was a cave. "The monks of Bethlehem show a grotto beneath the great Christian church, lined with marble, which they claim to be the stable where the infant Christ was laid. I believe that this tradition is better founded than those of most holy places. The caravansera, or inn, would naturally be where this is, just outside of the little town. It was founded by Chimham, son of Barzillai, in the days of David (2 Sam. 19: 37; 38; Jer. 41: 17,) and was scarcely likely to be changed up to the time of the Roman rule, when the early Christians consecrated it as a church. There are many natural grottoes on the slope of the hill; and we frequently see in other places that the caves near a caravansera have been enlarged and used as stables. The stable is very unlike ours. At the end farthest from the door is always an elevated dais or platform, usually made by enlarging the cavern, but leaving the floor of the platform about three or four feet higher than the area. In front of it is a long trough hollowed out, reaching from end to end,—the manger. The forage is stored on this platform, out of reach of the cattle, and is pushed into the long manger as required. Here the camel-drivers usually sleep, close to their animals. Now the inn being full, Joseph and Mary would be compelled to avail themselves of this shelter, and to sojourn on this platform. Naturally, when the child was born, the manger would suggest itself as the only cradle available, where the mother could tend him lying by her side, and wrapped, as is still the universal Eastern custom, in a series of bandages from head to foot, like a mummy, till the babe looks like some limb newly set and bandaged with surgical skill." (Canon Tristram.) Dr. Thompson in "The Land and the Book" says, that such mangers make very excellent cradles indeed, and that his children have very often slept in them while spending the summer among the hills. Inn—This was generally a quadrangular court-yard surrounded by rooms, or alcoves, the paved floor of which was raised a foot or more above the central area. In these the travellers found shelter, providing for, and waiting upon themselves.

II. THE ANGEL'S SONG. 8. In the same country—rather "in the same place," i. e. near Bethlehem. Shepherds—The sheep intended for sacrifice in the temple were pastured near Bethlehem. "Here on the road to Jerusalem, stood Migdal-Edgar, 'the watch-tower of the flock, the station where the shepherds watched the flocks destined for the daily sacrifice in the temple. Animals straying from Jerusalem on any side, so far as to Migdal-Edgar were confiscated to the temple service. It was a settled conviction among the Jews that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, and that previously he was to be an-