

# For the Sabbath School.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON I.—JULY 1.—LUKE II., 1-16.

(The Birth of Jesus.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke ii: 2.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.—Vs. 6, 7. At Bethlehem Joseph and Mary found the place so crowded that even in the inn there was no room for them. Wrapped him in swaddling clothes, not clothes regularly made, but strips of cloth three or four inches wide and several feet long, wound around the child. And laid him in a manger, etc. Bethlehem was a poor place, and its inn was probably a mere *khan* or *caravanserai*, which is an enclosed space surrounded by open recesses of which the paved floor (*ecwar*) is raised a little above the ground.

The Divine Providence. We should mark the marvellous example of the Divine Providence in thus guiding Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at this time so that by a decree beyond their control they are brought to Bethlehem, and without intention on their part or on the part of the Roman authorities the child of a Nazareth mother is born in Bethlehem as was foretold by the prophet (Micah v: 2.)

No Room for Them in the Inn. So often in our lives, in our hearts, in our business, are crowds of worldly things but no room for Jesus, for his service, for prayer and communion with him. But really Jesus takes up no room, where he is there is room for all that is good, and he transfigures and blesses all things in his presence.

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS.—Vs. 8-14. And there were in the same country. In the fields near Bethlehem. Shepherds abiding in the field, with their flocks. There are no detached farmhouses in Palestine, as with us, but the farmers live in villages, and hence would have to abide in the fields to watch their flocks. Keeping watch over their flock by night. Thieves, wild beasts, and the dangers of the rough precipices form the chief reasons for a night-watch over the flock.

Note that the Gospel Message was sent first to the poor. Not to royal personages but to pious laboring men, busy with their daily duties. “In the pedigree of heaven, an emperor reckons no higher than a slave.” A gospel for the poor is a gospel for all men.

Note also that this great religious blessing came to the shepherds, while employed about their daily work. The best place in all the world to be, is at the post of duty. Nowhere else can such blessings, temporal or spiritual, be fairly looked for.

And, lo, the angel, not “the” but “an” angel, of the Lord, one sent from heaven, came upon them. The word does not signify that the angel stood above them. It is our (French) *survenir*, to come unexpectedly. It indicates a sudden but actual appearance. And the glory of the Lord. The radiant brightness which in all ages has been the best symbol and manifestation of God’s nature. And they were sore afraid. Literally, *feared a great fear*.

And the angel said . . . Fear not. The glad tidings of a Saviour, bringing light and love, a Father in heaven, and forgiveness of sins, can alone take away all fear from the soul. I bring you good tidings of great joy. The best tidings the world ever heard. To all people. Of all ages, all nations, all classes, all colors.

For unto you is born . . . a Saviour. One who shall save them from their sins. Christ. “The Anointed One,” the Messiah, whom they had long been hoping and praying for.

And this shall be a sign unto you, that the words spoken were true. Ye shall find the babe (“a” babe).

And suddenly, as if revealed by a flash of lightning. A multitude of the heavenly host; an organized army. Joining with the first angel to show the interest all heaven has in the coming of the Saviour. Praising

God. Even the angels could find nothing more worthy of praise than God’s love in the salvation of men.

Glory to God, expressing both the fact that God is glorious in the work of salvation, and the feeling that would express and make known his glory. In the highest. In the highest strains. Only the most exquisite music and song is worthy to express this theme. And on earth peace, including all welfare and blessing, here and hereafter. Good-will toward men. There are two readings of this phrase in the original, which differ from each other by only a single letter,—s; but that letter makes a great difference in the meaning.

SEEKING AND FINDING THE SAVIOUR.—Vs. 15, 16. Let us now go. At once, without delay. So should we ever seek the Saviour.

They came with haste. Showing their zeal and ardor, as well as faith. And found, everything just as the angels had told them;—the Saviour had come

## Christian Endeavor.

### Daily Readings.

First Day—What is at stake?—Neh. iv: 7-14.

Second Day—A lost country.—Pr. cxxxvii: 1-9.

Third Day—Gods of gold.—Exod. xxxii: 30-35.

Fourth Day—Unshepherded sheep.—Matt. ix: 32-38.

Fifth Day—Better than country.—Gen. xii: 1-9.

Sixth Day—Beulah land.—Isa. lxii: 1-12.

Seventh Day—WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY DONE FOR OUR COUNTRY?—Ps. xxxiii: 8-22.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, July 1.—“What has Christianity done for our Country?” Ps. xxxiii: 8-12. This is a splendid subject for Dominion Day. Too often in our national celebrations are we apt to describe our country’s greatness to the character of her people, or the wisdom of her government; forgetting that the people’s conception of God and His truth, is the limit of the excellence of its citizenship, and that a government is good only in so far as its legislation harmonizes with the spirit of the law of God. Christianity has done much, we might say all, for our country. Its principles underlie our commercial world, and make it sound in the midst of depression and failure; its teachings permeate our social world and safe-guard the sacred relations of marriage and the home; its truths bear sway in our civic life, and protect the Sabbath in its sanctity. Employer and employee work in harmony under its blessed influence. Labor tyranny and liquor traffic tremble before its frown. Its ambassadors in the newer parts of our land are laying a foundation of truth and righteousness, for a coming great Canadian people, and the mighty influence of Christian Endeavor is rearing and educating a generation of Christian citizens under whose rule our land must prosper. Thank God we are citizens of a land where His name is honored and His truth revered.

“CHRIST FOR THE WORLD.”—Matt. xi: 28; xxviii: 18-20; Mark xvi: 15-20; Luke xxiv: 46-48; John i: 9-12, 29; iii: 14-17; x: 16; xxi: 15-17; Rom. x: 13-15; Rev. xxii: 17.

“FELLOW-CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS.”—1 Cor. i: 2; Eph. ii: 6, 19-22; Phil. iii: 20; Heb. iii: 1, 2, 5, 6; xi: 13-16, 39, 40; xii: 1, 2, 22, 23; 1 John i: 1, 2; Rev. xxii: 14.

### Pray for Cleveland!

The Convention at Cleveland needs your prayers. Twenty-five thousand young people without God’s Spirit in control, are in awful danger of going irremediably wrong; but twenty-five thousand young people filled with and led by the Holy Ghost are an unlimited power for the Glory of God. Therefore pray for an outpouring of the Spirit on those who attend. Pray individually, pray unitedly, pray without ceasing. Cleveland may be a second Pentecost, if the Holy Ghost is honored. Let those who cannot go have a “stay-at-home” convention, and beseech God for blessing. Pray for Cleveland!