

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS. NEW
TESTAMENT. NO. 1.
FOR THE USE OF THE IRISH
NATIONAL SCHOOLS**

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VARIOUS

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NEW TESTAMENT.

No. I.

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SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

NEW TESTAMENT.

LESSON I.

The annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Saviour, and the annunciation of the birth of the Saviour Christ himself.

FROM LUKE I.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us; according as they who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, have delivered them to us; it seemed good to me also, having gained exact knowledge of every thing from the very first, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the certainty of those things in which thou hast been instructed.

There was, in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest, named Zacharias, of the course of Abia,* and his wife was of the daughters

* *Of the course of Abia, &c.*—By the appointment of David, the descendants of Aaron were divided into twenty-four families, who attended at the temple in rotation. Of these families the eighth was Abia, from whom was descended this Zacharias, who was at this time attending at the temple in his turn.

of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and righteousness of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

And it came to pass, that when he executed the priest's office before God, in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, it was his lot to offer incense, going into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people was praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zacharias seeing him was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John;* and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord, and shall drink no wine or strong drink;† and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; and he shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the unbelieving to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my

* *John*—Grace of the Lord.

† *Shall drink no wine, &c.*—Persons who took upon them a vow to abstain from wine and other intoxicating liquors, and to submit to certain other privations, were called Nazarites. Sometimes children were dedicated to be Nazarites to God from their infancy.

wife is advanced in years. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel who stand before God: and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak, until the day when these things shall come to pass; because thou hast not believed* my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time.

And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and wondered that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out he could not speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he made signs to them, and remained dumb. And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And after these days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days when he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [And the angel saluted her as one peculiarly blessed of God, and intimated to her that, although she was a virgin, she should bear a son, by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, and that she should call his name JESUS, † which name signifies Saviour. This name was to be given to him, because, as St. Matthew tells us, he was to save his people from

* *Because thou hast not believed, &c.*—Zacharias might not be blameable in doubting, for what he saw might have been an illusion: but he should have waited the event, which would have decided. Craving, however, an immediate sign, he received one, which was also a rebuke.

† *Jesus.*—The same name with Joshua.

their sins. The same Evangelist says, that Jesus was to be born of a virgin, that an ancient prophecy might be fulfilled which said, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God with us.'*

When the angel had finished his annunciation] Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she cried out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she that believed: that those things which were told her of the Lord shall be performed.†

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things for me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them

* Matt. i. 21—23. Isaiah, vii. 14.

† *Blessed is she that believed.*—Elizabeth probably remembered that her own husband Zacharias had not believed what the angel said; and declares the superior blessedness of Mary, who did believe.

that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed might with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted the lowly. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped Israel his servant, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

WORDS, &c. TO BE EXPLAINED IN LESSON I.

Annunciation,	Incense,	Salutation,
Narrative,	Tarried,	Imagination,
Accomplished,	Esposued,	Abode.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.

- WHAT is the subject of this Lesson?
 To whom did Luke write this account?
 What reason does he give for writing it?
 Who was king of Judea when Zacharias was priest?
 What was the name of his wife?
 What is the character given of them?
 How was he engaged when the angel appeared unto him?
 What did the angel say?
 What did Zacharias say to this?
 Why was he to be dumb for a time?
 Where did Mary reside when the angel appeared to her?
 To whom was she espoused?
 How did the angel address her?
 What more did he say to her?
 Whom did Mary go to visit?
 What did Elisabeth say to her?
 How did Mary reply to this?
 How long did Mary remain with Elisabeth?

LESSON II.

The birth of John the Baptist.

FROM LUKE I.

Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had showed great mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass that, on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child; and they were giving him the name Zacharias after the name of his father. And his mother answering, said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asking for a writing-table, wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue was loosed, and he spoke, praising God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad over all the hill-country of Judea. And all they that had heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What will this child be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; and as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the kindness to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he