

birth they proclaim. That is the reason why St. Augustine cries out with admiration: "Who can this King be, so little, and yet so great, who speaks not yet on earth, and who already proclaims his laws in the heavens?"

Obedient to the call of the new-born Saviour inviting them to salvation, Caspar, Melchior and Balthassar have seen his star in the East and have come to adore him.

It was happy for them that they had hastened to come; a few days later, they would not have found him, for warned by an Angel of the persecution of Herod, the Holy Family had fled into Egypt. Every body remembers the closing circumstances of that sublime pilgrimage of all Christian generations to the cradle of their Saviour; how the star first led the wise men to Jerusalem, so that from the very lips of the Doctors of the Law they might learn the precise spot where the Redeemer was to be born. Foolish priests, they read in the Holy Books the sentence of their own condemnation. "The Saviour, say they, is to be born at Bethlehem, town of Juda," and they have not faith enough to go and adore him. "Unfortunate souls, exclaims St. Augustine, that die of thirst after having shown to others the fountain of life; they are like those mile-stones along the high road that point out the way to travellers, and yet remain insensible and motionless."

We also remember the anxiety which these tidings caused Herod, who feared to find a pretender to his ill-gotten throne in the newly born King of the Jews. Insane fear that suggested the massacre of the Innocents, and set the seal to his reprobation.

Listen to the touching address of a Father of the Church, St. Fulgentius. "O King, whence cometh thy trouble, and why fearest thou! That King, whose birth the Magi have announced, has not come to combat living, but to triumph by dying. If thou didst believe in Him, thou woldst one day reign with Him. Although the Kingdom of this Child is not of this