

(Rev. Ver.); a hypocritical trick, and not a clever one either. **Star . . . went before them.** They did not know the way, but they followed their heavenly guide. **Stood over . . . the young child.** Now the goal of their quest is reached. **Rejoiced with exceeding great joy**; as well they might, having found their way to Him whose birth was "good tidings of great joy", Luke 2 : 10.

III WORSHIPED.—11, 12. Came into the house. On their return from the presentation in the temple (see on v. 1), Mary and Joseph, with the child Jesus, seem to have been received into the house of some friend. **Fell down . . . worshipped . . . opened their treasures** (Rev. Ver.); doing homage with body and soul and goods. **Gifts.** It was the Eastern custom to approach a king with full hands. **Gold**; as to a king, for tribute to the kings of those days was paid in gold. **Frankincense.** Incense was offered to God (Ex. 30 : 6, 7), whose Son Jesus was. **Myrrh**; used in embalming the bodies of the dead. It has been said, therefore, that these three offerings pointed to Jesus respectively as King, as God, and as one who was to die. Frankincense and myrrh were both sweet-smelling gums distilled from trees. V. 12 tells of God's warning the **Wise Men** in a dream to return to their own country by another route than that leading through Jerusalem, and thus Herod's trick was defeated.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON



BETHLEHEM, the birthplace of Jesus, is situated about 6 miles southwest of Jerusalem, on a high ridge with terraced slopes. The name means, "House of Bread", which truly describes the fertility of the neighborhood. The hillsides around furnish pasture for countless flocks of sheep and goats. The valleys below produce abundant crops of wheat and barley. On the terraces leading up to the town grow olives,

almonds, pomegranates, figs and the finest of grapes. The modern town has but one main street, largely occupied by workshops, which are little more than arches open to the street. The population is differently given as from 4,000 to 8,000.

LESSON QUESTIONS

For whom was Matthew's Gospel first written? With what purpose? How does it deal with the descent of Jesus? How with the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him?

1 Give the probable date of Jesus' birth. Describe Bethlehem? Why is it here called "of Judea"? Who was king of Judea at this time? By whom had he been appointed? In what respects was he great? Who came to Jerusalem? Whence did they come? What did they profess to read from the stars? When did some Greeks come seeking Jesus? (John 12: 20-22.) What passage may have suggested that the Wise Men were kings? (Isa. 60 : 3.)

2-6 What did the Wise Men affirm? What did they ask? From whom did Herod seek information? What did these tell him about the birthplace of the Messiah? On what Old Testament prophecy was this information based?

7-10 What inquiry did Herod make about "the star"? Explain his purpose in so doing. What did he bid the Wise Men do? What did he pretend that he wisd to do? How were the Wise Men guided to Bethlehem?

11, 12 In what ways did they do homage to Jesus? What offerings did they present? Which of these pointed to Jesus as King? Which as God? Which to His death? By what means was Herod's trick defeated?

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Proofs that Jesus was (1) divine, (2) human.
2. The difference between Christ's kingdom and worldly kingdoms.

A LESSON FOR LIFE

"That means that star", the shepherds said,
 "What brightens through the rocky glen"
 And angels answering overhead,
 Sang, 'Peace on earth, good-will to men.'

"And they who do their souls no wrong,
 But keep at eve the faith of morn,
 Shall daily hear the angels' song,
 'To-day the Prince of Peace is born.'"
 —Lowell

Prove from Scripture—That Jesus is a mighty Saviour.

FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

1. What started the Wise Men on their quest for Jesus?
2. Where and how were they pointed to Bethlehem as His birthplace?
3. What was Herod's plot, and how was it foiled?