

Palestine throughout Syria, and thence to Babylon, Persia, and the entire "East" (4) Their guide. While in the East, the Magi saw HIS STAR, probably in the west toward Palestine. There are various learned theories concerning this "star." We prefer to consider it a luminous star-shaped orb divinely revealed to these inquiring Magi, and divinely moved to guide them; a special meteor employed for the special purpose of revealing the incarnate God whom these priestly pilgrims SEEK TO WORSHIP. (See Illustration 3.) Having conversed with Herod, the Magi are sent TO BETHLEHEM to SEARCH for Jesus. THE STAR now reappeared to their vision, and WENT and STOOD OVER WHERE THE.....CHILD WAS. Evidently the star or meteor could not be very high in the air. Verse 11 of this chapter tells us the child was now in a "house," not a "stable." (See Illustration 4.)

4. THE REJOICING WORSHIPERS, ver. 10. (1) *The greatness of their joy.* EXCEEDING GREAT JOY. Language could not be stronger, and doubtless their joy was as great as their humanity could then bear—only less than when they saw the infant Jesus himself. The re-appearance of the star re-assured them that their long pilgrimage was not in vain. (2) *The ground of their joy.* Their journey was not one of vain curiosity. They came to worship. Their grateful hearts pour out adoration, while their hands dispense their gifts—"myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king, frankincense to God." (See Illustrations 5, 6, and 7.)

5. THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, Mal. iv. 2. (1) *Who?* Christ is not only a star in our night, but he is the glorious Sun that turns our night into day. (2) *How is Christ like the sun?* As the sun lights the entire globe, so Jesus is the light of the world. All prophecy pointed to Christ—from Moses to Malachi, from Eden to Bethlehem and Calvary. He is the centre of attraction, the source of heat. *Life, motion, beauty, strength, glory* come from him. (See Illustration 8.)

#### ILLUSTRATIONS FOR LESSON I.

1. Christ, though a babe, was a King. He was King of kings. Let us never forget this fact. One day, when Latimer was about to speak before King Henry VIII., he thus soliloquized aloud, "Latimer, Latimer, Latimer, take care of what you say, for the great King Henry VIII. is here;" then he paused, and

proceeded, "Latimer, Latimer, Latimer, take care what you say, for the great King of kings is here."

2. The Grand Seigneur, when he perceived with what acclamations of all the people his son Mustapha was entertained upon his return from Persia, commanded him presently to be slain before him, and this oracle to be pronounced by the priest, "*Unus in cælo Deus, unus in terris sultanus*"—One God in heaven, one sultan on earth! And it is true that two suns in one hemisphere have ever been portentous; the crowns of kings and princes will not admit of rivals; that kingdom can never stand where are two supreme and uncontrollable commanders. —Spencer.

3. It was not simply a star which the Magi saw; it was the star, HIS STAR; the Star of King Jesus. Just as it guided these foot-sore and weary pilgrims to the Jewish capital to find the Messiah, so Christ himself, the STAR OF BETHLEHEM, shall guide a weary world to the New Jerusalem, to the palace of angels and God. There shall his faithful pilgrims rest, and there shall they see him as he is, and be like him, and reign with him for ever and ever.

4. However violently the winds may blow and the storm rage upon the sea, the needles of the compass remain immovable, because they are governed not by the winds of the earth, but according to the influence of the heavens. Just so good men seeking truth and righteousness are governed, not by the agitations of this life, but by celestial influences. Herod and all Jerusalem may rage; but the Magi, heaven-directed, calmly journey on.

5. The Gentile Balaam, whose dwelling was at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, prophesied of Christ, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob." Num. xxiv. 17. And Gentile Magi are the very first to see the sign-star. All nations shall yet come to its rising, and the whole earth shall worship before him who is the "Bright and Morning Star."

6. Carnal joy is a flash and away; leaves the mind in more extreme and deeper darkness; blasts the heart and affections with all spiritual deadness and desolations.....But godly joy is like the light of the sun, which, though it may for a time be overcast with clouds of temptations, mists of troubles, persecutions, and darkness of melancholy, yet it ordinarily breaks out again with more sweetness and splendor when the storm is over.—Bolton.