

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

On the feast of the Epiphany, the Church solemnizes the manifestation of our Lord. As, on the holy day of Christmas, Jesus manifested himself to the Jews, in the person of the shepherds who come to pay him the homage of their simple and confiding hearts, likewise, on this day, to the first-fruits of the Gentiles, to the wise Kings coming from the far East, he shows himself as the heir of the prophetic promises, as the true Desired one of the nations.

Our readers are too familiar with that sublime and consoling page of the Gospel narrative to allow of our recounting any of its details. Who has not read in Sacred History, or in the new Testament, the marvellous tale of our vocation to Faith? For we must not forget that we are not the descendants of the Jews, but of the Gentiles, of those nations once seated in the shadow of death, whose delegates, in the person of the Kings from the East, were happy enough, on this thrice holy day, to behold the features of Emmanuel, of God born among men to enlighten and save them. A star, of striking brilliancy, has led them to the grotto of Bethlehem. That star appeared to them shining as the sun in the cloudless sky of their country. Learned as they were, they knew the fragments of traditional truth that each people preserves more or less intact in the treasure of its religious belief.

A far-off echo of Balaam's prophecy awakens in their minds the memory of that star which is to come forth from Jacob, of him who, of the tribe of Juda, is to be the Ruler of nations. At the same time that the eyes of their body are enlightened by the rays of that star, the matchless radiancy of the Sun of Justice already commences to illumine the eyes of their soul.

Who can describe the eloquence of that star whose silent brilliancy leads away, far from home and country, our ancestors in the faith? Ah! its rays borrow their virtue from the God made man whose