

This mode of referring to the Old Testament prophecies will be observed in other instances in the New Testament.

Ver. 8. *that I may come and worship him also.*] Herod here exhibits the fox-like character attributed by our Lord to his son Herod Antipas. It was probably from his infirmity and old age that he did not proceed at once himself to Bethlehem, situated only six miles south of Jerusalem, to examine into the matter. The manner in which he sends the Magi to Bethlehem, sufficiently shows that they were not of that regal rank which after ages attributed to them.

Ver. 9. *the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*] This supernatural luminous object had appeared to them first when they were in their own country, beckoning them towards Jerusalem: now it is seen by them again, indicating by its peculiar movement the very house where "he who was born king of the Jews" was to be found. He who was "the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning Star," caused this miraculous symbol of Himself to appear, for the conviction of these first representatives of the nations who were so soon to be summoned to unite themselves to the true Israel, the Church founded by the Messiah.

UNPROFITABLE READING.

A giddy, reckless person, having a variety of seeds at command, sows them indiscriminately in his garden. What is the result? When autumn arrives, the foolish creature finds that his ground has produced much that is useless—much that is positively poisonous—and comparatively little that can be turned to profitable account.

Aptly does this illustrate the evils resulting from an injudicious and aimless course of reading, especially when indulged in by the young.

If in the spring-tide of existence, the soil of the mind is impregnated with a host of heterogeneous ideas, culled at random from the wilderness of general literature, can the issue be ought but calamitous? No nourishment, suited to fit and brace the

man for the stern battle of life, is obtained. Noxious weeds—or, at the best, trifling, flaunting flowers—occupy that space in the mind, which should have been stored with substantial fruits. Thus advancing years behold the triller, comparatively speaking, an intellectual child!—a child, not in innocence, but in imbecility. He is a moral cumber of the ground—a fruitless vine—and the risk is perilous that the great Husbandman will finally seal his doom, with the awful fiat, "*Cut him down!*"

LENT.

That period of the year has again come round when the Church calls upon her children, in an especial manner, to practice the duties of fasting and humiliation.

Lent is an ancient Saxon word, signifying spring. It commences on Ash Wednesday; so called because the early Christians were accustomed on that day to sprinkle ashes on their heads when they were penitent, and desirous to be again admitted into the Church. The last week of Lent is named Passion week, to remind us of the bitter and mysterious sufferings which the Lord Jesus Christ endured on behalf of sinners. Forty days is the duration of this solemn season, because for that space of time our blessed Redeemer fasted in the wilderness, prior to his temptation.

Whilst it is the bounden duty of Christians frequently to practice abstinence, in imitation of our Saviour and his Apostles, they should do so in an especial manner at this period. Wisely does the Church require this at their hands, because such is our natural disinclination to deny ourselves, and take up the cross and follow Jesus, that without some such specific admonishment, we would be apt to forget that this obligation lay upon us.

If we rightly employ the forty days of Lent, the salutary effects will be experienced throughout the remainder of the ecclesiastical year. Self-examination, and the mortification of our appetites, will become habitual, and more and more easy of performance; and what at first appeared a task, will eventually become a hallowed pleasure.