

5. It was faith which remained unchilled by what it found—jealousy in the king, lack of interest in the priesthood, selfishness among the people. (Verse 3.)

6. It was faith which overcame every obstacle in the path of its purpose to find Christ. (Verse 8.)

7. It was faith which accepted humbly and gratefully the divine guidance and the divine plan. (Verse 10.)

8. It was faith which offered not only formal honor, but practical gifts to Christ. (Verse 11.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

WHAT is the matter with Herod? His wicked eyes have a look of trouble. He walks up and down the floor of his palace, muttering, shaking his head, wondering what he would better do.

To go back a little way, there came one day some men riding into town—men on camels, men who plainly had been making a rough journey. They said they had seen a star in the east, and it was the star heralding the birth of the King of the Jews! What, that beautiful white star up to which Judea had been looking, wondering at its strange, rare luster, at its size and significance! The very star. And those men alighted from their camels and wanted to know where this infant King might be, as they wished to worship him.

Another king of the Jews, another than Herod? What does it mean? thinks Herod, walking the palace floor. Ah, he has it! He stops, smiles, and nods his head in assent. A lucky thought! He will summon the chief priests and scribes, and ask about certain old Jewish prophecies telling of Messiah, and find out about the place where he is to be born and—then what will he do? I don't know, but you may. Let an old wolf alone to find out a way for strangling babes in the cradle, if need be.

The chief priests and scribes gather. I can imagine that they come in fear, perhaps wondering if the old wolf may want their heads. No, it is a very innocent question he asks—where will Christ be born? Their countenances brighten. Where will the Anointed be born, the Messiah, the Holy One of God, the great King of Israel, the Ruler of all nations? I seem to see them standing erect, in great and conscious dignity, and as his eyes kindle some one repeats that grand old prophecy crowning little Bethlehem with imperishable honor. Herod looks solemn, dismisses the assembly, and calls in the wise men. What a contrast between that king thinking evil in his heart and those strange travelers summoned from their homes to follow a beautiful star, and with self-denying gifts to honor their Lord!

When did they first see the star? he would know. They tell the strange story, so like a romance. He nods. He has it all arranged. Let

them go down to Bethlehem, find the infant King, bring Herod word again, and then he will go down and worship! A wolf bowing by the side of a baby in harmless adoration! The innocents—he may call them—turn away. Does any one of them look back to see a wolf rolling his wicked eyes and snapping his red jaws? Come away, Magi! Let the palace door swing quickly between you and your enemy!

It is night.

The land is still as with the blessing of God. The stars come up above the hills, and wheeling into line join in the shining procession that all night will march through the heavens. And there is the beautiful star that won the love of the Magi in the Eastern land. Southward it beckons them, Bethlehemward. I hear the footfall of the camels as the Magi ride away in the still, starlight night. And at last they see the shadowy roofs of the little town that Ruth loved, that David honored, and that a baby has made immortal. But where? the wise men are asking, looking along the line of some narrow, ancient street, then up at the beautiful star. Perhaps, if there, we would have given up the search. No; faith is leading these men, and love surely finds.

Ah, there it is—the house where, shrined in the arms of the beautiful mother, the end of the wise men's loving quest, Israel's Hope, the world's Redeemer! What wonder that they bow in loving worship and heap their golden, fragrant gifts!

When they mount again their camels does the star say, "Ride to Jerusalem?" No; some word of the Lord bids them not go home by way of a wolf's den. Ah, wolf, with merciless, murderous spring, when you light at Bethlehem your coveted prey will not be there—only a baby's empty nest.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The easy connection between the divine and the human is one of the commonest subjects of faith in the whole Old World. Nimrod was on earth a mighty hunter, and passed away to become a god. Herod made an extraordinary oration, and the people said he was a god and not a man. Paul shook a serpent from him unharmed, and the people said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Simon Magus was a single attribute of God, omnipotence incarnated—"the great power of God." Fohi, of China, is reputed as having been born of a virgin; the Schakoeff of Thibet also. The Hindoos think the divinity has been incarnated nine special times, and they are looking for the tenth, or holy, incarnation, which is to inaugurate a millennium, or, rather, endless peace and happiness. This is to occur at Sambhal, within the bounds of the North India Conference, and this is rapidly displacing holy Benares in the Hindoo mind. It kindles expecta-