

I. SAFETY IN EGYPT. 13. Trace on a map the route taken by the wise men. Doubtless they told Joseph about their interview with Herod and he, knowing his character, would be less trustful of his good intentions than the magi. Their perplexity would lead to prayer, and the answer given to the visitors not to return to Herod would raise the anxiety of Joseph and Mary to the highest pitch. They were not left long in suspense. The dream may have come the very night after the departure of the wise men. **The angel**—(R. V.) "an" angel. Recall the angel ministrations in connection with the life of Jesus. **The young Child and his mother**—"It is a most striking fact throughout the Gospel history, that every other person sinks into comparative insignificance, and all events and persons alike find their importance only in connection with Jesus." (S. S. Times.) **Flee**—**Escape**. **Egypt**—The journey would not occupy more than a few days as it was only about 250 miles. The roads were good and safe. Egypt was a Roman province outside of Herod's jurisdiction. Many Jews were settled there and they would be among friends.

14. **When he arose**—lit. "having arisen he took." **By night**—That very night. They would not delay an instant after receiving such a warning. Tradition says that they went to Matarea, near Heliopolis (or On.) Trace on a map the road they would take.

15. **The death of Herod**—About April 1st, A. U. C., 750. (B. C., 4) Shortly before the passover, which fell on April 12th. Dr. Geikie thinks that his death may have occurred three years later, and that the holy family remained in Egypt for that length of time. **That it might be fulfilled**—Matthew is found of noting fulfillments of prophecy. The aim of his Gospel is to shew that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and that the Old Testament finds its accomplishment in him. In Hosea 11: 1 these words refer to Israel, and speak of its deliverance as a past event. They are based upon Ex. 4: 22, 23. How then can they be considered a prophecy? "The adoption of Israel as the son of Jehovah, which began with its deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and was completed in the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, forms the first stage in the carrying out of the divine work of salvation, which was completed in the incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of mankind from death and ruin. The relation which Jehovah sustained with that nation, was a preparation for the union of God with humanity in the person of Jesus, therefore the events of their history become types and material prophecies of him." (Keil.) So close is the parallel between the history of Israel and the life of Christ that the Jews are able to satisfy themselves with understanding all the prophecies which we call "Messianic," as referring to the nation collectively, and not to a person.

ed—So Herod would say, and his rage would be all the fiercer. **Slew all the male children** (R. V.)—In a population of about 2,000 there would not have been more than 25 or 30 boys of the age mentioned. **From two years and under**—We cannot infer from this that the star appeared just two years previously, for Herod would very likely make his reckoning ample to cover more than the time. The truth of this story has been assailed because Josephus makes no mention of it. But the order may have been executed secretly, and the circumstances have been unnoticed amid the more notorious outrages of this reign. The historian of that time would not have considered it of so much importance as we who regard it with Christian sympathies. Even if Josephus had known all about it, he could not have narrated it without saying more about Christ than was to him desirable. "The silence of Josephus on the subject of Christianity was as deliberate as it was dishonest." (Farrar.) **The coasts thereof**—(R. V.) "the border," the neighborhood. Compare the French *côte*, as used of the suburbs of Montreal.

17. **Jeremy**—Jeremiah 31: 15. Rachel was to the Jew the mother of all mothers, the type of mother-love. Her sorrow, like that of Niobe in classic fable, is the emblem of maternal grief. Read her story in Gen. 30. The reference in the prophecy is to the captives carried away into Babylon by Nebuzardan B. C. 586. See on verse 15 for the principle on which this is called a fulfilment of prophecy. See how much your scholars know about Rachel.

18. **Rama**—5 miles north of Jerusalem (Jer. 40: 1.) Here the captives were assembled preparatory to their journey to Babylon. Rama was in the tribe of Ephraim, but was originally assigned to Benjamin (Josh. 18: 25.) Hence the appropriateness of the reference to Rachel, Benjamin's mother. Bethlehem was near Rachel's tomb (Gen. 35: 19) and so again her name is suggested in connection with the scene of sorrow. The conception of both prophet and evangelist is one of great poetic beauty.

"Although doubts have been thrown on the Massacre of the Innocents, it is profoundly in accordance with all that we know of Herod's character. The master-passions of that able but wicked prince were a most unbounded ambition, and a most excruciating jealousy. His whole career was red with the blood of murder. He had massacred priests and nobles; he had decimated the Sanhedrin; he had caused the High Priest, his brother-in-law, the young and noble Aristobulus, to be drowned in pretended sport before his eyes; he had ordered the strangulation of his favorite wife, the beautiful Asmonæan princess Mariamne, though she seems to have been the only human being whom he passionately loved. His sons Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater—his uncle Joseph—Antigonos and Alexander, the uncle and father of his wife—his mother-in-law Alexandra—his kinsman Cortobanus—his friends Desitheus and Gadias, were but a few