

Christ, we are none of his. The tumult and the turmoil of these last years make it plain beyond any peradventure, that the supreme need of the world is a revival of the mind of Christ, that men and women and children everywhere should begin to think as he thought, to feel as he felt, to purpose as he purposed in the days of his flesh. Oh for a Bethlehem, a Nazareth, a Capernaum in every heart!

V. 2. Who were the first to seek the Christ child? Pagan Wise Men emerging from the Orient. Already the words of the Master were being fulfilled, many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first—last in opportunity, but first in service. In this day we hear voices from unsuspected quarters avowing the necessity of a change of heart in our civilization,—bankers, heads of great corporations and others. Roger Robson, the celebrated statistician of the United States says that there are spiritual values behind all the stocks and bonds of the country,—spiritual values upon which all material values in the last analysis depend, and that for this reason, if for no other, every business man should make the church one of his main institutions. The wise men of business to-day are going even unto Bethlehem.

V. 3. Meantime what were the children of the kingdom doing? The scribes and pharisees were agitated, read the scriptures even, but joined themselves to no forward movement unto Bethlehem. So still, while it is possible to have the birth of a new spirit, a revival such as took place after the Napoleonic wars—church members are quite content to "sit up and sit" in agitation and amazement. Let us too go even into the centre of things. Let us go beyond the prayer, God be merciful to all the other sinners of our day. An ardent desire for a revival in the life of others is not enough. There will be no great movement of the human spirit God-ward until we have the cry of each, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Vs. 7, 8. Did any one oppose the coming of Jesus? Yes, Herod the king who feared that his vested interests might be threatened by the advent of another king of the Jews.

Evil institutions know instinctively that anything in the way of a revival is their enemy. The increased immodesty of our time, the energy with which the purveyors of harmful things push their commodities upon the markets of the world, and many other symptoms show that when the forces that start a forward movement to Bethlehem begin to operate it is not long before the devil sets in motion a backward movement to Sodom and Gomorrah.

V. 9. What guidance had these pagan sages? They were started to the place where they would be. In the inner firmament of the spirit there shines to-day as sure a light—the light of conscience kindled from God's holy word. Let us hitch every forward movement of the soul and of society to that brilliant star.

"O young mariner,
Down to the haven
Call your companions.
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin
After it, follow it,
Follow the gleam."

Vs. 11, 12. What did these Wise Men do when they discovered the coming king? They bowed down and worshiped. To him every knee should bow. The ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. Pringle, tells us that though he has met many men who find fault with the Church, he has yet to meet the man who finds fault with Jesus Christ. Not to find fault with him is something, but to surrender ourselves to him, as subjects to a king, is the full duty of every one. Let us now adore him and give ourselves wholly to him.

They also gave him gifts. All that we have, as well as all that we are, belong to him. If the Christian world gave anything like what should be given for the spread of the kingdom of God, there would be no need of "financial spasms" to catch up. Let us, according to our ability, bring our gifts to his house. The Lord has need of them.

Vs. 13, 14, 15. Man proposes and plots, but God disposes and overrules for good.