

proceeded to find the king. Those who have little light are often more anxious to find more light than those who have the fullest light. The heathen in their desire to know the truth about Jesus put even our Christians at home to shame. When the Magi found the king, they yielded him obeisance, then offered him gifts. Is this the proper order? What gifts has the king given us? What gifts may we give the king? (See Matt. 22:37; 25:31-46.)

This lesson may be used to show how the deepest quests of the heart shall find their fulfilment.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Question the scholars about what they consider the greatest event in the history of the world, and remind them that the reckoning of time from the birth of Christ in all Christian lands implies that that is the real beginning of history. Bring out that the ages preceding were a preparation for that great event, and that the ages succeeding have been a slow but gradual extension of the kingdom of Christ, who is destined to reign in every land under the sun. Note that our lesson embraces an Old Testament prophecy, and a New Testament passage containing the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy.

1. *The Prophecy*, Mal. 3:1-12. Bring out the leading features of this prophecy,—that the work of Christ would consist in purifying the world (vs. 1-4), in judging evil-doers (vs. 5-9), and in blessing those who do well, vs. 10-12. Point out the touch of severity about the picture of this prophecy, and refer to some Old Testament prophecies in which other aspects of Christ's character and mission are brought out, such as Gen. 12:3, in which the Messiah is represented as bringing blessings to all the world; and Isaiah, ch. 53, in which he is represented as giving himself a sacrifice for sinners; and Ps. 72:8, in which he is represented as ruling over the whole world.

Phillips Brooks used to say that the conception he got of Christ from the Gospels was that of a great dear figure standing with outstretched hands. No one could get so winning and wooing a conception of Christ's character from this Old Testament prophecy which we are studying, but we must not forget that Christ's hatred of sin sometimes led him

to manifest a tone of severity while living out his great life of love.

2. *The Beginning of the Fulfilment of this Prophecy*, Matt. 2:1-12. What length of time intervened between the prophecy and its fulfilment? Ask some one to tell the story of the Wise Men,—why they came, how they found their way, what religious inquiry they started at Jerusalem, the joy they experienced in finding the Christ, the warning they received. Note that this is only the beginning of the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy, that the prophecy is still being fulfilled in the history of the world, and that we can do something to help by making the little world of our influence more Christlike, by getting the Christmas song sung into the life of the world. Make clear that we need to get the reverent, loving, obedient, unselfish spirit of the Wise Men into our hearts, if Christmas is to be full of joy and helpfulness.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

Ask the scholars what was the greatest of Christmas gifts. In getting them to state their reasons point out that one proof for saying that Jesus was, is that men, who lived and died before he was born, longed to see him come. Prophet after prophet would have given anything to know Jesus as we know him to-day. Tell them that one who longed for his coming was Malachi, and get one to read Mal. 3:1. Then pass on to Matt. 2:1, 2 and 11, and show that when Jesus did come three of the Wise Men of his day went a long way to bring him precious gifts and to worship him. Surely these prophets and Wise Men teach us what a great gift Jesus was.

Direct attention to the word "King" in v. 2 and v. 3 of Matt., ch. 2. Here we have two kings placed side by side. Bring out the picture of the first king in v. 11, and of the second in vs. 3-8. Here we have a powerful, old king trying to kill a weak, baby king. Ask why Herod wished to kill Jesus. Point out as one reason, that Herod was afraid that, if Jesus lived, he would become king in the place of Herod. In other words, Herod was looking out for what he could get for himself, not for what was best for the Jews, or what was right. Contrast this grasping for self on the part of Herod with Jonathan's sacrifice for David,