

“No,” he said gravely, “I can’t laugh. Only ignorant folks laugh at what they do not understand—and often secretly *fear*.” He hesitated, seeming to cast about for the right words to use. Finally he said: “My mother was a great believer in the occult. She asked for and *received* the help of the invisible workers and she was one of the sanest, most wholesome-minded women I’ve ever known. She too believed in the evil forces and constantly wore a little emblem that she felt sure was potent against their malignancy. I think your grandmother’s death by fire was ordained

by the masters of destiny—a purification that enabled her to rid herself of bad karma carried over from past existencies. That much of my mother’s belief is also my own. Your Mam is probably one of the ordained Helpers by virtue of her tragic death.”

Then coming to my side he placed a small object in my hand. “It was my mother’s charm against the evil ones,” he said, “and I want you to have it.” Abruptly he left as if fearing to be thanked. I looked down at the tiny article which he had given me. It was a small golden pin shaped like a cross.

Esoteric Bible Studies

BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE

THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI, THE THREE WISE MEN.

TEXT

8. *And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.*

9. *When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*

10. *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

11. *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

—Matt. 2:8-11.

INTERPRETATION

The Gospels are formulae of Initiation as interpreted by the mystic Christian. The work of St. Matthew may well be termed the “Gospel of the Supreme Dedication,” and is the only one of the four which contains the story of the coming of the three Wise Men from the East. The word Magi in Persian means wise men.

An ancient commentary on St. Matthew says that the Star on its first appearance had the radiant form of a child

bearing a cross. The three Initiates, or Wise Men, on beholding the Star arose and joyously set forth on the long and perilous journey across the desert that led to Jerusalem. Upon arriving there, they inquired eagerly, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?” At this question Herod and all the city became interested. They inquired of the chief priests, saying, “Where shall the young King be born?” They answered: “In Bethlehem of Judea.”

Following the guidance of the Star

they came unto the little town of Bethlehem, and there what had they come for to see? Not a royal princeling born in a palace and surrounded by an assemblage of servitors, but only a fair Child cradled upon His mother's knee, while around a lowly manger were many cattle and other beasts.

Their humility, faith, and reverence proclaimed them truly Wise Men. They prostrated themselves before this beautiful Child and *dedicated themselves* in the service of this new King of the world. They then made offering of their treasures.

“Who gives of himself with his gold feeds three,

Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me.”

There is an ancient scroll which reads—“The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents and the kings of Sheba shall offer gifts.”

It is said that Caspar, or Jaspar, was very aged, with a long, white beard. He was a king in Tarsus, the land of merchants, and his gift was gold. Melchior was middle-aged and a king of Arabia. His gift was frankincense. Balthazar, the dark king, was very young. He was from Seba or Sheba, the land of precious spices and gums. His gift was myrrh, Caspar is mystically called the White Lord with the Diamond; Melchior, the Bright Lord with the Diamond; Balthazar, the Treasure Lord with the Ruby.

The path of transmutation for the neophytes, sometimes called Transfiguration, is outlined in the story of the Wise Men. It is this process of transmutation which will cause each one of us to become Wise Men, or King-Initiates, and greet the Star upon the morn of the Holy Birth.

In the Cologne Cathedral is a sacred shrine which contains three skulls with the names of the three Wise Men worked upon them in rubies. The ruby has been called the stone of Christianity and symbolizes the cleansing of the desire nature and the spiritualizing of the mind

which is the chief work of the Christian Dispensation.

A legend tells us that Mary bestowed upon the Wise Men as a gift and a memorial one of the linen bands used to wrap about the sweet, flowerlike body of the Babe. They thanked her in great humbleness and joy, laid it away, and counted it among their most precious treasures. When they returned to their homes, they laid down their earthly wealth and possessions, distributed their goods to the poor, and in imitation of the poverty and humility of Him whom they revered and served, went about preaching of the new Christian regime which the Birth had inaugurated.

And again the legend relates that when St. Thomas traveled into the Indies, he found these Wise Men there. They worked and labored with him, and while carrying the new Light, were finally put to death, receiving thereby from the blessed Savior, Christ Jesus, a crown of immortal life for the earthly diadems which they had renounced. Their remains were discovered long afterward by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, and brought to Constantinople. From there they were taken to Milan and later deposited in the Cathedral of Cologne.

In return for their gifts, the legend continues, the Master bestowed upon them gifts of a much greater value. For the golden cup, He gave charity and spiritual riches; for the bowl of incense, perfect faith; and for the myrrh, truth and meekness.

These are the necessary qualifications of the would-be Initiate today. These, too, may be our gifts, when we learn to make this same pilgrimage and dedicate ourselves body, soul, and spirit to furthering the work of His kingdom upon the earth.

For the mystic Christian, the gifts of the three Wise Men symbolize the complete dedication of spirit, soul, and body to His will and His service—always the necessary beginning of the way of true attainment.