



## STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

What it was or how it appeared eighteen hundred years ago is unknown; the conjectures are various.

Some who claim that it was a star of peculiar course or orbit, sometime approaching close to the earth and becoming quite prominent, and sometimes receding far away into invisibility, claim that it has regular periods for appearing, centuries apart. These claim, that this star has appeared since our Lord's birth, and is due to appear shortly now.

From this it is evident that no special importance could attach to the star's appearance, except at the *one time*, when our Lord was born and when the "wise men of the east" were directed by it. For if it has the peculiar orbit claimed, which brings it into view of the earth every few centuries only, it is certain that it appeared centuries before as well as centuries since the time it was used of God to mark our Lord's birth. Hence, if this theory be true, the miracle would not be in the star's *appearance*, but in the *directing of the wise men* by it.

But as we said at first, this is merely a theory, and has nothing specially to recommend it. We know no more about it than others, but favour, as most reasonable, the idea that it was a bright luminous appearance which during these five months' journey guided the wise men to Judea, and finally to Bethlehem, and to the place where the young child was. We cannot conceive of a distant star in the sky being a guide by which a house or even a city could be found. Try it some starry night.

But a luminous appearance, a speck of light travelling through the air would not be a *star* says some one. No, not as the English word *star* is used to-day, when by that name we refer to far off suns and planets; nor can we conceive of planets many times larger than the earth coming close down so as to mark the stable where our Lord lay. But the Greek word here translated *star* has the meaning of *brightness* or *shining* whether of a planet or a candle or other shining, and hence it as a word would fit well to our opinion of this miracle.

So then we have no *reason* as yet for expecting anything from the promised reappearance of the star which *some suppose* to be the star of Bethlehem, but which we think improbable. For even if it were the star supposed, its re-appearance would no more prove a second coming of the babe of Bethlehem, than the recurrence of Washington's birthday proves that Washington comes again. On far better evidence than this, do we look for the Lord—not again a *babe in the flesh*, but a spirit being, in power and great majesty.

But to find the Lord now, as then, it will be necessary to see his star and to follow its leadings. First to the fully consecrated, waiting, watching ones, and finally to *all* "who look for him, he will appear." Those who find him first will be the *truly* wise; and the star which will guide them will be the "Day-star" (2 Pet. 1:19), the *light* of truth which will arise within their hearts, giving them understanding as to where, how, and what to seek and expect. This light of knowledge, in our hearts, is the star of importance now, without which the Lord's second advent cannot be properly discerned.

