6 ST. MATTHEW. IL.   
   
 Gen. x men from the Yeast to Jerusalem, ? saying, Where is he   
 30. Job 8. that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star   
   
 near the sea of Josh. xix. The cient and consistent opinion in all the   
 name Bethlehem-Judah is used, Judges East, that it fated that at that time   
 7, 8, 9: 1 Sam. xvii. 12. Another name those should go forth from Judea who   
 for our Bethlehem was Ephrath; Gen. should rule the empire of Tacitus,   
 xxxv. 19; xlviii. or Ephrata, Micah v. to the same effect and nearly the same   
 It was six Roman miles to the south of words,—and (c) the propheoy, also likely   
 Jerusalem, and was known as ‘the cit; to be known in the it, the seventy   
 of David,’ the origin of his Rut! weeks in Daniel ix. 24;—we can, I think,   
 i. 1, 19. & the deys of Herod] be at no loss to understand how any re-   
 Henop THE Gert, son of Antipater, an markable celestial at this time   
 Idamwan, by an Arabian mother, made should have been interpreted as it was.   
 king of Judza on occasion of his having (8) There is no ground for supposing the   
 fled to Rome, being driven from his te- magi to have been three in number (as   
 trarchy by the Antigonus. This first, by Leo the Great, a.p.   
 title confirmed to him after battle pe 3 or to have been Kings. The jirst   
 of Actium by Octavianus. He sought to tradition to have arisen from the   
 strengthen his by a series cruel- number of their gifts: the second,   
 ties slaughters, to death even the prophecy in Isa. lx. 8. Tertullian   
 his wife and his sons seems to deduce from the similar pro-   
 and Aristobulus. His cruelties, his hecy in Ps. Ixxii. for, he says, the   
 affectation Gentile customs, gained for jagi were most commonly ki in the   
 him a hatred among the Jews, which East. 2. his star} There is a ques-   
 neither his magnificent of the tion, whether this of the magi,   
 temple, nor his liberality other public we have seen his star, points to any   
 works, nor his care of people miraculous appearance, or to something   
 during a sovere famine, could mitigate. observed in the course of their watching   
 He died miserably, five after he had the heavens. We know the magi to have   
 put to death his son Antipater, in the been devoted to astrology: and on com-   
 seventieth year of his age, the thirty- paring the language of our text with this   
 eighth of his and the 750th year of undoubted fuct, I confess it appears   
 Rome. The events here took place to me the most ingenuous way, fuirly to   
 contained in before his books neces- take account of that fact in exegesis,   
 sarily It would be days; for he spent and not to shelter from an ap-   
 the last forty days of his history has parent difficulty the hypothesis of a   
 and the subject it what has been written miracle. Wherever supernatural agenc   
 would not may found by the magi at Jeru- is asserted, may be reasonably informed,   
 salem. a, or history of Herod’s reign is I shall ever be found foremost insist on   
 adjacent. See Ju vi. 8: Isa. xli. its recognition, im) every device   
 xlvi. 11: Num. xxiii. 7. Philo speaks of of rationalism or bat it   
 “the Eastern nations and their leaders does not therefore follow that I should   
 the Parthians.” In all these countries consent to attempts, however well meant,   
 there were magi, at least persons in to introduce miraculous interference   
 the wider sense of the word were now it does not appear to be borne out by   
 known by the name. The words in ver. 2 narrative. The principle on which this   
 seem to point to some land not very near commentary is conducted, is that of   
 Judea, as also the result Herod’s en- honestly endeavouring to ascertain the   
 quiry as to the date, shewn in “two sense of the sacred ‘text, regard   
 years old.” (2) If we place together to any preconceived systems, and fearless - ere  
 (a) the prophecy in Num. xxiv. 17, of any possible And if the   
 could hardly be unknown to the Eastern scientific historical of others   
 astrologers, and (6) the assertion of seem to contribute to this, readers will   
 Suetonius “that there prevailed an an- find them, as far they have fallen   
 my observation, made use for that pur-   
 pose. It seems to that the preliminary   
 question for us is, Have we hero in the   
 sacred text a miracle, or bave we some   
 natural appearancé which God in His   
 Providence used as a means of indicati