

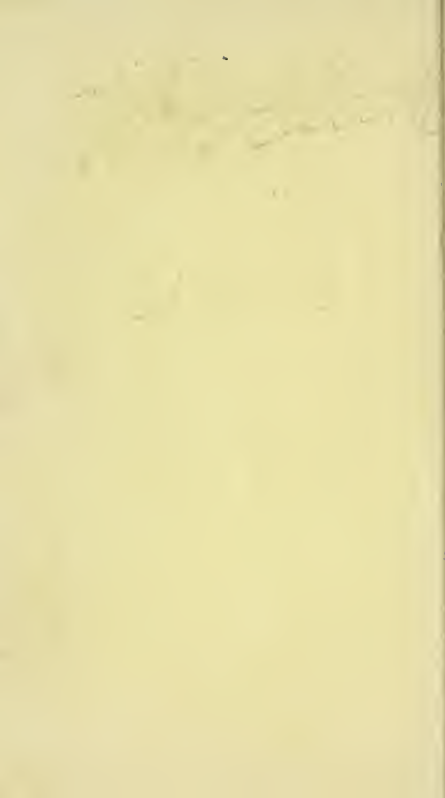
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THE
INCARNATION

R. H. NEALE



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To Mr

Charles Winton

with a

Happy New Year.

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Jan. 1st



THE
INCARNATION.

BY
ROLLIN H. NEALE,

PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON:
GOULD, KENDALL & LINCOLN,
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LETTER.

REV. R. H. NEALE,

Dear Brother :— It gives me great pleasure to communicate to you the following vote of the BOSTON NORTH BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, in reference to the Sermon preached by yourself before that body, at its recent session in Framingham.

“*Voted*, That the author of the Sermon preached at the opening of this Anniversary Meeting, be requested to give it to the public in such form as he may deem advisable.”

Allow me, dear brother, as an individual, to express to you my strong desire, that you may see fit to comply with the request contained in this action of the Association. I

am induced to do so, because of my firm conviction, that, by yielding to the wishes of your brethren, you will subserve the interests of truth and piety. The views contained in your Discourse seem to me specially adapted to the times in which we live, — times in which error stalks abroad in *protean* shapes, diverting men from the simplicity of the gospel, and “spoiling them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” By appealing to the Scriptures *alone*, as authority, I am satisfied that you take the only safe and tenable ground that can be occupied. Making them “the judge that ends the strife,” you place the great mysterious doctrine of the Divine Incarnation in its proper position, not as a subject for the speculations of philosophy, but as an object of implicit, child-like Faith.

The view you presented also appears to me peculiarly calculated to relieve and comfort the minds of Christians. That difficulties often perplex the children of God, you

well know, my dear brother, from the experience and observation which your station, as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, has furnished you. Your Sermon seemed to me, as I listened to it, to show with great clearness the fact, that the trials and distressing doubts which the disciples of the Saviour often have, on this and kindred subjects, were anticipated and provided for by the Holy Spirit; and that in consequence of them, or of temptations which they present, a caution was urged against the seductions of human reason, in a province where Faith should reign without a rival. And in my judgment, a mind thus troubled would be drawn from a situation of distress and danger, and would be comforted and established in the truth, if it heartily embraced the views contained in your Discourse.

I speak the more confidently, knowing, as I do, that my opinions touching your Sermon meet the concurrence of brethren whose judgment is superior to my own. The action of the Association was not designed as a

mere compliment, but as an ingenuous expression of opinion as to the adaptation of your Discourse to usefulness.

Excuse me, my dear brother, for occupying so much of your time and patience, by obtruding personal wishes upon your attention, while communicating to you the action of the Association. And permit me to hope, that you will comply with this strongly expressed, and sincere desire of the body.

Your brother in Christ,

WILLIAM C. CHILD,
Clerk of the Boston North Bap. Association.

CHARLESTOWN, OCT., 1849.

THE INCARNATION.

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE.

GOD, in our nature, is the central truth and soul of Christianity. "In Him," says the Apostle, referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Here was a peculiar and wonderful manifestation of the Deity. In some sense, indeed, he is manifested every where. The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork. In all the signatures of order and design, we be-

hold his unsearchable wisdom. In all that is fair in nature, shines forth the uncreated excellence of the Eternal. In all that is grand and sublime, his awful majesty appears. In the numberless forms of life and enjoyment, with which the world abounds, we see the evidences of his exuberant goodness and love. But the doctrine of the Bible is, that in Jesus dwelleth the fulness of the divine nature; that he who some eighteen hundred years ago, walked as a man over the hills and the plains of Palestine, clothed with a body like our own, subject to decay, disease, and death, and who had a soul also like ours, susceptible of joy and sorrow, hope and fear, was none other than the great Creator in human form, God over all and blessed forever.

PROOFS OF THE DOCTRINE.

1. The references, which are made in the Old Testament, to the coming and character of the Messiah, are appropriate to the personage here described. "Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." In no being that has ever appeared on earth, is this prophecy completely and gloriously fulfilled, except in Jesus of Nazareth. A Son, and yet the everlasting Father—a child born, and yet the mighty God! What could have suggested such an apparent paradox to the prophet, unless it were an inspired vision of the great mystery "God manifest in the flesh," the root, and

yet the offspring of David, the bright and morning star!

2. The circumstances attending our Saviour's birth, were also appropriate to the wonderful mystery of his nature. "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. And lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, frankincense,

and myrrh. And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Signs in the heavens, the songs of angels, the joy of saints, who had been long looking for the consolation of Israel, and the voice of the Spirit, all united to hon-

or and celebrate the glorious event. Not only so, but the first begotten is introduced to the world with this significant declaration from the Father himself, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

"See nature hastes her earliest wreaths to
bring

With all the incense of the breathing Spring:
See lofty Lebanon his head advance,
See nodding forests on the mountains dance;
See spicy clouds from lowly Sharon rise,
And Carmel's flowery top perfume the skies!
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers,
Prepare the way, A God — a God appears!
A God — a God! the vocal hills reply;
The rocks proclaim the approaching Deity."

3. The words and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth are in perfect accordance with this view of his character. He was in fashion as a man; meek, hum-

ble, unostentatious. Simplicity marked all his proceedings. There was no studied attempt to startle the world by displays of power, or to attract admiration by his superior knowledge and wisdom. In his works of beneficence he sought to avoid the public gaze, and exercised his ministry in the most unpretending manner; sometimes reading and expounding the Word in the synagogue, sometimes addressing the people on the shores of Genesareth, or at the temple in Jerusalem; oftener, however, conversing and praying with his disciples apart. Yet there were even here indications of his infinite majesty. "His brightness was as the light. He had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power." The elements of nature were under his control.

He spake, and the winds and the sea obeyed him.

Still more wonderful were the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. "So natural and yet so pregnant, so clear and yet so striking, so plain and yet so profound, they resemble the works of God, which, while they attract a child by their freshness and beauty, engage a philosopher by their grandeur and perfection." Never man spake like this man! The moral truths he taught were not only in advance of the period in which he lived, but of every succeeding age. There is now no system of ethics so pure and perfect, so adapted to our nature and to all the relations and circumstances of life, as that which was promulgated by Jesus of Nazareth. "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty

works?" Nay, more: his was not a system of mere morality. The truths he uttered were replete with a transforming power. He spake as one having authority. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Error was corrected, immorality abandoned, prejudices subdued, hatred overcome, hearts were filled with love, and souls animated with a new life under his mighty influence. Truly this was the Son of God!

"As in his birth, so during his whole life, the majesty of Jesus was generally concealed from the eyes of men. It is the sun behind the cloud, and yet enough of its splendor here and there breaks through the gloom to indicate the presence of the luminary beyond." "His entire separation from the world, like a

‘star dwelling apart’ even while mingling in society, his authority, so lofty and decisive, his natural yet singular and all-commanding speech, his mastery over nature, walking now upon the waves of the sea, now becoming invisible, now appearing unexpectedly — anon forgiving sin and attesting his power to do so by miraculous cures — opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, dissipating the leprous taint, and raising the very dead — all these and similar manifestations of the Divinity prove that even when on earth, there dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

“ Adoring saints around him stand,
And thrones and powers before him fall ;
The God shines gracious through the man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all.”

4. The manner in which the evangelists and inspired apostles speak of Christ is also in perfect harmony with this view of his character. "We have not," say they, "followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eye-witnesses of his majesty." "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, for it pleased the father that in him should all fulness dwell." And "he hath given him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Thus the early disciples honored the Son even as they honored the Father. They had no

fear of going too far, in expressions of love and adoration. They preached salvation through his death. They baptised in his name. They prayed and sang praises to him as their Lord and their God, and when dying committed their souls with unwavering confidence into his hands. All this was done while the solemn admonition of the prophet was well known to them, "Cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." And yet the name of Christ occurs at every turn as the object of assured confidence, of a hope which shall never make ashamed, of a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. The early disciples were distinguished from both the heathen and the Jews, by this, "that in all places they called upon the name of the Lord Jesus." Most obviously did

they regard him as divine, and worshipped him as a God. And why should he, knowing this, allow the impression to go uncorrected? It was blasphemy, according to his own teaching, to accord divine honor to a created being. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." The Apostles rejected such honor because they were *men*. Yea, angels refused it. It could with propriety, therefore, be given to Christ only on the supposition that while he was a man he had a nature that was above men and above angels; in a word, that "he was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person."

5. The importance which the Scriptures attach to the condescension of Christ, confirms the view we have taken

of his character. The power of the gospel in subduing the human heart is attributed to its being such a wonderful exhibition of Christ's love, and the strength of his love is shown from the greatness of the sacrifice he made to effect the work of human redemption. "Herein is love, that when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly." The song of the redeemed in heaven is, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever." But if Christ were a mere creature, however exalted, these lofty celebrations of his love and condescension would be strange and inappropriate. The Apostles and others in the ministry of reconciliation, suffered per-

secution and martyrdom. The Holy Ghost witnessed that in every place bonds and afflictions awaited them; but they persevered heroically to the last, and sealed their testimony with their blood. In what, then, does the superiority of Jesus appear? If he were only a good man, a servant, an ambassador, then is he only on a level with apostles and martyrs; for they were the messengers of God, and faithful unto death. And why should so much more be made of his sacrifices than of theirs? Why should Paul say, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich for our sakes he became poor?" But on the supposition that in becoming a man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he had descended from the highest heavens, there is a fulness of

meaning in this language. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." O what grace is here! He who is the original source of blessedness and honor, descending to the pain and ignominy of the cross! This gives a significancy, a most solemn import, to all that is said of the condescension of Christ, and of the influence which such evidence of his love is adapted to exert on the human heart. "Will God," says Solomon, "in very deed dwell with men upon the earth!" Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him! Yet this amazing grace is realized in Christ. In Jesus, the true and ever-living God appears, not with the dazzling splendors of an angel, or with the forbidding majesty of a king upon the throne, but with all the sympathies

of our nature, speaking good tidings to the meek and binding up the broken heart.

This it is that kindles the inspiration of the church, the songs of angels, and the hallelujahs of the redeemed, calling forth

“Praise, ardent, cordial, constant to high
heaven,
More fragrant than Arabia sacrificed,
And all her spicy mountains in a flame.”

6. The assurance of hope, the strength and comfort of faith, exhibited by those who have put their trust in Christ, are a proof of his divinity. What could induce men to hazard their all in committing their souls to him as a “faithful Creator,” unless they had evidence that he were so in reality? It is a fearful

thing in view of eternity and the destinies of the undying soul, to indulge in a false or an uncertain hope, — to rest responsibilities so inconceivably great on what may fail us in the day of trial. But what believer in Jesus ever for a moment had the slightest fear that he was trusting in one that would prove deficient either in grace or power? Who ever apprehended that, resting upon the atonement of Christ, the ground of his hope would give way from under him? The reason is, that in the very nature of faith, there is an intuitive perception of Christ's divinity. His image is impressed upon the renewed heart as outward objects upon the retina of the eye. Christ is, as it were, reproduced in the soul by the Holy Spirit, so that his people recognize him at once, and say, "This is

our God; we have waited for him and he will save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Questions may be put to the humble disciple respecting the mystery of the Incarnation which he cannot answer, but "one thing I *know*," is his reply, "that whereas once I was blind, now I see." Such was the faith of primitive Christians. It was strong and unwavering, full of comfort and joy. They knew in whom they had believed, and that he was able to keep what they had committed to him against that day. Their faith arose not merely from the outward evidences of his Messiahship, his miracles, the gracious words which proceeded from his lips, his pure and blameless life, the scenes which transpired at the crucifix-

ion, his resurrection from the dead, of which he gave them many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days after his passion, and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; but it was a faith which arose from the witness of the spirit. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," said they, "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ." Their faith was the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. They were sealed with that holy spirit of promise which was the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. Thus the Apostle Peter, speaking of Christ as a Prince and a Saviour, whose prerogative it was

to give repentance unto Israel and the remission of sins, says, "And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to all them that obey him." Hence, among that class of Christians who are led by the Spirit, who are accustomed to commune with God in prayer, and who read the Scriptures with a view to their own spiritual improvement, there is a remarkable uniformity of opinion in reference to the character and work of Christ. You might as easily pluck the sun from the heavens as to argue them out of their faith. Men of learning and science may find insuperable difficulties connected with the Incarnation, but the humble Christian, whose delight it is to do the will of God, *knows* of the doctrine. He experiences the "mystery" within

his own soul, and feeds upon it as the bread which cometh down from heaven. To a mind enlightened by the Spirit to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to a heart which is humbly praying for pardon, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, no doctrine is more readily seen or more precious than that of the Incarnation. It meets the deep-felt necessities of the soul, and while other refuges fail, this is an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the storm; as the rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

THE PRACTICAL BEARING OF THE
INCARNATION ON THE OFFICES
OF CHRIST.

1. *As Mediator.* The mystery of the Incarnation "is the stupendous link between God and man, heaven and earth—the mystic ladder, whose foot is on a level with the dust, and whose summit penetrates the inmost recesses of an unapproachable splendor." The need of such a medium of communication with the invisible Creator, is felt by every thoughtful mind. "Neither is there any day's-man betwixt us," said the Patriarch, "that might lay his hand upon us both!" He felt a difficulty arising from the infinite greatness of Jehovah. The manifestations of His power in the

material universe only indicated how profound and awful was his nature, and how fathomless the depths of the mystery in which his being is enshrined. "He removeth the mountains and overturneth them in his anger. He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. He spreadeth out the heavens as a curtain, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. He maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the South. He doeth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number." Deeply distressed in mind and forsaken by all others, the pious man of Uz wished to make known his case to God. But how shall he cross the immeasurable abyss, and gain access to One who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto? How shall a

worm of the dust ever hope to have communion with the invisible God, whose majesty is so transcendent and overpowering! "O that I knew where I might find him, I would come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. O that one might plead with God as a man pleadeth with his neighbor!" How completely and gloriously is this desire realized by the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ! His name is Immanuel — God with us. Here the Deity comes forth from the depths of his retirement. In the person of our Mediator, God is brought near to us and a way is opened into the holiest of all, by which we can draw nigh to God. He addresses us in words of kindness, of sympathy, and love. While I recognize Him as the

king eternal, immortal, invisible, to whom belongeth glory, dominion, and power forever, I know that he can be touched with a feeling of my infirmities. I can confide in him as in a parent. I can commune with him as a brother and friend. I can lean upon my Saviour's bosom, and out of his fulness receive even grace for grace.

2. *As a Prophet.* It was predicted that from among the Jews the Lord their God would raise them up a prophet like unto Moses; that is, a teacher of divine truth, who, like the lawgiver of Israel, should introduce a new dispensation. The apostle Peter applies this prediction to our Lord Jesus Christ. He was pre-eminently a Prophet. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of

the Father, he hath declared him." Life and immortality are brought to light by his teaching. The special object of his ministry was to make known the plan of redemption — to announce the great scheme which infinite wisdom had devised for the salvation of the guilty. Our gospel began to be spoken by the Lord himself, "and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost." Christ was appointed to utter truths of the greatest moment to mankind, and such as human reason is confessedly inadequate to discover; and how wonderfully is he qualified, by the mystery of the Incarnation, to fulfil his mission! A created and finite being might indeed be appointed by the God

of heaven to the office of a prophet. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But who is so well qualified to give instruction to men on divine subjects, as one in whom the divine and human nature are united? Who else, it may well be asked, knoweth the mind of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him? There is no searching of his understanding. Who, then, shall teach us of God? We want to hear from his own lips. In unfolding the mystery which hath been hidden for ages — in making known the deep counsels of the divine mind on the great subject of human salvation, on which all the voices of nature are silent, and in reference to which the wisdom of this world has proved itself as nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity, who shall

speak with such authority and so satisfactorily as he whom the evangelist describes as having been in the beginning with God, and who was God, and who in the fulness of time was made flesh and dwelt among us?

Hence the power of his teaching, and the confidence which his ministry inspired. "It was humanity, stainless indeed, refined, exalted, refulgent with the incarnate divinity, but still humanity, with its smiles and tears; our nature, with its quick, strong impulses of affection, of sorrow, and of joy. And who does not see that the gospel, passing through a human mind as the medium of its communication with other minds, spoken with the persuasive tones of human utterance, breathed out with the sweet modulations of human affections and sen-

sibilities, and with the deep earnestness of human experience, is far more eloquent to man, far better adapted to the end for which the preaching of the gospel was appointed, than if sung on earth with angel harps and voices, or sounded out from the trumpets of the seraphim !”

3. *Another office sustained by our Lord Jesus Christ, is that of a priest.* His character as such is set forth in the epistle to the Hebrews. He is described as a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. It is evident, says the Apostle, that after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. “Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and

separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; who needeth not daily, as the high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people's ; for this he did once when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated forevermore."

The Apostle shows the superiority of Christ in various particulars, but especially in reference to the two most important functions of the priestly office ; that of offering sacrifice and making intercession. " Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." In what, then, does his sacrifice consist, and wherein is

its efficacy? In the work of human redemption the Scriptures obviously attach special importance to the death of Christ. It is not by the truths he taught, nor by his wonderful works, nor by his pure and blameless life, that he becomes the author of eternal salvation; but in bringing many sons unto glory, he is made perfect through sufferings. We have redemption through his *blood*. On his *cross* he spoiled the principalities and powers of hell. We are saved by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And why is such efficacy ascribed to Christ's sufferings? It is not merely that they were confirmatory of his doctrines — not that they exhibited in him a martyr-spirit — proving his sincerity and zeal in an enterprise of mercy; but because, in the divine adminis-

tration, an expiatory sacrifice was deemed necessary to the great work of human redemption. Christ was to make atonement by his death. This was the grand object of his mission on earth, not incidental to it, but its crowning purpose. His birth, his manner of life, his ministry, all indicate that they were subsidiary to a higher purpose, and preparatory to a greater scene. They were designed to pave the way to that awfully mysterious death which he suffered upon the cross. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The Apostle states distinctly the purpose of his death. He was set forth to be a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood, that God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth.

Such an expedient was demanded by the law. No judicious magistrate, however tender and compassionate, feels at liberty to pardon a criminal simply on the ground of his penitence. Washington would gladly have spared the life of the ill-fated Andre. He signed his death warrant with tears. But he was impelled to the painful act by a high sense of public duty. Every instance of pardon, where guilt is clearly proved, unless some reason can be assigned besides the penitence, or even the reformation of the offender, weakens the force of law over the public mind, and brings discredit upon the government. If mercy, therefore, is to be exercised in the government of God, if forgiveness is to be extended to the transgressor, and Heaven opened to the guilty as is prom-

ised in the gospel, we should expect on the part of the Supreme Ruler a proceeding similar to that which Christ came to accomplish by his death.

That such was the design of Christ in coming into the world, is farther evident from the ceremonies and sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, and the predictions of the ancient prophets respecting the Messiah. Isaiah says, expressly, "he was smitten for our offences, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." The object of Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, is to show that the death of Christ answered to the sacrifices that were offered by the Jewish high priest, which sacrifices were vicarious and propitiatory. They were designed as an atonement; designed to

meet the claims of justice, and to honor a violated law, while the penitent, confessing his sins, with his hand upon the bleeding victim, received remission. Christ was the antitype of this proceeding, and his death is set forth as being a more efficient atonement. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God?"

When Christ came on earth, he professed that such was the grand design of his mission. He came for the purpose of dying. His death was perfectly voluntary, and in pursuance of a design previously formed. "I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it

down of myself." Had Christ been only a man, his dying in this way would have been suicide. No Prophet, or Apostle, or Confessor, would be justified in going to the stake or the cross if it were in his power to deliver himself from his enemies. But Christ had power to save his life: "I have power to lay down my life," he says, "and I have power to take it again." Legions of angels were ready to come at his bidding. Nevertheless he died, died voluntarily, and why — unless to fulfil the priestly office by making atonement? When the fearful crisis approached, he exclaimed, "what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."

In accordance with this view, the death of Christ was the great and constant

theme in the ministry of the Apostles. To this they uniformly ascribe his power as a Saviour. "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and how that he was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." They do not thus speak of his doctrines or his example, great and excellent as they were, but it was the cross — the cross — "Christ crucified," they held forth as the only hope of the guilty. Paul declares its superiority to all human methods of instruction, strange as it might seem to man. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are

called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

From the account which is given by the evangelists of Christ's last sufferings, we should be led to suppose that there was in them an extraordinary and mysterious element. He exhibited a terror, an anguish, a strange perturbation of mind, most difficult to be accounted for if he suffered only as a good man. The martyr Stephen, when stoned, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and fell asleep peacefully, and in the hope of a glorious resurrection. He was sustained as the dying believer ordinarily is, by the prospect of entering immediately upon a better life. The Apostle Paul contem-

plated with joy the time of his departure, because he confidently anticipated that when absent from the body he would be present with the Lord, and would receive a crown of glory which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him in that day. But, who ever had a brighter futurity in prospect than our Lord Jesus Christ? Never was there one so certain of a glorious immortality. He had himself revealed a future life; he had often cheered the hearts of his disconsolate disciples by unveiling to their view the bright and unfading attractions of heaven. What, therefore, could be the cause of his own mental agitation and distress? Sometimes good men, as they approach the invisible world, are in doubt respecting their fitness to appear before a holy God. They are conscious

of indwelling sin, and hence it is not a matter of surprise that a cloud of darkness and gloom should occasionally come over them. But there was nothing of this kind, as all will admit, in the case of our Redeemer. He had been pure in thought, in word and in action holy, harmless, undefiled. There is no intimation in the whole history of his life that conscience ever troubled him. No guilty fears agitated his bosom. Whatever may have been the cause of his sadness and sorrow, as he approached the hour of crucifixion, there is no evidence that he doubted a moment respecting his certain triumph over death, and of his glorious admission to the kingdom of heaven. Who then should we think, reasoning on ordinary principles, would be more likely to meet death with com-

posure than he — with a conscience void of offence, free from the slightest stain of guilt, with a destiny of surpassing splendor in view, as the certain reward of his obedience and fidelity ?

Being also in the full vigor of strength and manhood, we should suppose he would approach the scene of his last sufferings with the heroic fortitude of a martyr, as no prophet had done before him, and no apostle after him. But instead of this calmness, and confidence, and triumph, how strange is the spectacle actually presented to our view ! We see him in the garden of Gethsemane, bathed in a perspiration of blood, prostrated upon the ground, and praying, “Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.”

The only way to account for these cir-

cumstances, is to suppose that there were mysterious ingredients of bitterness in his cup of sorrow. Once admit that there were, in his sufferings, those elements of strange and awful power that were essential to make his death an offering for sin, an atonement adequate to satisfy offended justice, and open a door of hope to the guilty, and the previous agitation, distress, and trembling, the prayer in the garden, the bloody sweat, and the outcries of agony, all are accounted for. I know why the innocent sufferer exclaims, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and groans as if a mountain of guilt were resting upon him. As our substitute, it was even so. God hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. O thou bleeding Lamb! May we never forget the price of our

redemption, the wonders of thy dying love.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

I understand why the holy one and the just, who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, cries out, as if stung by an avenging conscience, and as if actually deserted of God! It is not that he is himself a criminal, nor the object of divine displeasure for a single moment, but he is standing in the place of those who are guilty, and who, in consequence, are justly exposed to the righteous indignation of heaven. He who knew no sin becomes sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Hence the pangs

and throes, his surprise and anguish, as the hour and the power of darkness drew nigh; and hence, also, his exclamation upon the cross, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!"

Christ's death, then, being designed as an expiatory sacrifice, how directly and wonderfully does the dignity of his character contribute to its efficacy! "The work of our redemption is every where spoken of as an achievement of strength, as done by the putting forth of mighty energies, as the work of one, who, travelling in his own unaided greatness, had to tread the wine-press alone; and who, when of the people there was none to help him, did, by his own arm, bring salvation. To work out a pardon for the disobedient, and at the same time to uphold, in all their strength, the pillars of

that throne which they had insulted — to intercept the defied penalties of the law, and at the same time to magnify it and make it honorable thus to bend, as it were, the holy and everlasting attributes of God, and, in doing so, to pour over them the lustre of a high and awful vindication — this was an enterprise of such length and breadth, such height and depth, as no created being could fulfil, and which demanded the might and counsel of him who is the wisdom of God and the power of God.” The offering of the body of Jesus Christ becomes a complete and mighty atonement, furnishing a ground of hope, firm as the rock of ages, to every believer, because in that body dwelt the fulness of the divine nature. There was a keen and quick sympathy of the eternal mind with those

sufferings that were endured upon the cross. "It was the heart of the Deity which uttered itself in the sigh of nature, the gloom of the heavens, the trembling of the earth, and the rending of the rocks." Hence it is that from "groaning Calvary shine forth the noblest truths; there, sacred violence assaults the soul."

"O what a scale of miracles is here!
Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood! with blood
Divine!"

Another part of the priestly office sustained by our Lord Jesus Christ, was that of making intercession for his people. As, under the law, the blood of the sacrifice was required to be carried by the high priest within the veil and sprin-

kled upon the mercy seat ; so Christ, by his own blood, hath entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption ; not into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us. He ever liveth to intercede. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. How admirably is he fitted to fulfil his office ! Had we a cause pending before an earthly tribunal, we should prefer, as an advocate, one who was thoroughly acquainted with the law, and with the cause which he had undertaken to conduct — one, who, by his moral character and standing in society, could command the greatest influence at court. One, who, from his own nature and experience in life, had a deep interest in,

and fellow feeling with, his client — and who, moreover, could present a good and effectual plea at bar. Look, then, at the character of our adorable Redeemer, as presented in the mystery of the Incarnation. In him are treasured up all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. He understands the law in all its length and breadth. He knows our guilt and danger, our temptations and trials, our present and our future wants, and hence provides for exigencies which we with our short-sightedness could not anticipate. “ I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not ” — a boon which Peter, in the supposed strength of his own moral integrity, had perhaps not thought of asking for himself.

Would we know the influence of our advocate at the court of heaven! Lo! a

voice from the excellent glory proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am ever well pleased." "Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." In addition to the glory he had with the father before the world was, the fidelity with which he has fulfilled the mediatorial office secures to him a welcome and a successful hearing. "Because thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." ∴

His identity also with our nature, his having suffered with us and for us, gives to his intercession a magic eloquence of appeal. It is not merely the force of

wisdom and of truth, but an appeal gushing forth from the deep fountains of compassion, from a heart all alive and palpitating with sympathy. It is Judah pleading for Benjamin his brother, unwilling to return himself to the promised land and to his father's house, except the lad be with him. "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Look we to the *ground* of his plea! It is based upon the blood of the everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. Not only is Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, but the personal holiness of his people and their ultimate and eternal blessedness in heaven are includ-

ed in the covenant and made certain by his death. We are complete in him, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. This was the travail of his soul which he shall see and be satisfied. This the promised reward and glory of his sufferings — the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross and despised the shame. Thus the intercession of our great high priest not only secures his people from the frowns of offended justice, but is adequate to present every one of them faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand

of God, and who also maketh intercession for us." O how desirable to have such an advocate ! Of those who commit their cause to him, not one shall fail of the kingdom of heaven ; for all the promises in him are yea and Amen, to the glory of God the Father.

4. *Christ is a King.* In accordance with ancient prediction, "dominion is given him, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This kingdom is established on earth, in the midst of a world that knows not God, where sin abounds and Satan reigns, and it is to extend until it shall have triumphed over all authority, and power, and might,

and dominion, and every name that is named, and until a multitude which no man can number, out of all ages, and kindred, and people, and tongues, shall stand redeemed before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. This achievement is to be the work of the Messiah. The government is upon his shoulder, and his work before him. Were he only a man, alas for the hope of Israel! But in the mystery of the Incarnation there are elements of strength adequate to the magnitude, and extent, and grandeur of the enterprise,—infinite wisdom, almighty power, and unparalleled love.

“Christ crucified,” is itself an element of mysterious and mighty power. When all other expedients have proved ineffectual to the recovery of our fallen race, it

has pleased God, by the preaching of the cross, to save them that believe. The experiment made by the missionaries to the Indians, though perhaps familiar to all, is a case in point. They discoursed eloquently on the wisdom and power of the Great Spirit, thinking thus to attract the attention of their swarthy hearers, and interest them in religion. But the Indians only laughed at them. They had heard nobler sermons on these subjects than men could utter. "The wild pomp of their mountains and the sublime silence of their forests preached to them." They looked up at night to the "pavement of unfading fire" above them, and listened to the voice of God in the storm, and in the rushing of the cataract, deep calling unto deep. Nature, with her ten thousand tongues, was daily preaching ser-

mons to them on God's natural attributes, more eloquent and powerful than ever proceeded from human lips, and yet they had remained unaffected. But when the missionaries preached to them the gospel, and spake of the blood of Christ, the savage heart melted. "Did he," said they, as tears were flowing down their cheeks, "did he shed his *blood* for us?" "Do tell us more about this." Not only is there a power in the mystery of the cross to break the heart, but also to heal it when broken. "I saw in my dream," says Bunyan, "that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from his back and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no

more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.' Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even until the springs in his head sent the waters down his cheeks." Similar to this was the experience of Luther. Convinced of his own sinfulness, and with a view to appease and quiet a troubled conscience, "he gave himself up to all the rigor of an ascetic life. He endeavored to crucify the flesh by fastings, macerations, and watchings." But shut up in his cell as in a prison, he was continually struggling against the evil thoughts and incli-

nations of his heart. "He did not find in the cloister the peace he was in quest of. The fears which had troubled him in the world pursued him to his cell." Nay, more, they increased there. In his solitude he saw more vividly his guilt, and the accusations of conscience were more severe and terrible than ever. In this state of mind he was visited at Erfuth by the venerable and pious Stau-pits, who said to him, "Young man, why do you thus distress yourself? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ; to the blood which he has shed. It is there you will see and find the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of the Redeemer. Trust in him, in the righteousness of his life, in the expiatory sacrifices of his death. Do not shrink

from him. God is not against you. It is you who are estranged and averse from God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favor. He says to you, "Thou art one of my flock ; hear my voice and no man shall pluck you out of my hand." This counsel met the case of the young inquirer and was the means of relief to his distressed soul. He looked to the cross and experienced the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Christianity is certain to triumph in the earth, because, as a system of doctrine and duty, it is pervaded in every part and made vital by the Divinity of its author. The attributes of infinite wisdom and power in him are its effectual safeguards. God manifest in the flesh, is its mighty foundation. " On

this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In the most troublous times, when Christ's disciples are called to struggle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places, the mystery of the Incarnation is the anchor of their souls, sure and steadfast. He lays his right hand upon them and says, "Fear not, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death." However numerous and bitter her foes, and though dark and portentous clouds may occasionally hang over Zion, the church is perfectly and everlastingly secure. For the Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty, his counsels are her guide, his

arm is her defence, and his presence "a wall of fire."

Christ, as king, is able to make all things subserve the advancement of his mediatorial reign. All events in providence are under his control. He lays the universe under tribute. The heavens and the earth, the sea and dry land, matter and mind — all are at his disposal. The hearts of the children of men, like the rivers of water, are in his hands, and he turneth them about whithersoever he will. He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain. Every movement of mankind, the enterprises of human ambition, the crusades of avarice, the revolutions of empires, the crumbling of thrones, and the strugglings of man for freedom — all contribute to

make way for the triumph of the Messiah, though they may not themselves intend it, neither do their hearts think so. "Thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem, and take off the crown; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, and overturn, and overturn, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. Mountains shall sink and valleys rise, rough places shall become smooth and crooked ways straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages, have an
end,
Foretold by prophets and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp;

The time of rest, the promis'd Sabbath comes:
Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world : and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of things
Is merely as the working of the sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :
For he whose ear the winds are, and the
 clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved him and his wrath is
 hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy, shall descend
Propitious in his chariot paved with love,
And what his storms have blasted and de-
 faced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.'

As the kingdom of Christ on earth is to be carried forward through the instrumentality of his people, they need to be under the influence of an impelling and sustaining power, mightier than

the ordinary incentives to human action, and this also is found in the Incarnation of our blessed and adorable Redeemer. I am crucified with Christ, says the Apostle, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. This is a motive of undying energy in the soul. Worldly ambition is liable to flag under disappointments and mortifications. The ardor of kindness and love may be dampened by human ingratitude. The most enterprising grow weary if hope is long deferred. But the motive power of the church is the mystery of Christ in the soul. "I labor," says an Apostle, "striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily. I am

willing to spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." It was not human ambition, nor the spirit of worldly enterprise, nor the expectation of present reward, but the love of Christ that constrained him, "because we thus judge," he says, "that if one died for all then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Christ in the soul, the hope of glory, is that which prepares the church to fulfil her high commission, and to go forth conquering and to conquer. She is animated, and sustained, and urged forward by the same spirit of love, and faith, and patient endurance which led her exalted Head to persevere in his work of mercy,

amid obloquy and scorn, faltering not until, all dripping with the blood of Calvary, he exclaimed, "It is finished."

These elements of strength, in the Incarnation, ensure a complete and glorious triumph to the kingdom of Christ. "He shall reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before him into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands."

"The Saviour comes ! by ancient bards fore-
told,
Hear him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold !
He from thick films shall purge the visual
ray,
And on the sightless eyeball pour the day ;
'T is he the obstructed paths of sound shall
clear,

And bid new music charm the unfolding
ear ;

The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch
forego,

And leap exulting like the bounding roe.

No sigh, no murmur, the wide world shall
hear ;

From every face he wipes off every tear.

In adamant chains shall death be bound,

And hell's grim tyrant feel the eternal wound.

As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,

Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,

Explores the lost, the wandering sheep di-
rects,

By day o'ersees them, and by night protects ;

The tender lambs he raises in his arms,

Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom
warms ;

Thus shall mankind his guardian care en-
gage,

The promised Father of the future age."

MEANS OF SECURING THE BLESSED-
NESS AND POWER OF THE
INCARNATION.

1. *A deep and intimate acquaintance with Divine Truth.* Christians should study the Scriptures for themselves. There is, in this respect, a strange and fearful neglect of the Bible. Many, even of those professing godliness, have no distinct idea of the gospel plan of salvation. If asked, What think ye of Christ? they can give no satisfactory answer, and of course can assign no clear and intelligent reason of the hope that is within them. For this cause many are weak and sickly among us, and many sleep. "When for the time they ought to be teachers, they have

need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." It is impossible thus to feel the power and life of the gospel. If we would know the preciousness of truth, we must not depend on others to study it for us, we must not take our knowledge at second-hand, but must follow the example of the Bereans, who were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they heard the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. The waters of life are sweeter when drawn, with our own pitchers, fresh from the fountain. As the truths of the gospel were given by inspiration of God, by men who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, it is obvious, that if we would receive them

in all their clearness and simplicity, their fulness and their power, we must study them, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. "Did not our hearts burn within us," said the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus, referring to what they had heard directly from the lips of the Lord himself, "did not our hearts burn within us, as he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? God's thoughts are very deep, and there is no medium through which they can be so clearly seen as that which he has himself selected. His wisdom is manifested in the mode and manner of revelation, as well as in the revelation itself. Not only are the thoughts of the Bible God's

thoughts, but the imagery and the words are his also:—Apples of gold in pictures of silver.

2. The doctrine of the Incarnation, like the other great truths of the gospel, must be received in the spirit of humble faith. It belongs to a supernatural system, confessedly beyond the sphere of human philosophy. The province of reason, in this connection, is, to ascertain whether God hath spoke, and, this point determined, she is to bow submissively to his unerring testimony. Let her satisfy herself that the Scriptures are, in deed and in truth, the word of God; after this, she is clothed and in her right mind, as she sits at the feet of revelation, and learns of him who was meek and lowly in heart. The union of the human and divine natures in the person of Christ is

not a truth which men can reach by a process of reasoning: hence, it is made the subject of a special communication from heaven; sanctioned, and sustained, and proved to be of God, by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Besides, it is revealed not as a mere matter of opinion, but as a life. "The life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." The Incarnation is the *vital* part of religion. As such, we may know it, and feel its power. But, like the life of the body, it is liable to be destroyed by attempting to analyze its internal machinery. The existence of vitality in the human frame is clearly revealed. Its presence is manifested in

the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the warm blood which flows through every vein, and sends vigor and animation to every limb; but let there be an anatomical analysis to find out its secret springs, and what would be the result? So it is with the mystery of Christ. A spirit of vain speculation is fatal to its vital power. Men of learning and talent here sometimes grievously fail. Attempting to pry into the secret things of God, they fail to apprehend what he has made known. Endeavoring to make the gospel conform to some system of human philosophy, they destroy the power of the gospel itself. It is like putting new wine into old bottles, which is destructive to both. The bottles break and the wine runneth out. Whereas, if the heavenly doctrine is incorporated with the

spirit of meekness, faith, and love, though in the minds of Barbarians, Scythians, bond or free, it is able to make them wise unto salvation. We must be converted and become as little children, in order to understand the gospel. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

3. The Incarnation, in order to develop its blessedness and power, should be kept apart and aloof from the cumbersome theological technicalities that are engendered by religious controversy. Ministers are indeed set for the defence of the gospel, and it is certainly their

duty, and that of the churches, to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. But the Apostle says, "beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Christians are never more exposed to this danger than when making the mysteries of Christianity topics of debate, and attempting to obviate all objections, and clear away all the difficulties with which, in our present imperfect state, the great truths of the gospel are confessedly encumbered. Questions may be asked by the veriest tyro on divinity, which the soundest theologian cannot answer. Persons of no more knowledge, or talent, or grace, than the witch of Endor, may succeed

in calling forth spirits, which, when once raised, no human wisdom or power can remand to the tomb. Even were it possible to remove every difficulty, to answer every objection, which might be started, and put your adversary to silence, he is not by this process brought into the faith of the gospel. Religion is not an opinion, not a judgment of the intellect,—not the wisdom of this world—not the letter, but the spirit and life,—Christ *in you* the hope of glory. To secure this blessed achievement in the hearts of men, the method adopted by inspired apostles was not to philosophize on the doctrine of Christ—nor to anticipate objections and show their skill and ingenuity in answering them, but to *proclaim* the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. They *held*

forth the Word of Life in all its clearness, and in all its obscurity, anxious not so much to convert men to their opinions as to make them new creatures in Christ Jesus.

“ O how unlike the complex works of man
Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan !
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile.
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickenings words, BELIEVE
and LIVE.

4. The doctrine of the Incarnation, like the other truths of our holy religion, is seen, appreciated, and enjoyed,

in proportion as the heart is imbued with divine influence. A decline in personal piety is the danger against which we should be most habitually and carefully on our guard. Open immoralities and damnable heresies may be seen, exposed, and avoided, with comparative facility. We may preach often, and talk earnestly, on doctrines that are "most surely believed among us." There may be, also, a commendable zeal and activity in defending ecclesiastical organizations, and in keeping the ordinances as they were delivered unto us. But in the midst of all this, there is danger of spiritual declension. We are liable to become worldly, selfish, and careless of our religious state. Even when laboring for the good of others, our own hearts may be neglected. There

are a thousand influences at work tending to dampen the ardor of our first love. And if we lose the simplicity, and freshness, and warmth of piety in the heart, the beams of the sun of righteousness shine on us no longer. There is nothing left in the soul but a cold sepulchre where the body of the Lord was laid, and where perhaps may be seen, even now, the napkin and the grave clothes; but from which the living Redeemer hath departed.

5. To appreciate the mystery of the Incarnation and feel its power, we must employ it for the purpose for which it was designed. Christ became incarnate to seek and to save the lost; no other expedient was adequate to reclaim a fallen world. In spite of all the devices of human wisdom, sin, and its attendant

evils, continued to abound. For ages, guilt and misery had been rolling their dark and turbid waves over the nations of the earth. So universal and deep is the influence of sin upon the heart, that there was no hope of human salvation, except by the special interposition of God. "Pass over the isles of Chittim and see," saith the Prophet, "and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed its gods?" But, if it is so difficult for men to change one form of false religion for another, how much more to abandon their idolatry altogether, to adopt an entire new system of opinions and feelings, and cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart!

To accomplish this work Christ assumed our nature. He descended from the

heavens to destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. It is only, therefore, when carrying out this purpose of our Lord, that we may expect to see displayed the mighty energies of the Incarnation. The Word of Life must be employed to counteract and remove the moral death which now broods over mankind. It must be carried, as designed, to all nations, — to the most degraded and abandoned, and with full faith in its quickening power, be allowed to breathe upon the dry bones that they may live.

Preaching the gospel earnestly and faithfully to men that are ready to perish, — preaching it not with a view merely to convince their judgment of its truth, but to affect an entire renovation in their hearts and lives, — to inspire them

with the love of God, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, — addressing it to the victims of vice, — to the dead in trespasses and sins, until they shall move quick and alive, and stand forth confessed the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty — *this* alone will give us an adequate perception of the richness and glory of its sacred truths, and is withal, the only effectual means of preserving them among us in all their original purity and power. We may have creeds, and formulas, and strong organizations, as so many depositories of the truth. But if we only aim thus to guard it against heretics, cavilers, and infidels, it will become stale and lifeless. The coriander seed of heaven hoarded up, though ever so carefully, will perish

and moulder on our hands. It must be distributed to the hungry and the dying. It descends from heaven to be the food, and nourishment, and life of Israel. The only safe repository of the gospel is the hearts of the redeemed, who, under the influence of the love of Christ, are fulfilling the great commission of their Lord. Let the "true light" shine forth upon the dark places of the earth, that are now full of the habitations of cruelty.

"Let the poor benighted pagan,
Let the rude barbarian see,
That divine and glorious conquest,
Once obtained on Calvary."

Then we may expect to behold the surpassing wonders of the cross. The latent power and hidden riches of the gospel will be developed, the rays of the

sun of righteousness will beam abroad, dispelling the darkness which is now spread like a funeral pall over the nations, and we shall behold, with a delighted vision, the glory of the Incarnate Word,—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. What think you are the views, of the Incarnation, entertained by the missionaries to the Karens? What strength of faith, what peace and comfort of hope, what joy in the Holy Ghost must be awakened in their bosoms in seeing above ten thousand of that degraded people springing to newness of life under the preaching of the cross? Mr. Abbot would as soon doubt his own existence as that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY: To our hands is committed a momentous trust. We are put in charge of the riches of the "mystery of Christ." Great and solemn is the responsibility connected with the station which the preacher of the gospel is called to occupy. Hence, the earnest counsels and admonitions that are given him by the inspired apostle, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Study to show thyself approved

unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity; sound speech, that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Above all, let us cherish the spirit of piety in our own souls. This is indispensable to our success in the ministry. Neither learning, nor eloquence, nor truth itself, without an unction from the Holy One, will ever work conviction in the hearts of our hearers, or win a soul to Christ. Sermons, to be effective, must contain the fulness of the gospel — must be bathed in divine influence, and come forth all warm and glowing

from lips touched with fire from the altar of God. Let us thus fulfil our ministry; and then, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Finally, in view of the subject of this Discourse, we see how great is the sin of rejecting the gospel. It is a message of mercy announced to us by the Lord himself. The God of heaven appears on earth to seek and to save us. O shall we make light of the celestial visitant! Shall weak, sinful, and dependant creatures turn ungratefully and coldly away from the proffered fulness of the Redeemer? O, my friends, let me urge you to behold the Lamb of God. Think of his condescension and his dying love. He died that you might live. Shall it be in vain? Will you

throw away treasures bought with blood? Will you go down to everlasting death within sight of that wonderful sacrifice which was offered upon the cross to save you? Heaven forbid! Think, O think of the blood which was there shed, and, with a broken and contrite heart, pray as did the dying penitent, "Lord Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

And now, to the King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God our Saviour, be honor and glory, dominion and power forever. Amen.



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