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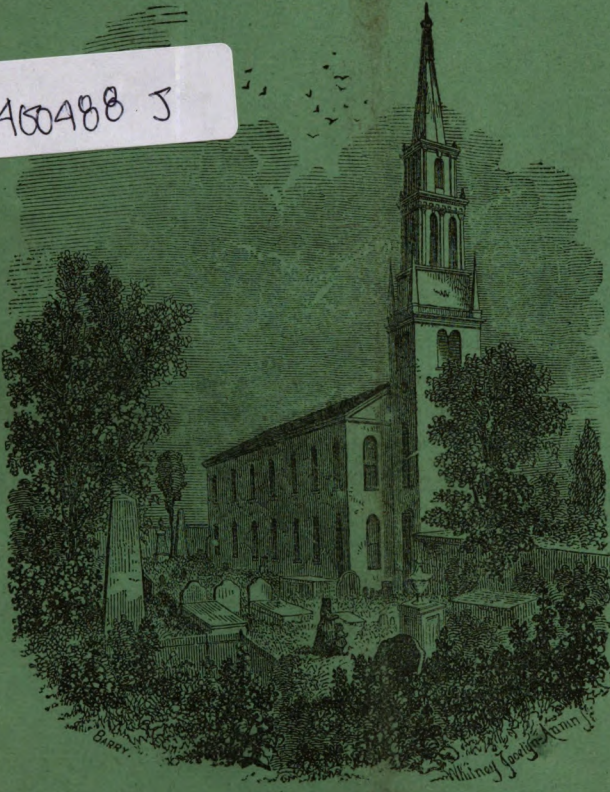
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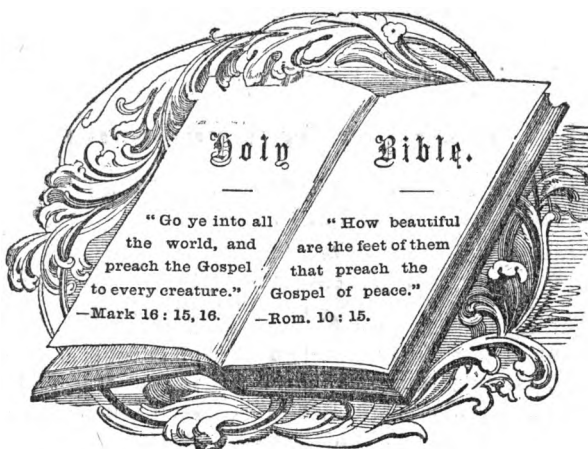


CONTENTS.

- I. THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. By REV. CHARLES N. BAIRD.
- II. THE DIVINE INCARNATION. By REV. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, D.D.
- III. THE GREAT WORK-DAY OF LIFE.

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SERMON VII.

BY REV. CHARLES W. BAIRD,

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THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY.

"VERILY I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."—MATTHEW 26: 13.

GREAT love can impose great obligations. It is when justified by a deep and strong affection, that the right of one man to act for others, engaging and covenanting in their behalf—as a king for his subjects, or a patriarch for his descendants—is most freely recognized and scrupulously respected. The unwritten wish, the implied request, will often obtain a fulfillment which no decree of chancery could secure.

Saul, in his cruel zeal for the people of God, had violated the solemn treaty made in the days of Joshua with the inhabitants of

outside of this canon there is no class of writings that have ministered more effectually to the comfort and growth of disciples in all ages, than this of which we speak. Jesus "will be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that believe; because their testimony among us is believed." (2 Thess. 1 : 10.) Would that the example of his faithful servants might be more frequently "spoken of for a memorial," wheresoever the Gospel is preached! Would that the edifying memoirs of so many pious men, and "also of honorable women not a few," with which, thank God! our literature at the present day abounds, might supplant to a great extent the newspaper, the magazine, the novel. Then might we become, more practically and habitually, "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6 : 12.)

And now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us: unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!

SERMON VIII.

BY REV. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BROOKLYN.

THE DIVINE INCARNATION.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—PHIL. 2 : 6-8.

THIS passage asserts the doctrine, or rather the fact of the Divine Incarnation in the person and earthly life of the historic Jesus, blending therewith a series of incidents to be found in the Scripture record of that life. The antecedent of the relative pronoun "who," is this very Jesus, in language that admits of no just doubt as to its meaning, affirmed to be divine, and with equal clearness affirmed to be human. These two facts—the divine fact and the human fact—being thus combined in one mysterious person, we designate as a divine incarnation, involving the wonderful

doctrine of God in Christ. Christ is hence a Theophany in the strictest sense—a personal manifestation of the invisible God to the children of men.

This doctrine is neither obscurely hinted in the Scriptures, nor left to rest upon the authority of a single passage. It is so often and so variously announced, that we must believe it, or reject the Bible as the supreme and infallible rule of faith. John says, that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." The Word is here spoken of as a divine person, to whom the act of creation is attributed. Identifying this Word still farther, the evangelist adds: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This language obviously refers to Jesus Christ; and if we credit its testimony, we certainly can not put Christ into the same category with Paul or Socrates, or any merely human classification of persons. Christ is infinitely more than a man. He is God manifest in the flesh. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." In him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "For it hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell." He "is the image of the invisible God." No such statements are ever made in regard to the works of nature; and nothing of the kind is ever affirmed of any other man. The fact of a divine incarnation in the man Christ Jesus, though as to its mode, the greatest of mysteries, is nevertheless clearly presented in the Bible. The Bible is fully committed to the fact.

As to the design of God in this most extraordinary development of providence, we are not left wholly in the dark. In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul presents and affirms the divinity of Christ; and in the second, he considers his humanity. Commenting upon the latter aspect as qualified and enriched by the former, the Apostle says, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," appearing in the nature of the beings he came to save. He says again: "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Not to startle us with a magnificent wonder, or perplex thought with a mysterious problem—not to create the world, but to redeem and save it, did Christ put on the robes of our humanity, and become participant in the attributes, conditions, and experience of our common nature. For this object, he that was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the

form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. For this object the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We surely can have no controversy with the end to be accomplished. It contemplates our good for eternity.

Assuming then both the fact and the Scripture theory of the divine incarnation in the person of Christ, I propose, on the present occasion, to turn your thoughts to the question of its relevancy to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual wants of man. You may take this thought in four particulars.

I. The Incarnation meets the eye of humanity with an appreciable HISTORIC PERSON. It so brings the divine Saviour of the world within the reach of human thought, within the circle of our experience and somewhat familiar knowledge, that the mind can act towards him and think of him, making him an object of conception in the understanding, and of affection in the heart. This it does by supplying the radical condition of an historic person, near enough to be seen and appreciated, described and remembered in all ages.

Were the term Christ a mere word invested with a sort of diffusive and mystic enchantment—the symbol of some strange and floating ambiguity—the indefinite sign of a vague, incomprehensible and ethereal awfulness, with no facts to measure its meaning, and no history to distinguish a person; were this the state of the case relatively to our perceptions, then Christ would be an unapproachable abstraction, unavailable for the purposes of thought and hope, like the God of the pantheist—any thing, every thing, nothing. The term would have no meaning which humanity could apprehend or appreciate; the whole question of man's salvation would sink into the deepest darkness of intellectual confusion; the sky of thought would be perfectly starless; and thought itself become a wretched fugitive, without a stopping-place or an object, and scarcely a path. Enveloped in such a mysticism, the intellect could see nothing to fix the form of its action, or invite the confiding and genial sympathies of the heart. Not knowing what to think, we should equally not know how to feel. We should be absolutely lost in the clouds of mystery. A system of salvation so impalpable and indeterminate in its agency, would not be suited to the wants of the soul. It would be a perplexity rather than a comfort, to even the most refined scholarship. It certainly could not bring forth the responses of human nature in intelligible acts of acceptance and hope.

Such, I am happy to say, is not the Being whom we are taught to regard as our Saviour. Christ is a person, as much so as Cesar or Alexander—not a force, not a law, not an idea, not an abstraction, but a living, concrete person, marked by his own peculiar history, qualities, and character. As to his humanity, he had

a birth, an infancy, a youth, a manhood, and a death-scene. He once trod our globe, spake our words, possessed our nature, was seen by human eyes, and listened to by human ears. His earthly life, in the facts which compose it, in the utterances of wisdom by which it is distinguished, in the numerous miracles which he wrought, in the sufferings he endured, in the sinless purities that form his celestial mantle, may, like any other life, be placed on the records of history, and thus go forth to greet the intelligence of the world. Jesus came to earth in the substantial verity of a person; on earth he lived; on earth he died; and hence the term Christ, with all its related facts, grouped, combined, and made central in one person, conveys a meaning which would be utterly lost, yea, impossible, if this Jesus had not appeared in the flesh. Whether seeing him, or reading the history of his life, we have something to think of, being able mentally to grasp, and at least partially to measure the object. The person to whom we are to look, and on whom to depend, is brought to the level of our apprehensive capacity. The mind can work towards him, and state facts in regard to him. Approaching us in our own nature, and entering into the earthly conditions of that nature, he comes in a form so familiar, that the light which proceeds from him, is gathered to a focus at the point of our clearest thinking.

This, I am persuaded, is the best mode in which a Redeemer can salute the intellect or heart of this lost world. Let that Redeemer be a person so constituted as to be an object which the eye can see and faith appreciate. Let him come to the very world he means to bless. Let him be related by some bonds of affinity to the beings who are to be saved by his mission. Touched by the inspiration of his wonderful life, let history tell a reading race what this Redeemer did and said in the days of his flesh, and thus lay a foundation for his supremacy over thought and feeling in all time, and among all classes. These demands of our nature, these needful adaptations to our condition and wants, are abundantly supplied in the doctrine of the Word made flesh, and dwelling among us, thus giving us the opportunity to see this Word full of grace and truth. I can not explain the intrinsic mystery of the Incarnation; yet when I look at man, and reason from him, I see its pertinency to his present state as a pilgrim of earth.

II. The incarnation seems equally pertinent as a medium for God's APPROACH and MANIFESTATION of himself to our race. Religion has its basis not only in man as the recipient of truth and the active subject of exercises, but also in God as the great and glorious Being on whom the eye of thought is to be fastened, and by whom the affections of the heart are to be determined. God and man are fitted to each other; and yet before religion as an

experimental condition can be a fact in the bosom of the latter, there must be some communication, some expression of attributes and character from the former. God must come to man in some way sufficiently clear and effective to excite the spiritual elements of his nature; and to meet this primary necessity is one of the grand objects to be gained by the Divine Incarnation. Let me ask your careful attention while I attempt to simplify and explain this thought.

Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, is not the absolute Deity, or the absolute humanity, but the two in mysterious conjunction, without any confusion of nature or attributes—the one acting as the medium and visible vehicle of the other. He is chargeable with the most astounding assumptions ever made if this be not true, and equally chargeable the apostles with great self-deception, or a deliberate intention to mislead the world. The doctrine of God in Christ is so woven into the very web of the history and ministry of Christ, and then so published by his apostles, that if we reject it as false, the whole system of Christianity, considered as having a divine sanction, falls to the ground.

Observe, too, that this doctrine, as presented in the Bible, is not a gorgeous and dramatic wonder merely to excite human curiosity. It is not a supernatural comet sweeping through our intellectual heavens for no apparent object. Though as an idea it strains the eye of thought to its very utmost, still when apprehended and accepted, it becomes the happiest, clearest, and most privileged medium of vision. It is indeed the Mount of Vision. God himself is a Spirit, invisible, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, inaccessible by sense, and incomprehensible by reason. In respect to this infinite Spirit, we are expressly told that Jesus Christ, the Immanuel, the God-Man, is "the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." He is such as a medium in relation to the vision of humanity. Hence the Apostle says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—language clearly implying that the invisible Jehovah is manifested to our appreciating apprehension in the person of Christ. Christ is therefore a revealer of God to the soul, standing, as it were, at a point midway between the finite and the Infinite. The same idea fell from the lips of Jesus when in answer to Philip's request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," he responded: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen ME, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ here speaks as if he himself were the veritable manifestation of God, gently rebuking Philip for not knowing it. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," is an utterance that transcends humanity—the

sublimest ever heard if true, and the most awful if false. By the showing of his own words, Jesus was not simply a man, but rather God manifest *to* man in the flesh. Let any merely human being, a Socrates or a Plato, a Mohammed or a Paul, undertake to put himself on this level, and thus speak of himself; and he could not sustain such a position for an instant under the scrutinizing search of human thought. Yet Jesus did take this very position, and he has sustained it for ages; fixing it as a fact in the faith of countless millions of our race. The whole system of Bible religion has been molded into this form.

Here then we make a pause upon a question that comes up from the very depths of our own nature. Looking at Christ as the Immanuel, so to speak, as the Divine Man, we ask whether it is possible, so far as we can see, for the Immortal, Infinite, and Absolute Jehovah to approach our race in any other way so well suited to our condition, and so conducive to our instruction? There is a broad gulf between man and his Maker. How, through what medium, sign, or symbol, is this gulf to be crossed? How is God to come sufficiently near to the creature, to be an object of his intelligent apprehension, confidence, and love—yea, to recover him from his darkened as well as fallen state? How shall God himself move towards man? This is the question.

The light of nature I have no desire to disparage; yet nature is not a person. Nature has no intelligence and no heart—utters no voice—says nothing—makes no communication—especially professes no hope to guilty beings. Nature is merely a ponderous mechanism of worlds; silent as a vacant eternity; teaching only what reason infers—to a brute, nothing as a symbol of God, and to man, nothing except as he expounds it and gives it a meaning. Nature is not a conscious and living teacher, but rather a stimulus and suggestion to thought. Looking at the works of nature, its moving worlds, its majestic laws, its stupendous forces, its complicated and wonderful adaptations, its numerous appearances of intelligent authorship, government, and providence, reason sees the foot-prints of the Creator's power, wisdom, and glory; and yet the God of mere reason sits behind this august scene—himself unapproached, unapproachable, retired, reserved, distant, vast, unsocial, incomprehensible, mysterious, silent, separated from the creature by an infinite gulf. The space between the finite and the Infinite is so absolutely immense, the latter is so far removed from the former, that reason while compelling us to believe in the reality of God, and perhaps constructing a sort of tabular statement of his attributes, has always felt, and if left to her own light, always must feel, the embarrassment and perplexity of her own weakness. Moreover, the light of reason acting upon the works of nature, has utterly failed to meet the wants of humanity, and bring the race into a true spiritual intercourse with God. Its history on earth is

that of a palpable failure. Mere reason can not so enter into the inner sanctuary of the Divine Mind as to bring forth a science of God suited to the exigencies of fallen man. Here reason leaves a chapter to be written by some other hand. The most enlightened pagans have felt the extreme difficulty of the problem. Plato felt it, and expressed the hope that the Infinite One would condescend in some extraordinary way to confer with his earthly creatures. We hence conclude that something more than mere nature is wanted—something supernatural, above nature, oracular, proceeding from God by a special providence. And this, too, is the very thing for which our fallen and thinking race has sighed in every age, driven thither as by the force of an original instinct.

How shall this want be so met as to develop in the human bosom the elements and affections of a devotional and hopeful existence? This plainly can not be done by some silent and incommunicative wonder, however august and startling. Such a miracle might fill the world with awe, but it would give no light. It would not relieve the difficulties that surround and perplex our thoughts. It would not open a channel of access to God.

What say you then to the idea of a supernatural messenger in the form of a prophet, inspired and speaking by the authority of God, as a Moses, a David, an Isaiah, or a Paul? This would present to us a human being elevated by the special gift of God to the rank of an inspired teacher: we could see his person, mark the signs of his commission, hear his voice, and accept his words as having the divine seal; and this, supposing it to be real, would certainly be an advance upon the light of nature. Such a teacher of God would be vastly superior to the mere philosopher moving in the circle of his own wisdom. Let an angel perform this service, coming into the sphere of flesh and blood, a visitant to earth though not of earth; and this angelic incarnation, supposing it to be real, would rise far above the brightest illumination of mere reason. Such a messenger duly certified, would be better than Plato in the purest strain of thought that Plato ever had. The words of this messenger would be clearer than the light of ten thousand suns. Raise the supernatural to a still higher grade, as is done in the person of Christ; in him behold Divinity actually making a tabernacle in the flesh, connected with a human form, and there fixing a local habitation; accept the idea, not as a dry dogma to be written on parchment and occasionally pronounced, but as a living thought of your inmost mental life; dwell upon it and be the Christian here; passing by the philosophic marvel, enter into communion with the spiritual, absolute, and unseen Jehovah through this human medium; learn with the believing Thomas to say, "My Lord and my God;" hear Jesus, and listen to the Deity; see him, and observe divine affection streaming through him; irradiate the entire firmament of your being with

the transcendent brightness of this one idea ; do this work effectually by a process of sublime contemplation and trustful faith ; and let me tell you that the feebler lights of nature will be lost in the splendors of a Christian day. On the supposition that the Divine Incarnation is a reality, it is the most intimate, endearing, impressive, and transporting approach of the great God to the children of men. The Bible says that it is a reality ; so Christ said ; so the apostles said ; so the faith of Christendom has affirmed ; and surely such a reality combines in itself the utmost that we can think, and all that we can desire, in a proposed medium of intercourse between the Creator-God and the creature-man. Compared with such a fact, nature is but a taper. The collected wisdom of all the philosophers of earth is merely the prattle of infants. One sentence from the lips of such a Teacher, touching the point to which it refers, is better than a thousand pages of the most elaborate induction. The lovely simplicities of the perfect Human furnish a tabernacle for the majestic presence of the King of kings and the Lord of hosts. A mystery of grace salutes our thoughts, which as a mystery is forgotten in the glorious appropriateness of the thing. God never came so near to man as he has done in the person of Christ. The divinity of this Christ makes a climax in the supernatural system of the Scriptures. Let angels sing ; let prophets tune their lyres ; let miracles of power attend this wonderful Messenger of the covenant ; let the zeal of cherubim and seraphim touch apostolic lips ; and let the gratitude, delight, confidence, and devout surprise of lost millions bring their willing offerings to the altar of the Divine and the Human, as reared upon these mortal shores in the person of Jesus. He is indeed "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Such a Being is at once God's best medium, and man's greatest facility. We want no more.

"Joy to the world—the Lord is come :
Let earth receive her King ;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing."

What are the feelings of God towards man ? What does he propose to do for man ? What does he require of man ? These questions are so answered by the God-incarnate as to make duty plain, devotion natural, and hope reliable. The science of God is relieved of its ambiguity, and so brought to the level of humanity that the humblest child of Adam may learn the way to heaven. Rooted and grounded in the words of Jesus, we have that eternal life which consists in the true and saving knowledge of God, without the uncertainties of human logic, or the calculations of reason to determine the greater probability. Faith in him is reason resting on the bosom of the Deity. Hope through him is thought anchored to the Throne. Worship paid to him is homage divine.

III. The Divine Incarnation supplies the conditions of an impressive and powerful **EXAMPLE**. The example of Christ, to which the Bible so often appeals, was a development of character in the sphere of flesh and blood—a moral pattern, not manufactured in heaven and sent to earth, but originated and drawn amid the actualities of a human life, and that too by one who shared in the conditions and relations of that life. It comes to us in a human form, invested with circumstances that are not only human, but in themselves ill adapted either to suggest or produce such a character as that of Christ.

This example is positive and real, laid in facts, adjusted to conditions and relations, and intelligible to thought. It is not a fiction, or a poem, or a beautiful flower gathered in some unearthly clime. It is not a conception, but a fact. Jesus actually lived among men, speaking, acting, suffering, dying, as reported in the Gospel-narrative. The record of his life is a history of facts. One instinctively feels that the life of Christ is and must be real, though in its moral elements the most fragrant and eloquent ever seen among men. No merely human brain ever did, or could invent such a life. Jesus himself worked it upon this earthly soil, made the exhibition, wove its facts together, and thus gave an opportunity for its submission to the inspection of the world.

Earth, too, has ever wanted, though in not one of her own children has she ever furnished, a model character, complete, well-sustained, and sinless in all its parts. Not one of her heroes, poets, philosophers, or statesmen, not even the very best of her most select and favored pupils, can be referred to as a finished and perfect specimen of moral goodness. Those who seem to have shared most largely in the spirit and temper of heaven—the great benefactors, instructors and guides of mankind—all bear an unvarying testimony to a distinct sense of their own imperfection. Humiliating confessions are on their lips, and severe self-reproaches often felt in their hearts. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” If we except Jesus, you can find no where in the whole history of the world an example of a perfectly sinless man. Hence, among men, repentance for sin is always a radical element in the inception and growth of a religious character. We must begin here; we can begin no where else, when seeking the communion and friendship of God. Not a sinner was ever converted, or a saint ever lived, free from the compunctions of conscious guilt.

Turning, then, to the wonderful Man of Galilee, we meet a character that at once strikes us as being sinless, absolutely perfect in all its expressions. This is our first impression; and moreover, the impression deepens just in proportion as we make ourselves familiar with the actual history of Jesus on earth. In him we do not detect the slightest evidence, that he ever had any experience

in the moral pangs of a sinner. He never acknowledged sin ; he never made a confession ; he never expressed a regret ; he never recalled a word ; he never said any thing to betray the least sense of moral imperfection ; he never implied that he could in any respect have done better than he had done ; though frequent in his communion with the Father, he never asked to be forgiven ; he challenged the Jews to convict him of sin ; in the habitual tenor of his own exercises, he always seemed to be reposing in the calm and quiet sense of his own perfection ; and yet in all this we discover none of those incongruities and faults, which are so sure to contradict the pretension, when mere men claim to be without sin. In the Saviour the claim appears natural, spontaneous, unstudied, unsought, coming out as the intuitive language of his own spirit, without extravagance, without any effort at self-righteous display, and always harmonious with the most perfect simplicity and humility of character.

The principles which Christ taught, presenting them as the beliefs of his own mind, and wishing others to adopt them and be governed by them, are clothed with a wisdom and purity sufficient to make his words immortal. Those lips that spake such words, that taught so wisely, that were never moved except in the utterance of some holy feeling or some pure and heavenly truth, were under the direction not merely of a sagacious vision, but also of a perfect heart. The words of Christ were the deep soul-breathings of his inner life. His public ministry presents such a combination of qualities, such an originality and independence of idea, such a superiority to all the contrivances and methods of human art, such a perfect symmetry and balance of character, such an exemption from all the extravagances and infirmities of man, such a simplicity and beauty of moral expression, such an appropriateness to the occasion, such a tender sympathy with the wants of this sinning and suffering race, such an unselfish and benevolent attitude of mind—in a word, so many characteristics of personal excellence, appearing alike in the manner and matter of what he taught, that one spontaneously feels that here is a being, as pure as he is wise, sounding the deepest depths of spiritual truth while filling thought with the fragrance of perfect holiness. Christ's teachings perfectly obeyed, would make the world as sinless as heaven. They contain no signs of weakness, and none of impurity. There they stand, unrepealed and unequalled, a legacy of wisdom and holiness for the guidance of the race.

The actions of the Saviour, with equal emphasis, declare him to be a perfect model. We behold him "mingling with all sorts of persons, and with all kinds of events ; we follow the steps of his public life, and we watch his most unsuspecting and retired moments ; we see him in the midst of thousands, or with his disciples, or with a single individual ; we see him in the capital of his

country, or in one of its remote villages, in the temple and the synagogue, or in the desert, or in the streets; we see him with the rich and with the poor, the prosperous and the afflicted, the good and the bad, with his private friends and with his enemies and murderers; and we behold him at last in circumstances the most overwhelming which it is possible to conceive, deserted, betrayed, falsely accused, unrighteously condemned, nailed to a cross. But wherever he is, and however placed, in the ordinary circumstances of his daily life, or at the last supper, or in Gethsemane, or in the judgment-hall, or on the hill of Calvary, he is the same meek, pure, wise, god-like Being." On all occasions, at all times, in all places, towards all persons, Jesus perfectly sustains the symmetrical and blameless beauty of himself—never uttering the language of passion—never doing any thing but the very thing he should do—dignified, yet not cold and reserved—intellectually great while accessible to the humblest child of want—exempt from every taint and foible of superstition—liberal without laxity—innocent as a lamb without weakness—uniting the sweetest passivities of patience and forbearance with the greatest force and energy of character—having nothing artificial or assumed, or planned for momentary effect—self-collected and self-possessed—alike superior to the infirmity of friends and the rage of enemies—proposing the immortal good of the race as the object of his mission—in all respects, coming up to the highest idea which can be formed of a perfect moral being, and hence admitting of no improvement in either the elements of his character, or the method of their combination. In him nothing was excessive and nothing defective. Judas betrays him, and yet no vengeance burns in the Saviour's heart. He is reviled, but he reviles not again. The contradiction of sinners he endures in silence. The terrible scenes of his trial and crucifixion fail to dispossess this wondrous, marvelous Jesus of the patience, love, and heavenly beauty, which have been the charm of his whole life. Indeed, every where we see in Christ a character unparalleled in the records of history, so gently simple that a child may converse with it, yet so morally grand as to fill speculation with admiration and wonder. Jesus was a perfect Man, gilding the firmament of our nature with the glories of heaven, as natural in his purity as he was sublime in his wisdom.

Eighteen centuries have elapsed since this Jesus moved as a man amid the scenes of earth. The short and simple annals of his life have borne his name to almost every clime, and invoked the judgment of countless millions. His character in even its minutest expressions has been thoroughly scanned by millions upon millions of men; and yet where, in all this vast array of mind, will you find a single person who, having made himself acquainted with the Bible history of Christ, ever supposed that he had detected a fault in the life of this most wonderful Being? What disciple

ever felt the necessity of making an apology for the conduct of his Lord? Those who neglect the Gospel, and even those who profess to be infidels, uniformly concede the perfection of the character assigned to Jesus. Thomas Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, is constrained to say: "Nothing that is here said, can apply even with the most distant disrespect to the real character of Jesus. He was a virtuous and amiable man." Rousseau, the polished though skeptical Frenchman, exclaims: "What sweetness! what purity in his manners! what impressive kindness in his instructions! what elevation in his maxims! what presence of mind! what skill and propriety in his answers! what control over his passions!" "Is it possible that a book in its faith so sublime, so wise, should be the work of men? Is it possible that he of whom it is a history, should himself be a man?" "Truly, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." Rousseau felt the moral majesty of Christ's character. Napoleon Bonaparte felt the same majesty. "Every thing in him," says Napoleon in a conversation with the skeptical Bertrand, "astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me." "He is truly a being by himself." "The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, every thing remains grand of a grandeur which overpowers." "From the first to the last he is the same—always the same—majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle." "I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or any thing which can approach the Gospel." "Who but God could produce that type—that ideal of perfection, equally exclusive and original?" Not a man ever lived who, upon a candid inspection of the Gospel narrative, would not pronounce Christ the "Holy One and the Just." His moral life is the voice of heaven, full-toned, blending all the harmonies of virtue, and swelling out into the finished melody of celestial song. It alike transcends eulogy and entrances spiritual discernment. In its presence infidelity is ashamed of its sneer. The moral life of Jesus is a doctrine in action, "beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God." No advance in ethical science sees in it any thing to correct or improve. It is a wonder, a mystery, a miracle, a celestial advent, in the kingdom of flesh and blood.

Looking now at the divine qualities and prerogatives of this mysterious Person, we of course accept his example as a final and absolute authority—a divine force or law, free from the fallibilities of human nature, and hence differing from the example of a prophet or an apostle. The example of Christ is an actual expression of moral truth, coming before us freighted with the sanctions of the Being who furnished it. In it we hear the voice of God, and learn his will. No command could be more positive, and no words clearer. The spirit and temper of Christ being ascertained,

the duty of man is made known. His life is a revelation from the throne of God.

Descending from the divine to the human aspect of the same person, we then observe his example in that circle of relations and circumstances, which are common to him and ourselves—in the virtues possible to man—in those trials, tribulations, and troubles of earth, by which he shared in the lot of men, teaching the world by his own action how to feel and what to do. Following in the line of the history, we see him in prayer; we see him in all points tempted like as we are; we see him as the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; we see him when the stormy clouds of persecution gather over him; we see him among friends and among foes; we see him without a place where to lay his head, poorer than the birds of the air; we see him when honored and when dishonored; we see him bathed in the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and expiring on the cross of Calvary; we see him in the whole range of the active, and also the passive virtues; we see him in all the walks and incidents of an earthly pilgrimage, severer than which no man ever felt; and wherever we see him, and under whatever circumstances, a pure and heavenly beauty shines upon him, and from him. Thus Jesus, the man, the sinless and perfect man, appears.

Combining, now, the two aspects in one vision—the divine and the human—we may well say with the poet:

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow."

What a delicate penciling of thought! A sweetness that is majestic! A majesty that is sweet! The life of such a being constitutes a presence and a power on earth, the like of which no man ever saw or felt before. As an example, it is perfect in its qualities, divine in its sanction, and human in its form. It exhibits our nature in its primitive beauty, in its unforfeited intimacy with Heaven, in its likeness to the immaculate Godhead, in its restored perfection, unsoiled by sin, glowing with a celestial consciousness, wearing the robes of innocence, and emitting the odors of Paradise. Such a life is in itself a most wonderful fact, and not less wonderful, as a power to instruct and impress the children of men. It blends the divine and the human in the greatest of mysteries and the sweetest of truths. The Divine Incarnation is hence a pertinency to the condition of man, which we can never cease to admire. The doctrine commends itself to our cordial acceptance by the gracious and glorious utility of its end.

IV. This same doctrine is directly related to the redemption of sinners by the process of an ATONING DEATH. The life of Christ

ended amid the agonies of crucifixion? The evangelists having sketched his public career, at length bring him to this strange and solemn hour. They hesitate not to tell the story of his death. Their narrative becomes unusually minute, when the wonderful Man, deserted by man, apparently forsaken by God, is himself overwhelmed in death. Reasoning from the greatness and goodness of Christ, from the miracles which he had performed, and also his claims upon human gratitude, we should have anticipated no such sequel. It seems a singular epilogue in a life so illustrious, an almost incredible reversal of its previous glory, a deep shadow alike terrible and mysterious. We should rather have supposed, that Heaven would have furnished a celestial chariot, with which to bear such a Being to the skies. Yet there the fact stands on the page of Bible history, that Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the cross of Calvary, and there hung, in the experience of untold anguish, till all that was spiritual in his nature fled from his lacerated body, leaving it broken, motionless, lifeless in death. Yes, there the fact stands without any effort to conceal it. The narrative is clear and distinct. There is a manifest design to make the fact prominent.

Moreover, to this fate Jesus himself made no resistance, and from it sought no escape. He met it of his own choice, fully foreseeing it, and having ample power to avoid the whole tragedy. He need not have died on the cross, yea, he need not have died at all by human hands, if he had otherwise determined. He was not a victim by coercion. Personally he did not deserve such a doom; God surely was not offended with him; and against his own consent, earth could not harm him. He laid down his own life, having power to lay it down, and power to take it again. No man took it from him. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Why, for what purpose, in what relation, did Jesus thus die? You are familiar with the Bible answer to this question. You remember that Christ told his disciples that he came to seek and to save that which was lost, yea, to give his life a ransom for many. You remember, too, what he said on the night which preceded the day of his death, instituting the Lord's Supper, and expounding its symbolic character—of the bread, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me"—of the wine, saying: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." These are plain words, clear words, true words, teaching that doctrine on which saintship has in all ages based the hope of salvation. Jesus spake them, meaning what he said, knowing in what character and for what purposes he was about to die, and designing to make his own idea both prominent and immortal in the memory of man. We must

believe them, regarding him the teacher as also our atoning Saviour. This was his thought, and hence, it should be ours.

The entire tenor of the Scriptures is in harmony with these memorable utterances. The paschal lamb had for ages typified the coming and the work of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The sacrificial system which God gave to the Jews, and commanded them to observe, was Heaven's chosen shadow of good things to come. The prophets, and especially Isaiah, were distinct and positive in declaring that the Messiah, of whom they wrote, would by suffering and death make an atonement for the sins of men. The first preachers of Christ proclaimed the doctrine of his death as an atonement for sin—as the procuring medium of pardon and reconciliation with God. This was their view, their doctrine, their hope for themselves and the world. Say what you please about the why and the wherefore, or say nothing; yet here stands the fact, which, as a fact of revelation, is as clear as the light of noonday—the oft-repeated fact, that Jesus died for our sins, that he tasted death for every man, that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, the just suffering for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God—I say, the fact, that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. There is no getting rid of it, if we read the Scriptures with candor. Nor have I ever been able to see for what good reason men should wish to avoid either the sight or the belief of this fact. It contemplates just what we need; it is a service wholly in our behalf; and if asserted in an accredited revelation, one would think it the very last thing that humanity would seek to ignore or shun. Why this desire of some men to detach the doctrine of the atonement from the Gospel? Why this antagonism of thought to the only theory of pardon which the Scriptures contain? Why this persistent effort to blot the principle of grace from the government of God? If we bow to the authority of the Bible at all, we should most cheerfully accept its whole testimony on the vital question of a sinner's salvation. To select the atonement as the special object of fastidious and skeptical criticism, is alike stupid and ungrateful.

Observe, now, that this doctrine of atonement by the sufferings and death of Jesus, crowns and completes our view of the Divine Incarnation. The complex and wonderful Person thus produced, was to be a Saviour, a Redeemer of guilty beings, meeting by a transaction peculiarly his own, an emergency in the history of man, suspending penalty, and yet honoring the law which enforces it. Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; still, in the relation of a Saviour to our race, it was meet in the wisdom of Heaven that he should take his position under the law; that he should assume the form of a servant; that he should be made in the likeness of men; and that in

this condition he should humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Just this composition of attributes in the Person, and just these items and conditions in the history of an efficacious atonement, were the requisites fixed upon in the counsels of eternity, and actually consummated in the life of Christ. We do well here to accept the truth as we find it in the Bible, whether our philosophy can or can not discern the mutual relation of all its particulars. We may not be able to adjust the elements of this supernatural plan to each other, as they exist in the mind of God. We are not the judges in the case. The requirements of the problem lie beyond the reach of natural reason. We do not know beforehand the necessary antecedents of a sinner's salvation; and hence it will be our wisdom to accept the truth as the Bible states it, rejoicing in the facts declared, even if the method of their relation should entirely transcend the most penetrating search of our philosophy.

Thus seeing the truth, we look upon Jesus the *Man* as the consecrated tent, the created organism of the world's Redeemer, the human visibility and locality, the victim and the altar of an oblation whose property is to cancel guilt and save the soul. Our thoughts rest upon a tangible object, and our faith, upon an appreciable method. His humanity and divinity are both involved, each being necessary to the other, and both uniting in the great work to be done. Jesus dead, is therefore a conqueror reposing in his glory, most victorious when apparently most blasted. He has finished his work. Those who sought and buried his body, knew little of the marvel so near to their eyes. Earth before had never received such a trust. Human hands never before carried such a corse to the tomb. The sad elegy of friendship was never before chanted over such a celestial presence. No wonder that angels watched while all that was mortal in the Prince of Peace lay sleeping in the sepulcher. Wait a moment! A glorious sequel is at hand! The resurrection morn has dawned! Jesus slain has left the tomb; at intervals for forty days he has met his disciples, and identified his person to their knowledge; he has given them their commission; and now you behold this same Jesus who bowed his head in death, mounting the heavens, greeted by the hosts of the world above, and taking his position as the Lord of heaven and earth to the glory of God the Father. He is now highly exalted; his name is above every name; and at his name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth. See then for what purpose Christ came in the likeness of men, for what purpose he humbled himself, and in what relation he was put to death in the flesh; let the Bible be your guide upon these points; and you will never want a theme for gratitude, or a spectacle for devout wonder. This glorious Person, this Word made flesh, into whose marvelous movements the angels desired to look, of whom the

prophets sang, to whom the apostles bore witness, and for whom martyrs have bled—this Lord Jesus Christ who hath ascended up far above all heavens, and who will come again to awake the dead, and judge mankind—this wonderful Counselor, who in his humanity sweat great drops of blood, who stood at Pilate's bar, who wore a crown of thorns, who breathed out an earthly life upon the cross in extremest agony—this great High Priest of our profession who made the atonement, for the joy that was set before him, despising the shame and apparent ignominy of the mortal struggle—this august Mediator between God and man, this heavenly Intercessor and final Judge—yes, this is the Being whom we preach as the Saviour of the world, of whose life we make mention, and to whom we point the thoughts of guilty men as their only ground of hope.

The doctrine of God in Christ, implying as its foundation a Divine Incarnation in the person of this Christ, was, and is, and ever will be, a complete pertuency to human want. The ends sought thereby, are those in which humanity has the very highest interest. The doctrine is not a speculation to bewilder thought, but a divine reality, a stupendous miracle of grace, for the salvation of our souls. Looking here, faith deals with the most exciting things that faith ever believed. Trusting here, faith finds a comfort pure as heaven and stronger than death. If the doctrine be true, and the four particulars we have named, express its relation to our instruction and salvation, then judge ye as to what ought to be the conduct of that man, or that community of men, or that world of men, to whom the knowledge of this truth is given. To be indifferent in its presence, negligent of its appeal, and disobedient to its mandate, supposes a torpor of thought paralleled only by the depravity which it implies and the doom it deserves. Come then, ye sons of earth, ye fallen children of Adam, ye men of all climes and ranks, come to your Redeemer-God. Taught by his wisdom, and pardoned by his grace, come and live forever.