

JESUS:

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

"Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*,"—Matthew i. 21.

EIGHTEEN centuries and a half have now elapsed since the birth at Bethlehem. And, as our custom is, we have come here to-day—the day set apart by the common consent of Christendom as the anniversary of that birth—to offer grateful praise to God for the unspeakable gift which it brought to our world. Here, ~~and~~ by heaven came the divinely sent child, and the simple shepherds from the fields of Judea, and well skilled sages from afar, alike came to his humble birthplace to do him reverence. His meek and saint-like mother treasured the utterances which were put forth concerning him, and, with a solicitude known only to herself, pondered them in the depths of her heart. She felt the hand of the Lord with her in giving her this child, and she had forebodings of his future career, such as few others had. The aged Simeon, spared to see his day, rejoiced, and told his mother that he was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." Yes, and he told her also that "a sword should pierce her own soul through;" but Mary then scarcely wist the sad meaning of this saying. The son grew in tranquil beauty by his mother's side, and at twelve years of age gave indications of an aim at once lofty and peculiar. He took his place among the doctors of the temple, heard their discoursing, and asked them questions, all the while kindling their astonishment by his own understanding and