

rative of the events which at that period came to pass in the natural world, as recorded in the Bible, we may suppose the reader to be familiar. The initial or primary event was a birth. A birth heralded by a declaration from heaven that it was fraught with blessings to mankind, and accompanied and followed by miraculous signs of divine interposition in human affairs, and of superhuman spiritual influence over the events and circumstances of the natural world. We who, living in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-five, have been educated in a Christian land, and enjoy the benefits and blessings of Christian civilization... We shall not be apt to think that the angelic heralds too highly estimated and extolled the importance to mankind of that event. The event was a birth. The immediate event manifested in the natural world was the birth of a human child. But what was the portentous ideal birth which was signified by and manifested in the birth of the human child? We are told by the authorized teachers that an incarnation of the Deity took place; that God manifested Himself in the natural world through the form and body of a man. Of the truth of that doctrine we have no doubt whatever. That it is strictly true in the highest sense we do not doubt; but that highest sense is the ideal sense, which is higher, fuller, and greater than the natural sense; the natural sense being related to the ideal sense, somewhat after the same sort that the shadow is related to the substance. It has unquestionably been of great advantage to num-