SERMON

Preached at Homeville, C. B., on the 12th of July, at the N. S. Eastern Association, by J. W. Gardner, of Guysboro, N. S.

(Published by request of the Association.)

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."—John 1st and 14 v.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.—1st John 3 and 8.

This is (we take it) one of the most wonderful statements in the Divine Word, and becomes at once the most profound, and sublime fact, and miracle of the universe. Consider, the "Eternal Spirit," who "fills immensity with His presence," and saturates everything around with His Divine immanence becomes flesh, and is scoped up within the narrow limits of our poor humanity, and in a state of babyhood, and weakness, "wails out a feeble cry," and the "sustenance" of all things, becomes dependent for a season at least, upon maternal love, and a woman's fondest care. Aye! verily, "Great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Now, let us like Moses, at sight of Horeb's burning bush, (which was unconsumed) turn aside for a few moments to consider this great, sight, and gaze upon the mighty mystery of the Incarnation of Deity.

As we pause awhile to contemplate, amid many, this question comes up, What do we owe to the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ? The answer most unhesitatingly comes, "Everything worth our reception."

Gaze around you, consider, and everything we prize as individuals, as a people or nation, is the outcome or fruit of the Nativity. Our civilization, our safety, our comforts, and our hope of a blessed immortality are all because of the advent and death of Christ, and crystallize around this undeniable and glorious fact. Mark ye the progress of civilization, and observe how the truths Jesus came to enunciate and establish, mark a "new era," and when carried out, as it is intended they should be, will usher in the dawn, and then on and on to the grand meridian splendours of the glad "golden age." For instance, does not Christianity purify, ennoble, uplift, enlighten, vivify, or quicken? Does not the hearty reception of its most blessed truths change the very heart, desires, actions, and tendencies toward evil, of the children of men? Now civilization alone cannot accomplish this, neither will a liberal education work so marvellous a change, and cannot possibly do it. Take for instance the case of the highly educated Brahmins and others, what is, and has been the effect of their education? Has it had the tendency to produce exactly such results as Christianity produces? Nay, verily! "It is not enough to say that the idolatry of the Old and New Testament" was precisely like to that of Hindostan. The idolatry of India is far worse. The gods of Greece and Rome had at least human features, they were made from the model of "men who were of like passions with ourselves," but among the hundred of millions of gods in India effecting the character of their worshippers, there is not one which represents a virtue, not one which is not a very monster of iniquity. Why do the Hindoos rarely worship their chief god *Brahma*? It is because he is reckoned too bad to be worshipped, and the gods by consent determined that he should not be. For instance their god *Shiva* has for his prevailing characteristics, revenge and malignity. The character of *Krishna*, is notoriously that of a licentious profligate. Their god *Juggernaut* is represented by an old idol without either legs or arms, because the legs and arms were cut off by the gods for incurable iniquity. Now if such then be the gods, the principle deities of India, what but impurity and cruelty can be the result of a religion which has such patrons in its gods? The Brahmins, the priests—therefore partake of the nature of the gods they profess to adore; and they are monsters of cruelty and iniquity, and these model and form the national character."

Then let your minds revert to the splendid intellects of Ancient Greece and Rome in their palmiest days, a Socrates, Plato, Solon, Chilo, Aristotle, etc., etc. Socrates approached very nearly Christianity without the light from Heaven; he believed,—you may remember,—in a Supreme Being, and the possibility of an eternal existence, he expressed and taught a distinct hope of immortality; and Plato, his pupil, also took up the doctrines of his great master, and transplanted them into his own fertile brain. They taught justice and morality and moral courage in the face of death itself, but they, with all their deep research and philosophy, "never found out God,—the eternal—nor discovered the Almighty to perfection." They never reached the religious conceptions of the "Old Testament," or the grand and beautiful doctrines revealed from "lips of gentleness and truth," found in the "New." They were some what like to

> A child crying in the night,
> A child crying for the light
> With nothing but a cry.

Is there no power, think ye, in this glorious Gospel? On one occasion in a large English town an infidel was lecturing against the truths and power of Christianity, and stated that it was only a myth; that the birth of the Lord Jesus and his life was merely a pretty fable or any way; ure imagination, the beautiful concoction of some fertile brains; and using the stock arguments against the miracles of healing and raising of the dead. Presently a man in the audience arose and obtained permission to ask a question. He told them how he had once been the worst of men in the town; how he had tried in every way to reform and how every power, human, was brought to bear upon him but all without avail; he plunged into sin worse and worse. Finally by the grace of God he was brought under the converting power of the love of Christ, as revealed in the Bible, and became a changed man from that very hour. "Now," said he, "will you tell me how a mere myth can exert such a wondrous power, and change the heart, as has the Gospel story? Ah, the "oracle was dumb"!" The gospel of Christ is indeed now, as in days of yore, "The power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, to every one which believeth."

First. Observe the prime reason of the Advent of Christ was to destroy the works of the devil and set men free from the bondage of sin.

The nature of sin is to bind men and and hold them fast within its "slavish chains."

I suppose some way there is really an attractiveness, a fascination, a power about the gossamer-like meshes of the spider's web, so deftly spun, woven and placed, as the sun shines upon it; and brings out its irridiscent or rainbow like colors, so that the poor silly fly is drawn and entired thereby, nearer and yet nearer by curiosity, and at length, alas! touches it and becomes ensnared, and the more it struggles to escape the entanglement within its meshes the worse the entanglement, yes:

> "Walk into my parlor
> Said the spider to the fly,
> 'Tis the prettiest little parlor
> That ever you did spy."

So men are enticed, drawn, fascinated by sin and become fast bound through evil, and held almost if not quite helpless within its awful enthralling power. A sinner is but the bond-slave of sin and a terrible unrelenting tyrant it is. In the year 1834, (you may remember) England, in a great measure through the exertions of Wilberforce and others put an end to slavery in all the British Colonies, which cost the nation no less a sum than $100,000,000, paid as compensation to the slave owners on releasing 700,000 slaves brought originally from "Africa's sunny plains."

Then you will remember our neighbors, the Government of "U. S. A." under Pres. Lincoln, set free her slaves; but oh at what a cost! in rivers of blood, destruction of property, and an immense amount of money during the four years struggle for supremacy between North and South in that unhappy war, ending in 1865.

"Christ came," and as expressed by the Roman Chief Captain to Paul in reference to being a Roman citizen—"with a great sum obtained to his freedom," so Jesus to set us free poured out the rich treasures of his heart in groan and agony, in spasm and in death, in Gethsemane's garden; Pratorium's pavement, and Calvary's Cross; "The just for the unjust, shedding His most precious blood as the ransom price of our everlasting manumission." Yes:

> "This was compassion like a God,
> That when the Saviour knew
> The price of pardon was His blood,
> His pity ne'er withdrew."

Secondly. "Christ came," or became one with us to bring "grace and truth; and immortality to light through the Gospel." Had not our Divine Master taken, or assumed our nature, and "took upon Himself the form of a slave, we could never under any circumstances, have received "grace and truth" in blessed exchange, for our lost and ruined condition; we must have perished in our sins, without a ray of hope or a chance of mercy. Hence to save, to uplift, and eternally bless and glorify, "He Himself took part of the same," etc., and behind the mysterious folds of a peasant's dress, and our poor humanity lay enwrapped (Ah, how!) "The Mighty God," "the Everlasting Father," "The Creator of the Universe," "The Prince of Peace," and yet, wishal, "One with us."

That somewhat eccentric, but devoted missionary Samuel Hebich, used to labor very hard to make his dull hearers among the Hindoos understand the mystery of Christ's humanity. His biographer says that he hit upon this device for accomplishing this end. He would hold up a copper coin behind which was concealed a silver rupee of the same size. When he made his hearers state the value of what he held in his hand then he would slip out the more precious coin, and show them how much greater was the value than they supposed. The silver—gold would have been better—was Christ's divine nature, hidden behind His human form to give its infinite worth. Such an object lesson must be preached, whether at home or abroad be ever exhibiting. The silver or gold of Christ's divinity must ever and soon be revealed behind the baser metal of our humanity; silver indeed, but stamped with the "image and superscription" of human woe, and want, and pain, that so it may pass current among men. "The gods, (or *God*) is come down to us in the likeness of man," is a grand and blessed fact!

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," etc. "Can you give the reason why Jesus Christ is called the Word? What is meant by the Word? It is a curious term". This question was put by a sceptic to a Mr. Greenfield; Mr. G. quite unconscious of the motive or principles of the enquirer, replied: "I suppose as words are the medium of communication between us the term is used in the Bible to demonstrate that He only is the medium between God and man. I know of no other reason." Aye, how much of truth is there in this, we each one can fully endorse the reply. As the sun climbing the eastern hills tomorrow morning comes chasing away the gloom and shadows of the night and brings in golden glory, radient, cheering, beautiful and life-imparting, so Christ the Eternal Son in His humanity comes over the darkened mountains of our sin-stricken world and brings in the full-orbed noontide of "grace and truth", bringing immortality to light through the medium of the "Grand Old Gospel" of His mercy and wonderous grace and love.

I late says, "Truth is the body of God and light is His shadow." For the pupil of Socrates (and one of the most spiritually-minded of the worshippers of the gods of Greece) this is a remarkable utterance; how true it is! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, and the light," etc. Plato's utterance was three or four centuries before the Advent of Christ, hence remarkable. May we indeed not exclaim, as did the Master to the scribe who questioned Him on one occasion, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

Thirdly. Observe our text states, "We beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

Although, therefore; "He was found in fashion as a man", and as expressly foretold by the prophet Isaiah seven hundred years prior to His miraculous birth, "He is despised and rejected of men"; wearing oftentimes methinks, in His humiliation a countenance expressive of deepest sorrow, being fully acquainted with grief; (for after all there was no sorrow like unto His sorrow",) yet there were times when the golden splendours of His Godhead overpowered the deep shadows of the poverty of His humanity; like as when the sun hidden behind dark, thunderous, tempestuous cloud, through a rift darts a beam of light and touches the drenched earth with splendour inimitable, so upon Hermon's heights when three only of the most favored disciples beheld the supernal glory of Him whom they reverently called "Master", shine through the thick folds of His humanity, and when that oftimes sorrow-stricken face outshone for a season the brilliancy of the sun, then was the cold mountain side or summit touched with Heaven's brightness and beauty, so that poor, astonished Peter was for then and there making three tabernacles, "one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elias", he knew not what to say or do, and no wonder. "And as he prayed". Oh, brethren, think of this! "As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was changed." Who among us would not like to have heard *Him pray*? We have oftimes heard brother C. H. Spurgeon (now in Heaven) pray, and it seemed indeed inspired from above. O the holy, loving familiarity, as a fond child communing with a fonder father. Dr. T. L. Cuyler says in reference to him: "It was Saturday night after a delightful afternoon with him, (Spurgeon) at his home in Upper Norwood": he said "when you are gone, I am going to get something to feed my chickens with tomorrow." That was his way, to select a text about 6 o'clock Saturday night, and then in about thirty minutes to prepare his sermon, which he delivered to thousands the next day. That was his way, to fill up the cask with the Bible, turn on the "spigot," and let it run. We went into his study—that great workshop, whose work has gone around the world—and we had prayer, and when I had finished prayer he was in such awful pain he could not even kneel, through his neuralgia. He sat at the end of the table and dropped his head between his hands, and began to call on God like a child at his mother's knee, sweet, simple, fervent, grasping glorious. When he had finished I said to Newman Hall, (who was with me) "Newman did you ever hear such a prayer as that in your born days?" "Never, never" was his reply. That was the time he got into the secret power. A man that could pray like that could influence the world. If such be the case with a mere mortal, "a man of like passions with ourselves," how must it have been when the perfect, sinless "Son of God" prayed? Well might the disciples exclaim on another occasion "Lord teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." "And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was changed." Was it as John in Apocalyptic vision, some sixty years later saw it? It may be. Heaven on the occasion touched Hermon's brow, and all was transfigured before the astonished eyes of Peter, James and John.

Moses, typical of the Law on the right; Elijah, typical of the prophets on the left; Jesus in the midst, the great centre of attraction, far greater than law and the prophets, for in Him all focussed, and every type, shadow, symbol, and picture found in Him a grand, wondrous, blessed fulfilment. Now, methinks, whatever doubts and fears the three favored disciples had before this wonderous phenomenon, or glory, all must have speedily vanished after this marvellous display of Divine power and favor; says Peter thirty three years later: "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came a voice from the excellent glory," etc, etc. Yes, we doubt not "grace and truth" shone out in every action of Jesus; "grace and truth" was manifest in the expression of that sinless, yet suffering countenance; "grace and truth" in every sentence which He uttered; "grace and truth" was (shall we say) as natural to Him—once indeed "Babe of Bethlehem" and afterwards "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,"—as for the sun to shine, and to illumine all the spheres, or as for the cloud to distil its treasures of moisture upon the thirsty soil, or, as for the flowers to fling off their aromas upon the breeze at early morn, or when evening shadows gather? He was full of "grace and truth" and it overflowed! O brethren! that each of us may indeed be a reflex in some measure of Him, who was, and is, "The Eternal Son of God" and yet is, (Ah! how?) The mysterious "Son of Man" also,

> "God with us! O glorious name!
> Let it shine in endless fame;
> God and man in Christ unite;
> O mysterious depth and height!"

THE COUNTRY PREACHER.

In England and Scotland, the words of poets, novelists, and essayists from Goldsmith and Wordsworth, down to the authors of "Recreations of a Country Parson," and "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," have cast a certain halo of romance about the rural pastor; he appears as a person of culture and refinement but of simple tastes, who possesses a small but certain income from the established church, finds countless opportunities to do good even in a small parish, is regarded with veneration by some and with respect by all, and in short, is "passing richron forty pounds a year." Even in our New England, and in some of the Southern States, this state of things has not entirely disappeared; but in the West it has seldom if ever existed. The work of the country minister, especially in the great agricultural states, is hard, monotonous, often unfruitful. He is regarded no such reverence as the minister once received; indeed his social position is sometimes far from agreeable. In all farming communities a person who works with his head rather than with his hands is subject to a certain prejudice; and those that assume his support often do so in a good-natured grumbling that does not make his lot any easier. They handle so little money themselves, even though fairly prosperous, that it is not strange they sometimes wonder that the minister can spend so much.

But a far greater trial to the country pastor is the spiritual poverty of the community in which he labors. Privations could be born; isolation from society of friends would not be counted hard, if only the pastor could see lives brightening under his touch; men wakened to a new life, narrow souls made generous; if only the practical materialism of a godless town, infinitely worse than the theoretical materialism of the schools, could be changed by the love of Christ, and the spirit of the kingdom of heaven could begin to rule; then the country pastor would feel himself truly a missionary, not an overworked, ignoble toiler. These rewards do come to some, and their hearts are made glad; but for others the hope deferred maketh the heart sick.

If the truth were known, this term "country preacher" would be no longer a term of reproach, but of honor. Men of good education miss keenly the books and scholarly atmosphere that they enjoyed in college and seminary; and those who have not had those advantages often long for them with a constant desire that is in itself ennobling. He who bravely makes the best of what he has is more worthy than any idler in the city pastorate who lounges amid a thousand books. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst. The country pastor stands by the places that are deserted by all other men of education and ambition. He watches his bright young men grow to be strong and helpful and then leave for the cities; he sits by the dying bed of aged saints and wonders how their places shall be filled; he struggles to hold together the Sunday school which often is the only religious influence to keep the children from utter heathenism. And all the while he feels himself growing less and less vigorous mentally, less able to undertake the duties of a city pastorate, and less likely to be called to such a position; he sees friends no abler than himself making names for themselves because of the accident of position; and in rare hours when his steady faith halts, he wonders if it is worth while.

Yet the country pastorate has its compensations. Life does not rush on with that breathless whirl that consumes the spirit of the dweller in cities. There is time to think, and to pray. The country pastor has a strong hold on his people, and receives from them gratitude and affection. And sometimes he is permitted to see the church awakened, and growing, until it molds a whole community, setting in motion forces that reach far beyond his vision.

Honor these men. Honor them as the salt of the earth; honor them as you would honor missionaries in India or Africa. Remember that the hope of the cities is in the country, and the hope of the country is in the country churches. One soweth and another reapeth. In the day of harvest, honors may be strangely transterred; and the country preacher shall be hidden no more.—The Standard.

Literary Notes

The August *Arena* contains the first of a series of "Bibliographies of Literature, Dealing with Vital, Social and Economic Problems," which will fill a want long felt by students of social and economic problems. The first Bibliography deals with the Land and the Land Question, and is carefully compiled by Thos. E. Will, A. M., professor of Political Economy in the Agricultural State College of Kansas.

All lovers of Whittier, and for the matter of that, all who love a beautiful life, will be deeply interested in the article in the August *Arena* entitled "Whittier—The Man." This article is one of the series on Whittier by the Editor, B. O. Flower, and is certainly the most delightful of the series so far. Mr. Flower is a brilliant and at the same time a sympathetic writer, and while from a literary point of view this paper is admirable, its great charm lies in bringing us so near to the heart and soul, to the real inner life of the gentle Quaker, one of the most loved of America's great poets.

The Treasury Magazine for August, 1896, has an initial sermon by the Rev. Dr. J. Thos. Pate, of Camden, S. C, whose likeness makes the frontispiece, and whose church is described and pictured. Dr. Pate is the subject of a biographical sketch, as are also Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and the new Methodist Bishops, McCabe and Cranston, of all of whom portraits are given. The first article is an illustrated description of the work at Northfield, with a portrait of Mr. Moody. Dr. W. E. Barton, of Boston, contributes the second sermon, and there are outlines from several eminent preachers and college presidents. Prof. Small closes his series on Denominational Characteristics with an article on Movements towards Unity. Prof. Charles Noble, of Iowa College, shows the need of high culture in the ministry; Prof. T. W. Hunt, of Princeton, gives a Literary Life Sketch of Macaulay; Rev. C. H. Yatman, the famous evangelist, gives the third of his characteristic Bible Talks, and the minor departments are maintained as usual. Whatever our financial or political anxieties, *The Treasury* always gives full measure. Annual subscription, $2.50. Clergymen, $2. Single copies, 25 cents.

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If spring came but once in a century instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake, and not in silence, what wonder and expectation there would be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change! But now the silent succession suggests nothing but necessity. To most men, only the cessation of the miracle would be miraculous, and the perpetual exercise of God's power seems less wonderful than its withdrawal would be.—Henry W. Longfellow.

GETTING READY.—Happy is that child of Jesus who is always listening for the footfall this side of the golden gate, and for the voice of invitation to hurry home. A true life is just a tarrying in the tent for Christ until we go into the mansion with Christ. "I hope your master has gone to heaven," said some one to a slave when his master was dead. "I's afraid he has not gone dar," replied Ben, "for I never heard him speak o' dat. When he go to de North or de Virginny Springs, he always be gittin' ready many weeks. I never see him gittin' ready for goin' to heaven." The simple negro's words are a test, an admonition, for each one of us; for let us be assured that not one of us will ever see that home unless we are made ready for it by Christ Jesus.—T. L. Cuyler.

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THE SECOND MAN.

1st Cor. 15-47.

The Lord from Heaven has to the earth come down!
And coming, He has brought the blest renown
Of Him who holds the universal throne;
The universal honor, all His own.

The Second Man, descending from above,
Reveals the incarnation of that love
Divine whose self existent boundlessness
Includes all powers that cheer, uphold and bless.

In Jesus, Heaven has appeared on earth!
And through the windows of this second birth,
We look beyond the schools of time and change,
And gaze along our own eternal range.

From Bethlehem the holy Birth lay ringing,
And echoes on and on, and sweetly sings
The recreation that has saved a race,
And will redeem our mortal dwelling place.

The Herald angels sing of peace on earth,
And Peace on earth shall reign—a heavenly worth,
When earth renewed, from Heaven shall receive
The Home of all who in the Lord believe.

ADDISON F. BROWNE.

Lockeport, July 25.

Humility is be autiful grace. Never put yourself before other people. Let them put you forward. Never, never boast of what you have done or could do. Self-praise goes but a little way.

A christian missionary, on entering a new field in China, was kindly received by the mandarin, who promised to do all in his power to help him. "I have not heard your doctrine," said he, "but I have seen it. I have a servant who was a perfect devil; but since he received your doctrine he is another man, and I can now trust him."—Sunday school Journal.

Here is a stone in a quarry. Men come along and rudely blast and tear it from its place. Then it is carried away, and other men come and cut and chip and chisel it rudely. The stone might say: "Why am I treated thus? How hard it is to undergo such rough and heartless treatment." But by and by there comes out from the rough stone a beautiful angel figure which all must admire and love. Then the stone begins to understand what the chipping and chiseling and hard treatment all meant. So with us: "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, but afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby."—Sel.

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B. P. SAUNDERS, PROPRIETOR.

The above named Hotel, opened to the public May 1st, is strictly a temperance house, and is conducted with a view to meet all requirements of permanent and transient boarders. The rooms in this house are fitted with the latest modern improvements, are heated by steam and lighted by gas; bathrooms with hot and cold water. Situation unsurpassed; view superb. Steamboat landings and post-office in close proximity. Electric cars pass the door every five minutes.
TERMS MODERATE.

HOTEL CENTRAL,
WOLFVILLE, N. S.
J. W. SELDRIDGE, - - PROPRIETOR.
Situated in the most central part of this most beautiful Town.
Repaired and newly refitted with all modern improvements.
Guests conveyed to and from Station free of charge.
Excellent Livery Stable (owned by W. J. Balcom) in connection.
First-class accommodation. Terms very moderate.

CENTRAL HOUSE,
HALIFAX, N. S.
Corner of Granville and Prince Streets. Entrance—45 Granville Street.
This location is convenient and pleasant. Arrangements are for the comfort of guests.
MISS A. M. PATSON, Proprietress.