

closer attendance on the mysteries of Christ's incarnation and birth would have procured us.

This, undoubtedly, is the best and most satisfactory point from which to view the mysteries, whether joyful or sorrowful, of our redemption. Their effects, it is true, have no limit in time, and their saving influence upon our souls is as great and as effectual as it could be upon those that witnessed them. The blood of Jesus is able to cleanse our stains, upon which it mystically descends, as much as those of Magdalen, or any others of the pious attendants on His cross, upon whom it actually was sprinkled. Yet who envies them not that pang of killing sorrow—that heart-bursting contrition—and that mournful love, which none but they could ever feel?

The love of our infant Saviour was as much displayed for us as for the happy shepherds of Bethlehem; for us as well as for them, He bore the cold and destitution of that His first night, and angels sung peace to men, and to God glory on our behalf, no less than on theirs that heard them. Yet who is not jealous of that prerogative which they had, of gazing on the god-like smile of that blessed Infant, and feeling that intensity of purest joy, which the sight of Him under such circumstances could alone inspire? And if the service of God hath a right to man's heart as much as to his understanding—and if the affections when given to Him, should be brought as nigh as possible to the full measure of their object, surely we shall do well to meditate upon the mysteries now before us, with as much of that fervent piety and devout affection, as may be supposed to have inspired those who actually beheld them.