

thereby greatly to win our love. Every part of His life presents us some peculiar incentive to affection, but none to the same familiarity of love as this of His humble birth into the world. When we contemplate Him upon Calvary, giving us the marvellous evidence of a love strong as death, there is in our returned affection a painful mingling of sorrow, of a culprit's shame, a penitent's remorse, and withal, a bitterness of sympathy which greatly disturbs the purity of simple love. When we behold Him breaking open the bolts of death, and triumphing over the tyranny of hell by His glorious resurrection, there is an admixture of reverence and exceeding awe, which tempers our affection and checks our familiarity. But here, in His poor and rough bed of straw, all His majesty is shrouded, all His dazzling and consuming brightness drawn in. He seems to require our loving care, to invite our caresses, and pure, tender, untempered love is the exclusive feeling wherewith we view Him. There is yet no stain of blood upon His tender flesh, no reproaching gash, no ignominious crown. We can imagine Him as yet unconscious of the pain He will one day suffer for us, and of the ingratitude wherewith we shall requite Him: His present miseries seem independent of our worthlessness, and such as we have a full right to sympathize with.

And where would all this sentiment of sincere and sweet affection have been found, had we been called to meditate on an infant royally laid in a bed of state, reposing upon cushions of down, and watched and nursed by princesses? No; we should have turned away, awed by it, or at least careless of its smile; it