

## SERMON I.

## On the Incarnation and Birth of Jesus Christ.

LUKE, iii. 6.

"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Two days more, my brethren, will bring us to that festival—fountain of all Christian joy—for which the Church has prepared us through the season of Advent. In that admirable spirit which has been maintained in her from the beginning, she has announced to us the coming solemnity with the same vivid phrase, as she might have been supposed to use, had the event we are going to commemorate been about actually to happen. Not only have the gospels of this preparatory season presented us with the preaching of the precursor John, but all her prayers and offices have spoken to us of the Son of God as about to be born for our salvation. At the beginning of the time, she called upon us to adore the Lord who is preparing to come; as we approached its term she changed her invitation to the more cheering notice that the Lord was nigh;\* her prayers expressed alternately a hope of His speedy appearance, and a fear lest the sins of His people might delay it; and thus our affections have been carried back through eighteen centuries to that truer standard of feelings, which

\* "Regem venturum Dominum,—Prope est jam Dominus, venite adoremus."—*Invitoria* in Advent.

