

those first tears were but the first fruits of the solitudes and anxieties which our love of perishable goods continues to the end to cause us. We love our riches, our reputation, our ease; we surround ourselves with comforts, and repine if they be taken from us. We would not have affliction come near us, and hate the look of sorrow. We would fain that all the crosses we must bear should be made of cedar, and that the lashes wherewith God scourges us should be of silk. Now, then, look upon that Infant, who lies upon a little bundle of straw, between the ox and the ass, and tell me what you think of gold, and luxury, and worship, and honor? Are they to be praised—nay, are they to be spoken of in His presence? Who is it? “The wonderful, the Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come.” (Is. ix. 6.) And did He will to be laid upon so lowly a bed, and to be attended with such mean state, and to be clothed so poorly, and to be known so little: and shall we, sinners and poor slaves, affect great pomp and service, and lose our peace if all things fall not out with us as we desire? Oh! such thoughts will not brook the vicinity of that humble couch; they fit us not to enter in with the shepherds; they belong to the rich and proud inhabitants of Bethlehem, who refused admittance to the poor, but most blessed parents of Jesus.

And if, in our dear Lord’s nativity, we are taught to despise the vain delights of earth, we are surely attracted by a sweet, but powerful, influence to cleave to Him. When He took upon Himself our flesh, He entered into Brotherhood with us—He intended