

this issue are vague and ambiguous, he seems to have believed that while Christ never actually sinned, he did have a sinful nature that had to be resisted and overcome. Irving often used the expression, "Christ's sinful flesh," and the error was perhaps due to a lack of differentiation between the more literal usage of the word flesh (as in John 1:14 where the incarnation is in view) and the theological meaning that it often takes in Paul's letters when he is speaking of fallen man's sinful nature (e.g. Gal. 5:16-19,24).

Another issue that Dallimore touches on only briefly was Irving's involvement in prophetic speculation. For a number of years (1825 - 1828), Irving was almost totally preoccupied with the thought that the end times had arrived, that a time of great judgment was at hand, and that the return of Christ was only a few years away. Irving's sermons on the books of Daniel and Revelation attracted great crowds and did much to fuel the flame of current prophetic enthusiasm. Margaret Oliphant, the 19th century biographer of Irving, relates a remarkable incident that should be included in any biography of him (cited by Iain Murray in The Puritan Hope, p. 192):

His text was taken from the 24th chapter of Matthew, regarding the coming of the Son of Man. I remember nothing of the sermon, save its general subject; but one thing I can never forget. While he was engaged in unfolding his subject, from out of a dark cloud, which obscured the church, there came forth a bright blaze of lightning and a crash of thunder. There was deep stillness in the audience. The preacher paused; and from the stillness and the gloom his powerful voice, clothed with increased solemnity, pronounced