

The Archbishop of Canterbury is not always so strong a partizan as some people may imagine. At the beginning of last month, his Grace not intending to follow the guidance of those who object to mixed assemblies, summoned a hundred and twenty clergymen, "more or less," of all schools of religious thought to Lambert Palace for the purpose of discussing the question—"How, under present circumstances, unity of prayer and action may be best promoted in the Church." Some idea may be formed of the various composition of the meeting from the names which have been given of those who took part in the proceedings. They were the Archbishop, the Bishops of London, Winchester, and Rochester, Canon Farrar, the Revds. T. T. Carter, Arthur Brook, G. W. Herbert, J. C. Ryle, H. M. Villiers, J. Bardsley, F. H. Murray, W. G. Humphrey, W. Boyd Carpenter. Holy Communion was celebrated at the beginning of the Conference; which was a good sign of success. We trust that the results will be satisfactory; and we shall doubtless be favored in a few days with further accounts of the proceedings. A contemporary reminds the Bishops, however, of the Shakespearian aphorism, that "the remedies oft lie within ourselves which we ascribe to Heaven"; and it adds, "if they wish to bring about unity, they have nothing to do but to declare that they will have no more attempts to force the consciences of earnest and religious men; or to settle controversies of the faith by means of bailiffs and prison cells."

Since the capture of Plevna, inquiries have been instituted as to the treatment of Russian prisoners taken by Turkish soldiers, suspicion having been aroused by the fact of very few prisoners being found there. It turns out that most of them were massacred as soon as captured, it not being an essential part of Turkish warfare to be plagued with such very useless appendages to an army. Altogether the state of affairs discovered in the captured city must serve to detract very considerably from the praise to be awarded to Osman Pacha as the gallant defender of Plevna—that is to say, if there is any humanity at all still left in Christendom. Eighteen hundred prisoners were huddled together on the banks of the Vid, and it is said that the horrors of their position equalled those of a plague. Living and dead were piled together promiscuously in heaps like wood, and carted away. The bravery of the Turkish Commander is sadly blackened by his treatment of the Russian prisoners that fell into his hands. His gallant defence of Plevna for so long a time and under circumstances so unfavorable, united with the skill he manifested in thwarting the attempts of the Russians excited the admiration of Europe, while they were ignorant of the fact that nearly all prisoners were butchered by the troops under Osman's command. When the city was taken, multitudes of famished dogs and birds of prey were found feeding on the corpses of the dead and on the bodies of the still living wounded. The most harrowing details circulated in reference to the horrible state of the city, and

which at first were scarcely credited, have been confirmed by later accounts.

At last Turkey consents to strike her colors and sue for peace. Russia is preparing to put forth all her strength; the reinforcements ordered for her army exceed two hundred and fifty thousand men; the army of the Baltic, numbering ninety thousand men, is also being formed, and she has bought two hundred thousand rifles in Berlin. All this argues a determination on her part to do little more in the way of talking in the cabinet and to carry on in future her operations in the field with all the forces at her command. Probably, in view of these demonstrations, the Turkish government has solicited Great Britain to approach the Czar, with a view to bring about negotiations of peace. It is said that no basis has been laid down for a peace settlement, and that no more is involved than to test the willingness of Russia to enter into negotiations—the terms of peace being a matter for subsequent consideration. It is also stated that England has consented to try what can be done towards putting an end to the war.

But, in the meantime, England is said to have addressed a warning note to Russia against her approach to Constantinople, and the war party in England is increasing in violence. Twenty thousand English regulars and eighty thousand native troops in India are ordered to be in readiness to leave at short notice for Turkey or Egypt; in fact a considerable amount of bluster is manifested by those who wish to bring on another edition of the Crimean War, which began in incompetency, diplomatically as well as otherwise, and ended in a practical failure. But England has now no ally in the shape of Napoleon the Third, and the Czar will surely smile at the idea of twenty thousand Englishmen being sent against the myriads of his own army! A powerful and enthusiastic force might doubtless be raised against Russia among the Mohammedan population of India.

#### THE EPIPHANY.

THIS festival falling on a Sunday this year is likely to receive more attention than in ordinary years, when happening to come on a week-day. It is not, however, one of the principal festivals of the Church, being subordinated to Christmas; indeed, the Epiphany was originally regarded as that part of the Christmas Festival on which was commemorated the baptism of the Saviour by St. John the Baptist. It appears to have acquired a more independent position, and to have been observed in memory of our Lord's manifestation to the Gentile Magi, in the Western Church, about the Fourth Century. This was perhaps a development of the original idea; and although it has become the most prominent feature of the festival, it has never altogether superseded the original principle connected with it. The primitive name of the day was "Theophany," which is still retained in the Eastern branches of the Church. It is also called *The Lights*, from the array of torches and

tapers with which the Benediction of the waters is performed on this day, to symbolize that spiritual illumination to which our Lord by His Baptism in the Jordan, consecrated water. This name of the festival appears to be as old as the time of Gregory Nazianzen, and probably originated in the idea of the illumination of the world by that true Light, which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man; and to which the Magi were led by the light of the star.

Tradition has always asserted that the Magi were three in number, and that the remainder of their lives after the events recorded in the Gospel, was devoted to the service of God. They are said to have been baptized by St. Thomas, to have themselves preached the Gospel, and at length to have been crowned with martyrdom. The names ascribed to the Magi in medieval art and literature are, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.

The season of the Epiphany, whether regarded as commemorating the manifestation to the Gentiles, or the Baptism in the Jordan, carries us back to one among a number of the instances in which the lowly humiliation of the Saviour was mingled with the beaming forth of the illuminations of His Godhead.

Connecting it with the visit of the Eastern sages, there is very much to learn from the short account given us of the event. In the worship of the Eastern sages there was much more than reverent outward homage. They proved their sincerity practically by their gifts of gold, of frankincense, of myrrh—material symbols of things infinitely more precious—of love, of piety, of self-denial. Their inquiry ended in discovery; and when they had found their Lord, they did not curiously examine Him, as if He had been merely the solution of an intellectual puzzle; they worshipped Him as their King and their God. We may look on the material sun in his brightness, or in his eclipse, as day by day we learn to know more of him, and our highest knowledge ever must stop at the stage of an intelligent wonder, for this sun is but a creature after all, and he only at best reflects the glory of the uncreated and awful Being who really made him. But at the feet of the Sun of the moral world—the Sun of Righteousness—it is, it must be, otherwise. At His feet we have reached the very frontier and source of being, and to gaze without worship, without true, inward, utter self-annihilation before Him, is to deny the truth of what our spirits see. May He grant to each who needs it at this blessed season, some star of His Epiphany—some tongue of fire that shall speak from Heaven! And may we watch till we follow, and follow though it be amidst discouragements—follow perseveringly—Him whose message and evangel it is.

#### GOODNESS AS SEPARATE FROM CHRISTIANITY.

WERE it not to be seen every day that mankind are oftentimes more affected by the most paltry trifles than they are by the gravest realities, it would appear