

THE NEW YEAR.

NEW Year's Day is dawning upon us, the old year with all its joys and sorrows, its sins and suffering, its heroic deeds, its manifold temptations, its months and weeks, its days and hours are gathered into one word—*Dead*. We, cannot recall it any more than we can breathe the breath of life into the nostrils of a dead man, it has passed into the hands of a higher power than our own, we can do nothing but leave it to the mercy and judgment of one who holdeth the years in His keeping.

As there must be a resurrection of the dead body which we lay in the grave, and bury from our sight, so will there be a resurrection of the dead year, when the fulness of time has come, and who shall say that it is not very near, even at the very doors? Each soul knows what record has been written against it in the past year, how blurred and blotted by sin have been the pages of life's book, how our best actions when looked at by God's all-searching eye, are stamped by sin and self.

In the year of our Lord 1884, how much has gone before to judgment! Assassinations, murders lawlessness, rebellion of every kind has stalked abroad, and smitten down many a noble life; infidelity too has done its work, and God alone can see the end, but such things must rise up again in judgment upon the perpetrators—the year is dead, but the deeds thereof must be brought to light in that day when the books are opened, and the Son of God seated on the great white throne passes sentence, on those who have not repented of their sins. This is a gloomy aspect—still, it is there buried with the dead year, but not annihilated.

On the other hand we have much of joy and gladness, to look back upon in the past year. Many have striven to keep their robes unspotted by sin, and although their shields have been bruised and battered by the enemy, the robes beneath have been kept white and clean, and their record is written without stain, or blemish.

How many too have gone forth in the past year, leaving home and kindred, earthly honour and worldly joys, to plant the standard of the cross in foreign lands, to endure hardship and privation, so that they may snatch, if only a handful of souls from the grasp of the destroyer, to be gathered up into a sheaf of glory, waved before the Lord, in the day of His harvest. We know, all that has been done for His honour and glory, (be it only a cup of cold water, given in His name) small have its reward in that day, when He maketh up His jewels, and the simple pearl will take its place beside the brilliant diamond in His kingly crown, and the brilliancy of the one will not take from the clear, pure lustre of the other.

New Year's Day is dawning, and there is something bright and hopeful in the sound of these words. We cannot tell what of joy or sorrow this New Year may bring, but we all hope for happiness for ourselves and others. Let us each begin the day by dedicating ourselves afresh to God and His service, praying for a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit, to dwell in our hearts—then we need not fear anything, the New Year may bear to us on the wings of time, for whether it be tribulation or happiness, if we have His Holy Spirit, the fruits of that spirit must be "joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness," for He hath said it, and His words, cannot fail. Let us all press on, looking and longing for that New Year's Day which will usher in Eternity—when time shall be no more, when instead of the pealing bell ringing out

the birth of another year of time, the golden harp will be strung, and the minstrelsy of heaven will greet those who having been cleansed at the Fountain filled with blood, will enter the golden gates of the celestial city, in robes of purity, given to them by their Lord and their King.

H. L.

THE CHURCH, VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE.

THE spirit of sectarian exclusiveness is most certainly not a very amiable or liberal spirit, very foreign indeed to the New Testament idea of the grandness, the largeness of redeeming and forgiving mercy, and yet so common to humanity is this wretched idea of miserable selfishness, that we see it often among Christian people in some one of its many forms.

Our own branch of the Catholic Church welcomes and receives by the initiatory sacrament of regeneration, all who enter into her bosom, thus obeying her Lord; first, discipling by baptism and then teaching all necessary truth, (see Matt. xxviii. 19 v.). All so received she recognizes as children some of them erring children unfortunately, but yet children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and in so doing she follows the New Testament, if not the pharisaical spirit of modern religionism, she has received them into the only kind of church recognized in the New Testament, viz; a visible church, to which all baptized people belong, (who are not apostates) instituted by a visible Christ, with visible ordinances, visible ministers, and a visible organization, (see 1 Cor. xii. 28., and Eph. iv. 11. And after thus receiving she addresses them always, directly or indirectly, through her authorized formularies, as St. Paul does in a passage, full of sharp rebukes, and most impressive warnings, a passage addressed to weak and erring, grossly erring, Christians "ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular." In the xii. ch., 1 Cor. we see how St. Paul treats some fallen children of the church, who had so far forgotten themselves, as to drink to excess at the table of the Lord; he tells them a man so eating and drinking would bring a judgement (not damnation) upon himself, viz.: as in 30th verse, weakness, sickness, or sleep, (death) and this in order that (see 32nd verse) they should not be condemned with the world. Such judgment are of course the working out of the natural laws of God. St. Paul did not consign these weak brothers to Hell, with that fluency so common among some modern religionists.

This religious sectarian, selfishness, unconsciously shows itself in the unscriptural idea of an invisible church, viz., "a kind of ideal company of the elect," to which all who violently defend this human tradition, must secretly believe they of course belong, or they could never speak with so much assurance to other people, blessed it may be with more humility and less presumption than themselves. The uncertainty which must possess a humble man's mind, as to his position regarding this invisible society, the making empty signs of the sacraments, and the virtual unchurching of the great mass of baptized people, makes this illiberal figment this harsh dogma, appear in its true light, as one of the most revolting conceptions ever profounded by human beings as God's truth; if the great majority of people were in intense earnest about religion (which unfortunately they are not) with this doctrine ever before them, the strong minded would be in a state of agonizing un-

certainly, for they would have no sure seal that they were of the elect few, while half of the weak minded would be lunatics and the other half frantically and insolently positive as to their elect condition. If this miserable idea were acted upon it would make it impossible to carry on any Christian work for we should not know, but, that we were working with a wretched slave of the devil, the invisible of damnation upon his brow. The evils of this miserable Donatist error, are clearly brought out by Archer Butler, he says, "it" (this invisible church idea) "cuts all the tenderest nerves of sympathy between godly men and the visible church of Christ around them. It is impossible for them to sympathize on purely scriptural grounds with a society which they have been taught to imagine is nowhere (or scarcely) recognized in scripture. It may be a valuable community, but it is not theirs. They admit it to be a useful machinery, a tolerably instrument as times go, for spiritual benefit, but they do not see in it a direct appointment of Heaven, an immediate object of divine superintendence, a society intended to engage and to foster their affections dear for its own and Christ's sake, and these being considerations that impress godly men, most deeply, the church thus loses her highest holiest, and most engaging claims. Calculation takes the place of a bright and happy enthusiasm, the spouse is regarded as a useful slave, not as amid all her misfortunes the still cherished Bride of Christ. And thus instead of the topics that Paul has given us and Isaiah and the Lord Himself, we have to descend to low calculations of economic utility—not that we dread such inquiries," etc.

But after reading catechism and baptismal office over carefully we really must in the main, agree with Mr. Spurgeon, when he says, "I am told that many (ministers) in the Church of England preach against her own teaching. I know they do, and herein I rejoice in their enlightenment, but I question, gravely question, their morality. To take oath, that I sincerely assent and consent to a doctrine which I do not believe would to my conscience appear little short of perjury, if not absolute, down right perjury, but those who do so must be judged by the Lord. For me to take money for defending what I do not believe, for me take money of a church, and then, to preach against what are most evidently its doctrines, I say for me to do this, (I shall not judge the peculiar views of other men) for me, or any other simple, honest, man to do so were an atrocity so great that if I perpetrated the deed, I should consider myself out of pale of truthfulness, honest and common morality and when worldly men hears ministers denouncing the very thing which their own Prayer-book teaches, they imagine that words have no meaning among ecclesiastics, and that vital differences in religion are merely a matter of tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum."

W. B.

REGULATIONS REGARDING THE READING OF THE BIBLE AND PRAYER IN THE PUBLIC AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

Approved by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council on the 16th day of December, 1884.

1. Every Public and High School shall be opened with the Lord's Prayer, and close with the reading of the Scriptures and the Lord's Prayer, or the prayer sanctioned by the Department of Education.

2. The portions of Scriptures used shall be taken from selections authorized for that purpose, by the