

reasons ; yet it is a fact that the mind of our countrymen is too much perverted and prejudiced to appreciate those higher principles. We can hardly refer to them without wounding their feelings and exciting their antagonism ; but might we not safely and charitably direct their attention to our liturgic system, first of all, as *something* which *they ought to examine*, and then leave them to their own conclusions when once they have discovered that this inestimable possession is only to be found in all its completeness among those who have preserved all the other Apostolic institutions of the Gospel in their purity and integrity !—*Thoughts on the Services.*

NEW YEAR.

THERE are few persons, unless the utterly thoughtless, who, when standing on the threshold of a New Year, have not some good intentions with regard to the era of time opening before them. Very vague these intentions may be with some, while with others they may amount to an earnest determination to live in the future more in accordance with what their better nature acknowledges as the Right, than they have done in the past. But while good intentions are certainly to be encouraged as the first necessary steps towards amendment of life or good in any shape, yet, on the other hand, such intentions, if they have no practical result, are often worse than useless, for we are too prone to regard them as in themselves meritorious, and to flatter ourselves that God will thus credit them to our account. But surely, if we look back upon the record of our past years, and pass

in review, it may be, the long array of good intentions which have resulted in failure, we must feel profound humiliation. How often have we stood thus on the threshold of the New Year, and promised ourselves that in its course it should find us better, stronger, nobler than the last, more abounding in charity, more faithful in duties, less devoted to ourselves, more to the good of others.—Alas ! Did each year, at its close, leave us further on the road to Heaven ? or not a step advanced ? nay, rather had we not lost ground ?

It is well, indeed, that the New Year should bring with it high aims and fresh hopes, but let us not have failed to apply the lesson of the *closing* year ! Let us not shrink from reviewing our past weakness, the promises we have made to ourselves and to our God that have again and again been broken ; and, while renewing those promises once more, let it be with that deep humility, that distrust of self and prayerful trust in God, which will best ensure an advance towards the higher life, the life of a disciple and servant of the HOLY ONE.

CIRCUMCISION.

THE festival of the Circumcision is part of Christmas, and in considering it we shall not have occasion so much to speak of any peculiar doctrine connected with it, as to point out the *duty* which it teaches, and this not the less plainly from our Blessed Lord's own example. That duty is *obedience*. Christ took our nature upon Him—this is the general doctrine of the season. We who call ourselves by His