

victions with increasing charity toward those from whom they differ. The question is one of extreme difficulty and complexity, and the first thing we need is to understand each other's position and point of view. And the next thing is to believe the best, and not the worst, of those who take an opposite view to our own. If I can say any word making for peace and charity, I shall thank God. My own views I never conceal. I love best a simple yet very reverent ritual, a service which is congregational and at the same time devotional, and differences in minor observances do not affect me much. I am accustomed to great variety in detail, and I thank God I can worship in all. But this is an advantage which belongs to my office, and I can truly sympathize with those who are disturbed and distracted by unaccustomed ritual observance. I am sure we ought to be very considerate of the feelings, and even of the prejudices, of our people. I really think the clergy are so in general, but self-repression and sacrifice of one's own tastes or preferences in matters of no vital importance are never thrown away. The real question, however, is as to the lawful limits of ritual and their enforcement. Surely it cannot be right or wholesome that each man should be a law to himself."

JAPAN is laying the foundation of its native ministry. Six belong to the Tokyo staff. There is another native clergyman in the Society's Mission at Kobe. Bishop Bickersteth gives the names of six, and says: "They are, on the whole, a very satisfactory set of men, and we may be very thankful to have them: Shimada San, deacon in charge of Mita, where Mr. Lloyd has recently erected a church. Yamagata San, priest in charge of Ushigomi, a district of Tokyo. Iida, deacon in charge of Kyobashi (under Mr. Freese), also a district of Tokyo. Yoshizawa San, a deacon working under Archdeacon Shaw at S. Andrew's, Shiba. Tai San, a deacon under Bishop Williams. Imai San, a priest, lecturer at S. Andrew's Theological College."

GAMBLING.—An appeal signed by the vicar of Leeds (Dr. Talbot) and 214, or nearly all the ministers of religion in that town, has been issued on the subject of "Betting and Gambling." They state that they desire to make "a united, respectful, and earnest appeal" to their fellow townsmen on this matter:—

We are not able to judge for others' consciences, and we do not ask you to say that every bet is a sin. Our wish is to look at things as they are, and we ask you whether you should not avoid, for your own sake, or at least for the sake of others, practices which are so useless, demoralising, and ruinous in their effects.

The following reasons are given:—

1. Gambling is a passion. There is a pleasure and excitement about all risk and chance, and in gambling this excitement easily grows frightfully strong. A wise man will not expose himself to the risk of becoming its victim.

2. Gambling is ruinous. It withdraws energy from legitimate industry and commerce, and you speak in vain to a confirmed gambler on any of the higher and better things in life. It leads to cruelty; many families suffer want of food and due care through the fathers', and even the mothers', gambling. It carries men into other crimes: pilfering and theft and even forgery often result from the desire to get money for gambling purposes.

3. Gambling is a bad, selfish and wasteful way

of spending money; wasteful because it purchases nothing but a few moments' excitement; selfish, without doing anything to earn or deserve it; bad, because it makes men covetous.

Especially do we appeal to the young, who have their habits to form and their lives to make or mar, and whose influence with one another is so powerful, to abstain from practices which are often productive of much misery.

CHRISTMAS.

The birth-day of the Lord Jesus commemorates the very greatest event in the world's history—the central fact of time. Nothing can represent more fully the frenzy with which the Puritan innovators were carried away than the abolition of this great commemorative festival. Men delight to keep alive the memory of the heroes and benefactors of the past, and to commemorate the great events in their own and the world's history. It was therefore the stifling of a natural instinct, and the subversion of instinctive gratitude, when in mere hatred to every usage of the Catholic Church these stern men prohibited the observance of this glad festal day. We may be thankful that a better time is dawning even for their followers, and that though still bound to the evil traditions of the past, their descendants are more and more becoming ashamed of this inherited folly, and are creeping back, one here and one there, to the celebration of that great event which the whole Christian world from the beginning has commemorated—the birthday of her God and King. We can remember the time when in most of our country parishes the day was only thought of as a day of feasting, family gatherings, and mere worldly amusements. Great changes have been wrought throughout the land during the last forty years, and more and more the glad eucharistic feast is prepared for, and celebrated as the centre of the day's joy, and the only fitting commemoration of the coming amongst us of Him who is the true Bread that came down from Heaven.

THE EXPECTATION OF HIS COMING.

The people of Judea, guided by the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, yearned for the appearance of the Messiah, with an anxiety only rendered more intense by the oppressions under which they groaned. But they had learned to cherish an entirely false idea of what He was to be, when He came, and so there were but few who longed for and expected Him as one who should come, as announced by the Prophet Daniel, to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness. As misgovernment installed, observes Dr. Milman, as exactions pressed, as national pride was wounded by foreign dominations, so enthusiasm took a fiercer and more martial turn, as the desire for national independence grew and became dominant; the Messiah was more and more expected as a conquering king to accomplish among them that which was nearest to their hearts. The higher views of His character were well nigh lost, and so the people were not at all in a condition to listen to the doctrines of humility and love, or to believe in any Messiah who did not come in power and great glory.

The Saviour of the world came not, however, with the gorgeous magnificence of an earthly Ruler. And those who were expecting Him little thought that the throne before which they would be summoned to render their homage, would be the cradle of a helpless infant.

He came not with His heavenly crown, His sceptre clad with power;
His coming was in weakness, the Infant of an hour,
A humble manger cradled, first, the Virgin's holy birth,
And lowing herds companioned there the Lord of Heaven and earth.
He came not in his robe of wrath, with arm outstretched to slay;
But on the darkling paths of earth to pour celestial day,
To guide in peace the wandering foot, the broken heart to bind,
And bear upon the painful cross the sins of human kind.

—BISHOP DOANE.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

It was at this period of suspense and agitation in the Jewish nation that the expected Messiah came. The Gospel accounts agree in stating that His birth was a supernatural creative act of God. "Whatever has its origin in the natural course of humanity," says Neander, "must bear the stamp of humanity, must share in the sinfulness that stains and takes part in the strifes which distract it. It was impossible therefore that the second Adam, the Divine progenitor of a new and heavenly race, could derive His origin from the first Adam in the ordinary course of nature, or could represent the people or family from which He sprung, as do the common children of men. We must conceive Him not as the individual representative of the type which descended from our first parents, but as the creative origin of a new type. And so our idea of Christ compels us to admit that two factors, the one natural and the other supernatural, were co-operative in His entrance into human life, or in other words, that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, though born of the Virgin Mary; that in person He was the Son of God, and by His added nature became the "Son of Man." The new Head of a new race. The Fountain of a new life. The mighty God. The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Father of the ages to come, as Adam had been of the ages past.

THE PLACE OF HIS BIRTH.

Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, and Mary, his espoused wife, both descendants of the royal line of David, journeyed to the village of Bethlehem, which had been the home of their great ancestor, to enrol their names as members of the house of David, in a census that had been ordered by the Emperor Augustus. When they reached Bethlehem there was no room for them in the inn, and they were obliged to seek rest and lodging in an adjoining stable. In the rude limestone grotto attached to the inn as a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the food and rest of the cattle, weary with their journey, far from home, in the midst of strangers, in the chilly winter night, in circumstances so devoid of all earthly comfort or splendour that it is impossible to imagine a humbler Nativity, Christ was born. And perhaps it was most fitting that the cattle stables of the lowly inn should be the birth place of Him who, from His Cross of shame, was to rule the world and man.

THE TIME.

At the time of the birth of Christ the heathen Temple of Janus, which was always closed in time of peace, and open in time of war, was closed for the third time since the founding of Rome, and the nations of the earth were at peace with one another. Hence it is that Milton, in his Hymn of the Nativity, observes of this auspicious period in the world's history that