

partly the reason why the Church is regarded by them with so much increased hostility, and is spoken of with so much bitterness. If we are mistaken, and we wish for charity's sake we could think we are, it is their own words and writings which have misled us, and which they must blame for our error.

LATELY AN EX-OFFICIAL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION said that, if the dissenting bodies "are to live," their losses in the country must be made up by gains in the large towns. New populations are their hope. "Fail with them," he said, "and our doom is sealed." The situation must be indeed critical when one of themselves speaks in such a pessimistic strain, and apparently actually doubts the very possibility of their continued existence.

TWO DISTINCT TYPES.—Among the Roman Catholics in England there are two distinct types of men, those who desire nothing better than the ruin of the Church of England, and those who, like Cardinal Newman, recognise in her a great "break-water" against the rising tide of infidelity. *Church Times* says with the former class we are compelled to wage war. Their spirit is bitterly hostile, their method of attack insidious, their purpose destructive. Among the latter class we are glad to recognise in Mr. Lilly a thoughtful and cultured writer of a totally different stamp.

EPIPHANY GIFTS.

"When they opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

The Magi's gifts, brought with such faith and perseverance through their long pilgrimage, have many lessons for ourselves and a deeper significance than they dreamed of, as they offered their treasures which symbolized Christ's nature, His office, and His work, witnessed to His Godhead and Kingly state, His Priestly ministry of reconciliation, and to the Redemption of a fallen race which the Son of Man was to accomplish through His Passion and Death.

"Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all."

I. Gold, the symbol of royalty and honour, denoting the presence of the King of kings, God Incarnate. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory."

Such an Epiphany may well claim the homage of the kings of the earth, the wise men of all nations, who come in every age to worship the Child of Bethlehem as their Lord, bringing the gold of devotion, love, fame, power, wealth, and intellect, to lay at His feet, for "all things come of Thee." Nor is it to be an outward homage only, but also an inward worship and offering of a pure love, the treasure of heart and life unspotted by the world, the gold of a soul which has been refined in the furnace of trial and purified seven times in the fire. The Ark and the Temple were lined with gold, and our lives should be lined with love, for such an offering is precious unto God, Who, as St. Chrysostom says, "has no need of golden vessels but of golden souls," bright with the glory of a Divine Light; and such gifts must be sprinkled with the precious Blood of Christ, ere they can be acceptable to God,—as the golden vessels of the sanctuary were cleansed and sprinkled before they could be used in the Temple. The offering of gold betokens the offering of our best, whether in devotion or work, in affection, intellect, or will; we should give God our best,

and in the simplest way we can. It has been well said, "Don't take the gold off your sacrifices by speaking about them;" and the most silent unobserved ways of rendering our homage to God, are those which are most pleasing unto Him. The effort of sustained carefulness in daily duties, the prompt obedience to the most trifling calls of service for God or man, the accuracy which may be shown in every detail of work, and the loving reverence which should mark all approaches to God, are tokens of love without which our offerings are of little worth; and these show whether they are the pure gold which is acceptable to God, or whether they are spoiled by the admixture of worldly alloy. The true nature of life's work and offerings will only be seen in that day when the fire of God's judgment shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.

The gold, too, should be a costly gift, in whatever way it is made; and sometimes those who are seeking most earnestly to serve God in a life of self-sacrifice, find that He may ask that which costs them dear:

"New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice."

Treasures of love, happiness, easy circumstances, success, or strength, may be put into our hands as materials for our offerings, not for self-gratification; and we should hold ourselves ready to receive such gifts most thankfully and humbly, or to surrender them cheerfully if God asks us in any way to give them up, that we may love Him above all things, resting in the giver rather than in His gifts, "having nothing, yet possessing all things." In the exercise of our stewardship in all that He has entrusted to us, we often need to ask, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" striving to bring Him as best we can a grateful response in devotion and work for all the manifold treasures with which He has enriched and gladdened our lives.

LAY HELP.

The need of the Church is of an organization which will send out laymen (more or less trained mentally or spiritually) to aid the parochial clergy in their work. Some might be regulars, single men living in community; some tertiaries, living in the world, supporting themselves on week days, but ready to give their Sundays, when asked, to God's service, wherever required. The funds for such an organization would soon be forthcoming if we only had the men. As proof we have only to point to the myriads of pounds (partially from Churchmen's pockets) which have flown into the coffers of "General" Booth, and the large sums raised by the Church Army, and other similar systems. Many of those who gave to these objects would also give to an organized scheme of lay evangelists under the Church and working with the Church. There is an abundance of zeal in England which only needs directing into Church lines. We have restored religious life for women, why not for men also? Our ideal is a religious house where earnest laymen could work together. As for dress or titles, or names, they are matters of detail. We should prefer such as would not repel, but would rather attract, ordinary English Churchmen. When the house was once established, a body of tertiaries might be added who would give Sundays and some hours a week for God's service, and when capable, be sent (as wanted and asked for) into slum or country parishes to help in mission rooms, cottage lectures, open air services, Sunday schools, choirs, and any other way they are wanted. There are thousands of laymen who would be use-

ful anywhere but in their own parishes, who might be utilized. The parochial clergy would be strengthened, the Church invigorated, and the working man won by such a system.—*The Church Review*.

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

We have parted from the Old Year with lingering regret; we have entered upon the New with confidence and hope. The year now closed has had many bright spots, many pleasant scenes, many happy associations; and these are not by any means counterbalanced by the unfortunate occurrences which have helped to make its history. With all its failings and shadows we feel toward it as toward a warmly attached friend; and as we now recall its joys and sorrows, its failures and successes, we could almost wish it lingered with us still.

The past we know; the future is uncertain. Yet from the past are now to be drawn lessons that may guide us in the future. In all there has been the controlling hand of God; and whether we consider the calamities which have befallen the nation, or the blessings which have been bestowed upon the Church, or the experiences through which we have passed as individuals and families, we may recognise in each a Divine will and power, and may be stimulated by each to renewed devotion and love.

The New Year has entered upon a goodly heritage; and its history, we trust, will show that it is worthy of the name it bears and the patrimony it inherits. To all our readers we offer the compliments of the season; and for one and all, young and old, we wish, in the truest and best sense, a Happy New Year!

The character of the year will be shaped very much by unseen influences. Even the great events which go to make up history are prepared and regulated silently. In this respect every individual has an appropriate influence to exert—an important work to perform—and by imbibing right principles, indulging cheerful dispositions, and practising good habits, each will sensibly affect the whole; and the influence thus combined will lead to the attainment of the result which all desire. In his personal character and home relations each can and should do much. It should be the aim of each to make the other happy; and if there be the desire for useful occupation and influence, the opportunity will never be found wanting.

No finite minds can forecast the events of the year. The future is hidden with God. We may conjecture, but we cannot foretell. As of old, so now it is true, that the times and the seasons God hath reserved in His own hand. But, in unfolding His purpose, and developing His will, the Deity employs, works with and through, human instrumentalities and means—and in this respect we are all co-workers with God, and necessary factors in the complicated machinery of life. It should, therefore, be the aim of each to ascertain his own qualifications and sphere, and then to apply himself to his appointed work with becoming energy and zeal.

The work of the year applies to the Home, to the Church, and to Society. In each department there is the greatest demand, the amplest opportunity, the brightest prospect. The home should be made happy by good temper, gentle forbearance, kind influence, and generous acts. In the Church a liberal spirit, a charitable disposition, a fervent devotion, a sound theology, an active and enterprising zeal, will contribute to peace and prosperity. The ignorance and vices of the age—the drunkenness, the debauchery, the fraud, the murder, the sufferings, the woes—which roll in