

"Let us speak not in a spirit of defiance, but in a spirit of love, let us eschew all needless expressions which may give offence; above all let us remember that the grand object which we have in view is the discovery of the wisest methods of work, the strengthening of peace, the firmer cohesion of the members of the Body. By this course our very differences will serve to bring out more clearly the unity of our faith, and our diversities of thought will be at once a safeguard and protest against any narrowing of the limits which define the membership of our branch of the Catholic Church.—  
BISHOP MACLAGAN.

#### A NEW YEAR.

ALTHOUGH the Church takes no cognizance of the day which commences the secular term which opens each first of January, the season is too marked a division of time to be passed over by individuals without some recognition, as it is to many persons, as the French term it, "the day of the year." To the Church, Time is not of that moment that it is to the world. To the Christian, too, the milestones of life are also and serve chiefly as finger-posts, pointing to his happy goal, to the haven where he would be.

The divisions of the secular time bill are based on that which is material and transient, on conditions which are temporary indeed, in title, in essence, and relation. The Church is not bound within these conditions, her life is led independently of such frail phenomena. The Church existed before new years were known, the Church will see the last new year vanish into the indistinguishable ocean whither all Time, and all interests dependent upon Time conditions, or subject to Time control, will sink eventually into eternal oblivion. The life of each soul now is so dependent, is so under control, but is hastening unto the sphere where, being made like unto its Divine Head, it will share in His eternity.

New Years, then, as they come and as they go, like shadows on a screen, may serve to suggest reflections in some to whom the seasons of the Church appeal in vain. In days gone by, these irresistible reflections gave rise to customs which were meant to drown the consciousness of having neared the fate of all men by another year, and as with all such efforts to efface the records of experience, these outbreaks only served to emphasize that which was sought to be obliterated. The Saturnalia of the heathen world answered in its inspiration and aim to the dissipation of to-day. What is now diffused and eccentric and scattered over all the year, was then concentrated into a universally observed season of licentious indulgence. Individuals now made wretched by self-seeking vain would drown their consciences and fears of a coming doom in the dark waters of vice. In Pagan times a whole people broke up the bonds of moral order, and demonstrated for our learning and for our warning, how slim are the bonds of social life, how flimsy the control of mere philosophy under the pressure of human passion. Those who make the opening of a New Year an excuse and occasion for an outburst of frivolity or self-indulgence are simply perpetuating the heathenism which developed the Saturnalia of Sin, blackening each closing year with the brand of vice. The Church called the nations out of this degradation, and now too, year by year, the Church calls pathetically, with a mother's tenderness, upon her children to have no fellowship with such works of darkness as stifling the conscience, or drowning reflection, or dissipating thought in a round of lustful gaities. A Happy New Year, so universally wished, and usually, we believe, so heartily wished, is a very mocking phrase if associated with any forms of mere self-

indulgence. A Happy New Year we wish all our friends. Happy may they be by participation in His life Who is the Fountain and Spring of happiness, the Giver of peace, love and content in the present, and of assured hope in the future being the consummation of rest and joy.

#### THE EPIPHANY.

THE sixth day of January has for many centuries been observed by the Christian Church as a day for specially commemorating that manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles which is described in Matt. ii. 1-12. It is not, however, a festival of very early date. It is not traced as a separate feast earlier than the year 813; although we read of some distinction being made between Christmas and Epiphany about the middle of the fourth century, by Pope Julius I.

The earliest Christmas observed the Feast of the Nativity for twelve days, the first day and the last being especially solemn. The former day was termed the greater Epiphany, as commemorating our Lord's manifestation in the flesh to mankind at Bethany; the latter day was called the lesser Epiphany, to commemorate His manifestation to the Gentiles in the person of the Magi.

Later on, the feasts of Christmas and the Epiphany were separately observed, as they now are. But the name of the Twelfth Day, as being that number after Christmas, has ever since preserved the memory of its original identity with the feast of the Nativity.

Early tradition gives the number of the Magi who came to Jerusalem from the East as three, and their names as Melchior, Gasper and Balthazar.

The offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh are generally believed to have been offered by them to our Lord with deep symbolical meaning; the gold, to acknowledge Him as a king; the frankincense, to confess His divinity; and the myrrh to foreshadow his bitter suffering.

Their long journey is briefly described by Dr. Macduff, in his volume for the young, on the Life of Our Lord in the following words:—"I like to think of that journey. The Magi and their servants were not dressed, as you often find them in pictures, as Bedouin Arabs. Their garb was more thoroughly Eastern still. The great men rode in front on camels, with bright trappings and embroideries, having the sun-emblem upon them, followed by armed slaves or retainers leading the baggage camels, with silver bells hung from their long necks. The patient riders wistfully strain their eyes towards the guiding star. Sometimes they have to feel their way though drifted tracts of yellow sand. Sometimes they have to cross a swollen winter stream in some deep valley; and then at last they have to climb the mountain passes of Moab and Gilead. But they do not mind the fatigue and the length of the way, the hot sun by day, and the drenching dews by night. The bright star was to them what a beacon is to a sailor in a dark night and stormy sea."

In the magnificent cathedral at Cologne visitors are shown, in a richly decorated casket, three skulls, which are said to be those of the Magi, and thousands flock to see them, some of course very rightly doubting their reality, but many also believing the evident imposition.

The great lesson of Epiphany to ourselves is that of thankfulness that all the benefits of Christ's sufferings and death were extended beyond the limits of God's ancient people, the Jews, and

made to reach also to every Gentile nation under heaven. As gentiles ourselves, we have a deep and special interest in this. And in those "wise men of the East" we see the forerunners of all the thousands and millions who from every nation would acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and King, and so find eternal salvation in Him.—  
*Churchman's Penny Magazine.*

#### DRAWBACKS TO THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.

THERE is in every man a natural desire for a "comfortable assurance" that he is in a state of salvation. The extraordinary teaching of some extremists on this point has had the effect of making the clergy speak more negatively than positively about it, the people have the errors on the matter put clearly before them, but the truth itself is not pressed upon them sufficiently. The best way of pointing out erroneous ideas concerning a doctrinal truth is to teach the truth itself positively. Forceful, positive teaching is always more effectual in the overturning of error, than mere negation.

This is the only way in which the great amount of religious uncertainty among Churchpeople can be accounted for, many good Christian people seem to be in a sort of religious night-mare, this state of mind makes them an easy prey for propounders of startling explanations of Holy Scripture, which seem to supply a felt want. When a man becomes convinced that he is and has been a recipient of inestimable blessings (not theoretically, but actually) he will act in a very different manner to what he did before; there will then be no difficulty in enlisting his sympathy on behalf of sustaining Church ministrations and missions. Before we can hope to see the people really alive to their responsibilities they must be assured of their privileges; the mere talk of the great privileges of living in a Christian country within sound of the Gospel, &c., will not do. Even if a good, humble, spiritually minded man, he must realize his state and privileges before he will awake to the reality of his duties as a member of the Church of God.

The want of this scripturally founded assurance of state and privileges (the consequence of lack of positive teachings on the subject) has been a great drawback to the Church's progress, and in proportion as she impresses this truth upon her members will she progress in the future.—W. B.

#### "SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE."

(Eph. iv. 15.)

SERMON BY THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGE ON 26TH NOV., 1882.

The words have the sweet ring of a proverb. They are often used to express affectionate plain speaking—the "wounds of a friend"—often to describe the finest vein of Gospel preaching. Our revisers, dropping the "the" before "truth," hint that they are words of wider reach, and by a marginal rendering of "Dealing truly" broaden them still more "Dealing truly in love." But, at some cost of brightness, "Dealing truly in love" will never get the old sparkle.

And though *altheuein* has in usage the special force of "expressing truth," yet here it seems to be the expression by a whole life and conversation, and so to answer to the recent phrase (too recent to find place in a great version) the phrase of "being real." It means the tone of true life answering to true conviction.

For the apostle, with a crash of images, bids us not be infantile, and not toss and twist as the waves of opinion surge to the breath of every new system—system ever so fortuitous, ever so scheming, ever so methodically misleading, *kludonizomenoi peripheromenoi—en kubeia, en panourgia—pros teen methodieian tees planes*, but counter to all this, bids us form a purpose of steady growth; a growth depending on our own will, a growing into Jesus Christ.

Of this mystic, here attained and hereafter to be understood attainment, the moral intelligible means at this present is this:

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