

should always be some one point of unity in a picture; some point from which the lines radiating may give the sense of harmony and perfect proportion. So also is it in the Christmas decorations of our churches. The eye searches for some token or evidence that the teaching of the day has been grasped in its fulness, and that it is duly and properly set forth in the special 'adornments' of the Sanctuary.

It is not a hard thing to discover what the exact teaching of the Christmas season is. The familiar words, 'Immanuel,' 'God with us,' 'The Word was made flesh,' 'God manifest in the flesh,' recall our minds to its central idea and doctrine, viz. that of the Incarnation. Yet when we have stated the doctrine in one word, we are often left to surmise or to wonder at its many-sided application. For the Incarnation does possess the completeness of application, as it is the one event to which all God's manifestations in the world tend, and round which they revolve. We have mentioned the central point of a picture. We have read somewhere of a very famous picture of the Nativity—and what a subject it has been for the artist!—which is called 'La Nuit,' or *The Night*. There are no signs, however, of the gloom and darkness of night in this picture. On the contrary, it is a blaze of the brightest light. But all the light is skilfully made to proceed from the Holy Child on its Virgin-mother's lap. So it is with regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is the central light which irradiates the teachings and principles of religion; the one circumstance which brings God near to us, and we to Him; the Divine deed wherein we may trace the explanation of the dark riddles of human life and perceive the solution of what would otherwise be entirely enigmatical and unexplicable.

And because the doctrine of the Incarnation is so great, it must also be so many-sided. Its thoughts must extend to all matters which concern man's actual state in the world. In proportion as we have been brought near to God and have fellowship with Him, so also at the same time do we get assurance of our fellowship with each other. 'That ye may have fellowship with us,' Thus wrote the Apostle, who through Divine Love had probed the depths and studied most deeply the mystery of the Incarnation. It was manifested to his disciples; They had become conscious of Him by sense, having seen Him with their eyes, having looked upon Him, and their hands having handled Him: all this had been brought to pass that they might testify to others of what they had seen and heard, and so unite in their fellowship with the Father the far-off children of the Gospel, and the throbbing hearts of the whole of human-kind.

And thus it is that the Christmas season seems to unite us all for a time. During this festive week there will be many passings to and fro, and gathering together of friends and acquaintances. There will be the 'compliments of the season' interchanged between employer and workpeople, master and servant. There will be special greetings between those whom the ties of earthly relationship have made

'near and dear' to each other. There will be kindly thoughts—and we hope deeds also—towards the less 'fortunate' in the great race of life. And these good signs will not be lessened, but rather increased, because England is rapidly filling up with human souls, is every Christmas becoming greater in 'magnitude.' Yet amid it all, let us not forget that our truest fellowship is with God. Our joy is to be full. Yet no joy can be worthy of the name in which the God of Holiness, is not present to our thoughts and minds, sanctifying every earthly pleasure, and giving us that true happiness which can only come from the Spirit and from the consciousness of innocence and rectitude.

J. C. C.

BOOK NOTICES.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUPERNATURAL (Paddock Lectures. By Rev. Dr. Platt. Dutton, 1886.) There is a great deal that is very good and very useful in these lectures. The writer has read widely and thought severely, and undoubtedly many of his criticisms are to the point. But we doubt whether he has really advanced the cause which he has at heart by the publication of his lectures in their present form. We do not come to this conclusion merely from his apologetic statements in the note which he has prefixed to the volume, but from the contents of the book itself. He tells us that the lectures were delivered extempore, and that it is not possible for him to reproduce the popular form of illustration which he used in delivering them. Yet, on account of his abundant parochial work, he has been unable to give them the form of a more finished treatise—which we can quite believe.

Now, we think the author has made a mistake, which is sufficiently indicated by this very explanation. Popular lectures may be very useful, if they are published in the form in which they are delivered. Readers will take them for what they are and profess to be—for that and no more. Or, again, carefully constructed lectures which make up a scientifically elaborated treatise, like most of the Bampton Lectures, are also of great value. But something which is neither the one nor the other will probably disappoint the readers of both classes.

There is a great deal of carelessness in the printing of the book. Apart from the errata which are noted, we have marked a good many which can hardly be errors (even clerical errors) on the part of the author. Thus, at p. 16, we have: "The better interpretation of each phenomena," and the same mistake occurs elsewhere.

When the writer says, (p. 6) "Fact implies a factor," he is pronouncing a merely analytical judgment which no one will for a moment dispute. Does he mean that existence or finite existence implies a cause? or that every beginning must have a beginner? Either we must have proof of a statement, or the statement is so obvious that its mere enunciation has no value as an argument.

Dr. Platt was quite right to begin a treatise on the Supernatural by explaining the Natural or Nature. "Nature," he says, "is all that it can prove itself to be, and supernature is all that nature is not, and which it cannot prove itself to be." Now, this tells us very little, and seems to us a very unhelpful beginning. Nature is used in two different senses. It is used to mean the whole universe as distinguished from God; and it is used to designate the universe in so far as it is under the operation of natural law; so that the question arises whether there is any other law than this, whether man be, in this sense, a mere part of nature, or whether there is a voluntary or supernatural element in him. This is the primary question. The secondary question has reference to the existence of a Supreme being as distinguished from nature in the meaning of the word first given. If the author will begin with some such notion as this—very much as his countryman, Dr. Bushnell, has done—and will

recast his work when he has more leisure, he has it in him to give us something that we shall like to read and keep.

Home & Foreign Church News.

From our own Correspondents.

DOMINION.

ONTARIO.

OTTAWA.—*The Ten Days' Mission.*—The city of Ottawa received with indifference the tidings that the Church of England, in her four churches, was about to hold a union mission, but ere the ten days were half over the most unexpected interest had been aroused, even among many, who, as a rule, concerned themselves little about matters in that communion. An open secret of unity of action among the Ottawa clergy is their guild, which meets monthly and enables all matters of common interest to be amicably discussed. The plan of a union mission was accepted by all the clergy in May last, and forthwith missionaries were selected and the matter put forth in sermons. About six weeks before the mission began, bands of workers were organized to make the whole subject thoroughly understood by all church people, and others who might care to learn, tracts were circulated in the churches and from house to house, and above all other effort constant prayer was made for blessings on the work. The tracts and circulars with all expenses of the missions and all printing and bill-posting were paid for out of a common fund raised from offerings made at the church doors. Hymn books were prepared and printed in great quantities, and at last, on Thursday evening, Nov. 11th, the work began in each church. The city clergy met often to keep things moving smoothly and to arrange for new efforts in unity. An account of each church's work will be found below. Two meetings were held in common at the Opera House, one on Thanksgiving Day, for children, addressed by Mr. Ford and Father Osborne, and one on the second Sunday afternoon for men, addressed by Mr. Duvernay and Father Osborne. Each meeting in a different way helped to move the city and excite wonder, but the men's meeting was emphatically the great success of the mission. Fifteen hundred men listened with utmost interest to two plain-spoken addresses on sin and the way of escape, and then fell on their knees to think and to pray and rose up to sing with one voice, "When I survey the wondrous cross." The true success of this faithful effort to save souls can be truly estimated only in the future. Its apparent success has been far beyond what even the most sanguine hoped.

Christ Church.—The missionary at the Old Mother Church, was the Rev. Edward Osborne, of Boston, one of the English Society of St. John the Evangelist, commonly called the Cowley Fathers. He was eminently fitted for the task. Physically strong he was equal to the great strain, which the mission as arranged by himself brought on him. Four times every day and five times on Sunday he held large numbers spell-bound. At first people seemed simply to enjoy the preaching, but as the days passed by and the regular course of the teaching pressed harder and harder on the conscience, the effect was simply tremendous. A sermon on old sins followed by a searching instruction on the practical meaning of the Ten Commandments was the turning point of the mission. Thence the people as of one mind were carried on through meditation on the passion and many awful thoughts concerning sin, until the full Gospel of the grace of God touched many a hard heart, and brought unlooked for tears to many a dry eye. Day after day began with the great intercession of the Holy Communion. Matins followed at 10.30 and then a wonderful course of practical teaching on prayer at 4.15, and a meeting for intercessory prayer. Each day one of a course of instructions on the life of St. John Baptist was given, attended by a gradually increasing crowd of earnest faces. Evensong was said at 5.15, and the mission service and sermon began at 8. A few simple prayers, a brief lesson and three or four mission hymns, accompanied a sermon and an instruction on some point of practical religious importance. All day long Father Osborne, as all Christ Church soon learnt to call him, was ready to help all who sought for counsel or encouragement. His name will remain long in the prayers, and the lives of many to whom, by God's grace, he brought a message which met some great spiritual need. They rejoice to learn that he has undertaken a mission in Toronto in February next. If numbers be a test of success, the mission at Christ Church was indeed successful. Beginning with perhaps 500 the number steadily grew, until at the Sunday evening service, and again at the