

THE decline of dissenting strength in rural districts in England is causing serious misgivings in the minds of the leaders of various dissenting bodies, and is, unless we are very much mistaken, 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 Congregation Union, referring to the shrinkage of which we have just spoken, declared 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.—*Church Bells.*

THE Convention number of *St. Andrew's Cross*, containing all the addresses made at the recent Convention of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew in Boston, is a volume of 120 pages bound in a very effective cover and embellished with four wood engravings. It is well described by the publishers as a "treasury of practical theology." When such men as Bishop Thompson, Bishop Tuttle, Bishop Huntington, Bishop Courtney, Bishop Nichols, Bishop Brooks, Father Huntington, Rev. H. C. Swentzel, Rev. Arthur S. Lloyd, Messrs. Horace E. Scudder, George Zabbriskie, James L. Houghteling, W. C. Sturgis, Charles James Wills, and Robert Stiles, give expression to the largest thoughts and deepest feelings that have come to them in their manifold experience of life, the result is sure to be a body of wonderfully "practical" theology. The whole Church is under obligations to the Brotherhood for publishing surely at great expense, this very useful volume. Copies may be obtained, at twenty-five cents each, at any Church bookstore, of any newsdealer through the American News Co., or by addressing *St. Andrew's Cross*, 13 Astor Place, New York.

A KINGDOM.

Some persons read the Bible only to pick out text that confirm and establish opinions and prejudices of their own that have taken possession of their minds. This makes sectarians and narrow religionists. Yet there is a way of taking one of the higher divine truths or principles and observing how it is broadened and deepened by bringing together whatever bears upon it in our perusal of the Word of God. And this widens our spiritual horizon instead of making it narrow. Take, for instance, the fact of the kingdom of God among men, and we shall find it all the way along through both the Old and New Testaments. Immediately after His baptism, the first sound of our Lord's voice was in preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. His first words were: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." And the burden of His words and work were for the bringing men into this kingdom. Now, once let the mind get as full idea

as possible of what this kingdom is, as the basis of God's work among men, together with the definite impression of the positive existence of Christ's kingdom in which are enclosed the children of God redeemed by the Saviour, re-born through the Holy Spirit, and by the side of it the kingdom of the world or the kingdom of Satan, then religion, life and its purpose, duty to our fellow-men, duty to the Church, duty to God, take their true meaning and right place. And, moreover, with this knowledge, questions of morals and practice, questions of doctrine and ceremony, of spiritual experience, questions of names and parties and social disturbances, that so much perplex thoughtful people, would be a deal cleared up and settled. For lack of a large and definite idea of what the kingdom of God means, many zealous and earnest Christians lose much of the glory and blessing of religious life and work. They insensibly limit the kingdom to their own denomination, to those who think and believe just as they do, and even some intelligently trained in our own historic Church forget that the kingdom of God includes all His children of whatever name, race, or clime. Worse still, there are those who confine the kingdom to their own parish or congregation, with neither sympathy for nor recognition of anything beyond. And, sadly enough, there are preachers and even priests who wall themselves in a circle bounding their own flock. And all this tends to the seeking of personal glory, and not the glory of God and His kingdom. And glory of self is the world-spirit, and the impulse comes not from Christ's kingdom, but the other kingdom, for Jesus says: "My kingdom is not of this world."—*The Church News, Miss.*

BOTH GOD AND MAN.

Christmas brings us very close to God. It emphasizes the truth that man is made in God's image. We may not be able to know fully and precisely all that this means, but it helps to make clear the fact of the Incarnation, that if man is made in the image of God, then "God can express Himself in His own image. He can express Himself, therefore, in manhood; He can show Himself as man." In a certain sense every man is divine, but the divine image is clouded by sin, and does not fully outwork itself under the present limitations of humanity. He who was born of the Virgin Mary has all that man has. He is absolutely without sin, and much more than all this, he is God in man, and He is God and man. And this is the reason that Christmas brings us so close to God. What we see in Christ Jesus, what we know of Him while here in this world. His love, His justice, His purity, His sympathy, His unselfishness, are just the human qualities that show His oneness with us and the identity of His nature with human nature. He is one with us, and He is also one with God, and this makes us closely akin to God. Blessed is the Christmas-tide to every soul to whom the story of Bethlehem's Babe intensifies the consciousness of being forever "enclosed in the Divine Presence."

"Man's weakness is his glory—for the strength which raises him to Heaven and near God's self. Came spite of it: God's strength his glory is: For thence came, with our weakness, sympathy, Which brought God down to earth, a man like us."

St. Louis Church News.

TO OUR READERS.

We very much regret that our "CHRISTMAS GREETINGS" to our subscribers and friends failed to find space in the *GUARDIAN* of last week. As the printing of the paper has been done for sometime past at a distance of 27 miles from the Editorial office, it has not been possible to see the final proofs of matter set up; and we were not aware of the omission until a copy of the paper was received after the whole issue had been struck off. We trust our readers will accept our apology.

1893

We heartily wish "A HAPPY NEW YEAR" to each and all of our subscribers, and to all into whose hands the *GUARDIAN* may come.

CHRISTMAS IN MONTREAL.

(Condensed from *The Gazette.*)

THE CATHEDRAL.—The Christmas festival service and Choral Communion at Christ Church cathedral was impressive by its plain joyousness. An artistic programme had been arranged by Mr. Birch, organist, which was splendidly sung by the choir. The large congregation joined in singing the hymns. The "Te Deum," by Dudley Buck, and the anthem, "Sing O Sing" (Leslie), were rendered by the choir alone, and it was seen that it was a splendidly trained one, with a large number of good voices. Before preaching the sermon, the Rev. Dr. Norton, D.D., announced that there would be a special Communion service on St. Stephens, St. Johns and Holy Innocents Day; also that he had received three subscriptions, on behalf of the Choir fund, of \$50 each.

The Rector took his text from the Gospel of St. Matthew, 2nd chapter, 11th verse: "They presented unto Him gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh," and delivered a forceful sermon on true charity.

In concluding he stated that the offertory would be for the poor and invited liberal contributions. The Rev. E. T. Capel, assistant, was the preacher at evening service.

ST. GEORGE'S was crowded Xmas morning. The Church was decorated with flowers and the pillars garlanded with evergreens, adding greatly to the appearance of the sacred edifice. The service was very beautiful, the music being particularly effective, Mr. Percival J. Illsley being the organist. The singing of the hymn, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," was rendered with spirit, while the Canticles and Psalms were sung with marked precision and effect. The sacrament of the Holy Communion was administered to a large number of communicants at 9 o'clock, again at eleven, and to a smaller number in the evening. The Lord Bishop of the diocese was celebrant at the Holy-Communion in the morning.

Very Rev. Dean Carmichael in the morning preached an eloquent and feeling sermon from St. Luke's gospel, "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings, of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The offertory—a liberal one—was for the poor.

ST. STEPHENS.—The festivities at St. Stephen's began on Christmas eve at 8 o'clock, when Archdeacon Evans, rector of the parish, acting