

Christ and the Glory which shall be revealed.

There should be nothing saddening to the Christian in this thought of the brevity of life; rather a solemn gladness should fill our hearts as we remember how each day brings us by so much nearer to our Saviour and our God, to the Saints of all ages, and to those angel faces, "whom we have loved long since and lost awhile."

MEANING OF SOME OF THE EMBLEMS USED IN DECORATIONS AT CHRISTMAS.

As the Christmas decorations are still up, it may be interesting to give, for the benefit of some of our readers, the meaning of the principal emblems used.

Alpha and Omega.—These, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used separately or next a monogram or cross, are used by Christ of himself, as "the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Anchor.—The emblem of hope. The cross beam gives it a Christian meaning, as the emblem of faith.

Banners.—The remembrance of the victorious standard, the *Laborum* with its motto, carried by the army of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, is kept in view by the use of these with texts or designs.

Crown.—Our emblem of the kingly power of our Lord or the glory of the Saints.

Fish.—The Greek word for fish is *ichthus*. This comprises the initials of the Greek words Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, and it became a favourite symbol with the early Christians. The pointed oval form has the same meaning.

Geometrical Forms are common.

The circle is an emblem of eternity, having neither beginning nor end. The triangle or trefoil signifies Trinity in Unity. The hexagon or sexfoil, the six attributes of God. The septagon or septfoil, the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Agnus Dei.—This means Lamb of God, under which title our Lord is constantly represented in the Bible. This is generally represented as a lamb carrying a cross, and the Banner of the Resurrection.

Nimbus is the circle around the head of our Lord and the Saints. It is the attribute of holiness.

Monograms.—These are of various kinds. The X. P. united are the first two Greek letters (Ch. ϰ), of the word Christ. This is the earliest monogram used by Christians. It is over 15 centuries old. I. H. S. are the first three letters of the Greek *Iesous*, Jesus.

The Cross. being the public symbol of Christianity, is common. The plain cross is the Cross of the Passover. With floriated ends it is a sign of triumph. There are many varieties of crosses used in ecclesiastical decoration. The foolish prejudice which some have against using "the Sign of the Son of Man" in decoration, seems to arise from confusing the cross with the crucifix. The error about the crucifix is that it represents Christ still on the cross, and our redemption, therefore, as incomplete. The cross is empty; it shows our redemption accomplished.

The white *Lily* is an emblem of holiness and purity.

Birds are employed as Christian symbols. The eagle is a sign of the resurrection, also of St. John, who soared so high to contemplate the Mystery of the Divinity.