

THE Rev. Professor Momerie writes to the *Globe*: "I must ask you to be good enough to contradict a report which appeared on the 5th inst. I have not seceded—and have not the slightest intention of seceding—from the Church of England."

IN A recent issue of the *Expository Times*, Professor Sayce reads the "higher critics" an instructive lesson from Oriental archaeology. The campaign of Chedorlaomer and his allies against Palestine, and the account of the priest-king Melchizedek, as given in Gen. xiv., have been confidently pronounced impossible and mythical by what are called "advanced" scholars. Dr. Sayce, however, adduces the testimony of the cuneiform tablets found at Tel-el-Amarna; and these not only furnish names and circumstances which throw remarkable light upon the earliest campaign of history, but confirm in every point the record concerning the king of Salem, who met Abraham when returning from the slaughter of the confederate kings.—*The C.S.S. Magazine*.

MR. THOS. EDWARDS, the Superintendent of the Continental Mission, said lately in an address on "Sunday Schools and Sunday School workers in Continental lands," that there were now more than 19,000 schools, 70,000 teachers, and one and a quarter millions of scholars. In Holland there were over 150,000 scholars; in Sweden, 242,000 against 20,000 in 1873. Twenty-five years ago a Sunday school was unknown in Norway, but there were now 50,000 scholars in the State Schools, and 15,000 connected with the Free Church. The first Sunday school in Germany was started in 1825, and there were now 100,000 children connected with the Free or non-State Churches. In France there were 1,400 schools and 16,000 scholars; in Italy there were 10,000 scholars.

A Few Words on the Church and the Bible and the Church's Ministry.

[The following "Few Words" were, in substance, addressed to the late Very Rev. Dr. Close, Dean of Carlisle, 26 years ago. In a considerably enlarged form they have, for several years, been published by Mr. Hodges, as No. V. of his "Manuals for the People." To me it is one of the most hopeful signs of the times to see how well and ably the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has taken up the subject of a true and proper basis on which to seek for greater unity among "all who profess and call themselves Christians." We need never go far wrong if we will but "ask for the old paths and walk therein." (Jer. vi. 16.) T.F.

Whinthaite, Levens, Milnthorpe, 25th June, 1892.]

It is a fact that "both the faith of the Church and her visible constitution were complete and in full force before a single word of the New Testament Scriptures was written." The Christian Faith, in all its essential verities, was complete when the Author and Finisher of that Faith had sent down the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, to "bring all things to the remembrance" of His Apostles "whatsoever He had said unto them," and to "guide them into all the truth." And from that same Day of Pentecost full power was given to the Apostles to carry on and build up the Church. Now, the sending down of the Holy Ghost took place in the year A.D. 29; but the earliest books of the New Testament were not written until the year

A.D. 54; so that from the year A.D. 29 to the year A.D. 54, the Church was without any portion of the New Testament Scriptures. Hence it is very clear that the Church must have had her faith and her visible constitution before she had even one of the canonical books of the New Testament.

It follows then (as the late Canon Ashwell well observed) that "the Church was before the Bible, instituted and built up independently of it. To the Church and not the Bible was given the commission to teach; for which also the guidance of the Spirit and the living Headship of Christ, were promised for all time. To the Church was the Bible given, to be used by her at once as a standard and a means of teaching. By the Church has the Bible been preserved and the blessings which it was intended to bestow been diffused throughout the world. Now, God makes all things exactly adapted for the ends He has in view and also for every good end provides exactly the means needed for its fulfilment. If God, then, has made the Bible for the Church and provided the Church with the Bible, in order that thereby His truth should be revealed to mankind, it is plain that to sever either from the other is to thwart God's purpose, to employ self-chosen means, and therefore to imperil the accomplishment of His ends. To make the Bible a teacher apart from the Church is to use it for other ends than God intended." The Church is built upon the rock—our Blessed Lord Himself; as we have seen, she existed for at least a quarter of a century before any of the New Testament books were written; and some time about the year 180 is the date given, by the best authorities, to the first systematic list of the Canonical Books of the New Testament. The real truth is that from the Church we learn what we have to believe and to do; and from the Scriptures we prove what we so learn. The Church teaches, the Scriptures prove. Our Lord Himself the Founder of the Christian Church, has said, "If a man neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;" and St. Paul calls the Church "the Pillar and Ground of the truth." So the Divinely appointed office of the Church is to keep and guard the truth, and from her therefore her children are to learn it; but having so learnt it, they may then prove it out of the Holy Scriptures.

Thus, when our Lord had first taught the Jews high truths respecting Himself and they would not believe Him. He refers them to the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, that they might find therein a proof of what He had taught them. "Search the Scriptures (He says to them) for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify Me." You see He here invites them to test and prove out of the Old Testament Scriptures what He had Himself been teaching them. And in like manner afterwards, when the Church, in the person of St. Paul and her other ministers, first taught the great truths of the Gospel to the people of Berea, as we read in the Acts, it is said that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." And during those twenty-five years, or thereabouts, immediately after the ascension of our Blessed Lord, when there were no New Testament Scriptures written, the

Church through her appointed ministers, was actively engaged spreading a knowledge of those truths which in after years were by inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, written down for us in the pages of the New Testament.

And is it not so with each one of us? Is it not the case that the Church, our spiritual mother, even now, with a true mother's kindness, and considerateness for her children, provides that we, severally, shall "learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." Yes, these things she provides that we shall be "taught so soon as we shall be able to learn them." And when afterwards we are of an age to read and understand the Scriptures for ourselves, she then enjoins upon us that duty, and teaches us how best and most profitably to perform it; we are to "hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of God's Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which He has given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And now let me say a few words respecting that spiritual authority which was vested in the Apostles as the ministers of the Church. We must remember that they were ambassadors of Him Who is the Apostolic of our profession, the one sent forth by the Father to be Prophet, Priest, and King. As St. Paul says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

After His resurrection Christ received from His Father new power to be Head of the Church, and in virtue of this power it was that He gave their commission to the Apostles. "All power (He says) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." Thus the commission He had Himself received from the Father He gave in its fullness to them: "As My Father hath sent Me even so send I you."

Such was the ministry of the Apostles, as commissioned and sent forth by our Lord Himself. That this was to be an abiding order in the Church we may learn, first, from the solemn words, "Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world;" and secondly, from the fact that the term "Apostolic" has been, and is one of the four marks of the Church; it is the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; the title of "Apostolic" showing that the Church as it is now is the name as it was in the times of the Apostles, having the same ministry, the same sacraments, and other ordinances the same.

These Apostles thus appointed by the Divine Head of the Church, themselves appointed ministers, not only bishops as chief ministers to be in their stead when they themselves did leave this world, but also inferior ministers, priests, and deacons, that the great work for which Christ came on earth might be carried on without intermission until the end of the world. These several orders, St. Paul tells us, were instituted "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the