

## LEO XIII.'S ENCYCLICAL.

On the Study of Holy Scripture.

(Continued from Last Week)

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF BIBLICAL EXEGESIS.

As a confirmation of our arguments we may recall the example of multitudes of men remarkable for the sanctity of their lives and for their knowledge of Divine truth, who were sedulous students of the Scriptures. We may cite the disciples nearest to the Apostles, amongst whom may be mentioned Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp, and we may point also to the Apologists, especially Justin and Irenæus. All these, in their letters and in their books, whether they were treating the preservation or the propagation of the Divine dogmas, set forth the power, and the piety of the Holy Scriptures. In the schools of theology founded at the side of so many episcopal sees, whereof the most famous were at Alexandria and at Antioch, the instructions given consisted of little else than the reading, explaining, and vindicating of the written Word of God. From these schools went forth the greater number of those Fathers and those writers whose profound studies and wonderful works succeeded each other during three centuries in so great abundance that this period has been called the golden age of Biblical exegesis. Amongst the men of the East, the first place is filled by Origen, a man most admirable for the quickness of his mental conception and by the persistence of his labours. From his immense and multiple works almost all his successors have drawn. Others must be named who extended the boundaries of the science. Amongst the most eminent are Clement and Cyril, produced by Alexandria; Eusebius and the second Cyril, the sons of Palestine; Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, from Cappadocia; and from Antioch that great Chrysostom, in whom wonderful learning was joined to wonderful eloquence. Nor has the Church of the West gained less glory. Amongst many Doctors of her own, illustrious are Tertullian and Cyprian, Hilary and Ambrose, Leo the Great and Gregory the Great, and, above all, Augustine and Jerome. The one proved his possession of an admirable penetration in interpreting the Word of God, and of a consummate ability in drawing therefrom proofs of Catholic truth; the other, master of an extraordinary knowledge of the Bible and author of magnificent studies of that sacred book has been honoured by the Church with the title of the Great Doctor.

## THE MIDDLE AGES.

From that time down to the eleventh century, although study was neither so fervently pursued nor so fruitful in results, it nevertheless went on steadily, thanks, above all, to the zeal of the clergy. These were careful both to gather together the works of their predecessors and to spread abroad the knowledge of them enriched with the fruits of their own labours. Thus acted, amongst others, Isidore of Seville, Bede, and Acuin. The clergy furnished the sacred manuscripts with commentaries—thus did Valafride Strabo and Anselm of Laon; or they put into practice new methods for safeguarding the text—thus did Peter Damian and Lanfranc. In the twelfth century several undertook with great success the allegorical interpretation of Holy Scripture. In this St. Bernard was conspicuous amongst all others. His sermons are based upon almost nothing except the Sacred Writings. New and abundant progress, moreover, was made by the efforts of the scholastics. These men, although specially devoted to research, into the veritable text of the Latin version—as appears from the "corrected Scrip-

tures" which they produced—applied an even greater zeal and more extreme care to the interpretation and exposition of those Scriptures. With lucid learning equal to that of their greatest predecessors, they distinguished the various meanings of the Latin words, established the value of each term for theological use, marked off the several chapters of the books and the subjects thereof, traced the significance of Biblical words, and explained the coherence of all Scriptural precepts. All men know how much light they throw in this manner upon dark places. All her works, furthermore, whether theological or Biblical, manifest a profound knowledge of Scripture. And amongst them all the palm is borne by St. Thomas Aquinas.

## THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING.

When Clement V., our predecessor, had attached chairs of Oriental languages to the Athenæum of Rome and to the most important Universities, the Bible began to be studied in the original as well as in the Latin. When, afterwards, the monuments of Greek learning were recovered, when the art of printing was invented, the study of Holy Scripture spread still further. The editions multiplied to a wonderful number in astonishingly short spaces of time. This was especially the case with editions of the Vulgate. The Catholic world was filled with them. So dearly, in times that have been decried by the enemies of the Church, were the Holy Scriptures beloved and honoured. We must not forget the great number of men of learning, belonging mostly to the Religious Orders, who between the time of the Council of Vienna and that of the Council of Trent, laboured for the furtherance of Biblical studies. Using the new means they had gained, using also their high talent and their great erudition, these men not only added to the riches accumulated by their predecessors, but also prepared, in some sort, the way for the students who were to succeed them in the age then drawing near—the age when the Council of Trent seemed to be followed by the promise of a return to the prosperity of the early Church and the early Fathers. No one can be ignorant of the fact that it is sweet to us to recall now—the fact that our predecessors, Pius IV. and Clement VIII., caused to be published important editions of ancient versions, the Alexandrine and the Vulgate. Those which appeared later by order and authority of Sixtus V. and of the same Clement are to-day in general use. It is known that at that time appeared, together with other versions, the Polyglot Bibles of Antwerp and of Paris, carefully arranged for the study of precise significations. There is no book of either Testament that did not then form the subject of some thorough interpretation. There is no question arising from those subjects that did not then exercise the learning and ability of students, many of whom—especially those following most closely the methods of the Fathers—made themselves memorable names. Finally, the zeal of our exegetists has not failed since that day. Distinguished men have deserved well of Biblical learning, and have preserved Holy Scripture against the attacks of Rationalism—attacks founded upon philology and kindred sciences, and to be refuted by arguments upon the same ground.

All those who will consider this review, without prejudice beforehand, will certainly accord to Us that the Church has never been lacking in foresight, that it has always let flow towards its children the healthful springs of Holy Writ, that it has always depended on this support, to the guardianship of which it has been pre-ordained by God, that it has fortified it by every species of protection, so that it has never needed, nor never will need, to be stimulated by those who are foreign to it.

The plan We have traced for Ourselves, Venerable Brethren, demands that We should have an understanding with you as to what seems the best means for the good regulation of these studies. But, at first, We must single out those who oppose obstacles to Us and the methods and arms to which they trust. Formerly the Holy See had to do, above all, with those who relied on private judgment, and, repudiating the divers traditions and authority of the Church, affirmed that Scriptures were the unique source of revelation and the sovereign judge of faith. At present Our principal adversaries are rationalists, who, sons and heirs, so to speak, of the men whom We mentioned above, and basing their notions on their individual opinions, have rejected wholesale even the doctrines of Christian faith still accepted by their predecessors. They absolutely deny all inspiration; they reject Holy Writ, and proclaim that all sacred objects are human inventions and artifices; they regard the Sacred Books not as containing the exact narrative of real events, but as inept fables and lying histories. To their eyes there are no prophecies, but predictions forged after the occurrences had taken place or, rather, presentiments due to natural causes; miracles really worthy of the name do not exist; they are not manifestations of the divine power, but surprising facts, which by no means transcend the forces of nature or of illusions and myths; finally, they hold that the Gospel and the writings of the Apostles do not emanate from those to whom they are attributed. To reinforce those errors, by means of which they believe they can annihilate the holy truth of Scripture, they invoke the decisions of a new free science. Those decisions are so dubious to the clouded visions of those rationalists that they vary and often contradict each other on the self-same points. And while men judge and speak in so impious a fashion of God, Christ, the Gospel, and the remainder of the Scriptures, there are not wanting among them those who wish to be considered Christians, theologians, and commentators, and who under the most honorable of names, dissemble the audacity of a spirit abounding in insolence. To those are added a certain number of men who, urged by similar aim and co-operating with them, cultivate other sciences, and whom a like hostility to revealed truth leads to kindred attacks on the Bible. We cannot too deeply lament the extent and hourly increasing violence which these attacks assume. They are directed against informed and intelligent men, although these are thoroughly competent to defend themselves; but it is particularly against the crowd of the ignorant that these implacable enemies employ every weapon of assault. By means of books, pamphlets and newspapers they spread the deadly poison; by meetings and speeches they sink it more profoundly into the public mind. Already they have carried on a general invasion, and possess numerous schools ravished from the Church, where, descending even to the miserable corruption by mockery and jibe of the still fresh and credulous hearts of youth, they excite them to the contempt of Holy Writ.

In that, Venerable Brethren, there is much to move and animate the common zeal of pastors so that to this new and false science should be lifted up the antique and voracious doctrine which the Church received from Christ by the intermediary of the Apostles, and which, in such a struggle, is always displayed by the able champions of Holy Writ.

This, then, should be our duty, that in the seminaries and the universities divine literature should be taught in every respect as the importance of the science and the requirements of the actual epoch demand. For this

reason prudence in the choice of professors should be held nearly to heart. For this function must be selected not men taken amongst the crowd but those who are recommended by a great love and a long practice of the Bible, and a veritable scientific culture—men, in a word, who rise to the height of their mission. Less care must not be expended in the preparation of those who are to succeed them. It is Our pleasure, therefore, that everywhere that it is possible those should be chosen as disciples who have traversed in a satisfactory manner the cycle of theological studies, a certain number of whom will devote themselves entirely to the acquisition of knowledge of the Holy Book, and to whom the possibility of giving themselves up to more extended familiarity will be furnished. When the masters shall have been thus singled out and formed, they should enter on the task confided to them with confidence, and that they may be able to discharge their duties well and obtain the results to be expected, We wish to impart to them more developed instructions.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## "St. Peter's Cross."

In a recent address, Sir Stuart Kaill, the last lord mayor of London, spoke interestingly about some obstacles which he encountered on account of his Catholicity. He said:

"I was, by the way, strangely attacked over the banquet to the hospital managers. It is one which is given annually, and with the arrangement of which I had nothing whatever to do, the secretary and committee of the hospital's fund sending out the invitations. You will scarcely believe that a vicar of a West end parish wrote to me to say that as Cardinal Vaughan had been put up to reply for the hospital, he should not in future allow his pulpit to be used for a plea on behalf of the fund. I took no notice of the letter. I did not know Cardinal Vaughan was coming till I saw him there. And while I am on this subject, showing how suspicious a few people were of me because of my religious views careful though I was to keep them in the background, I may tell you an experience I had which involved an attack on my loyalty. I received a communication from some one connected with the stock exchange declaring that now Cardinal Vaughan had put England under the patronage of St. Peter I had altered the city flag and put a St. Peter's cross on it. Naturally I was astonished but I found a solution of the puzzle. You know that in the city arms the sword of St. Paul occupies the top left-hand quartering. Sometimes it is called Sir William Walworth's sword. The sword bearer carries it with the crossed keys of St. Peter, as you know, the position of the keys on the dexter or sinister side of the sword depending upon whether, in the particular circumstances, St. Peter or St. Paul is prominent. The sword on the quarterings of course, looks like a cross upside down—a St. Peter's cross, and this man knew no more about his own city arms than to fancy I put a cross in it."

The continual succession of boils, pimples, and eruptions from which many suffer, indicates an impure state of the blood. The most effective remedy is Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It expels the poison harmlessly through the natural channels, and leaves the skin clean and clear.

Mr. Patrick B. Ryan, of Cathedral street, Ennisorthy, son to the late Mr. Patrick Ryan, proprietor of the Carley's Bridge Mills, passed away on Nov. 23th. Mr. Ryan was one of the most popular young men in the town of Ennisorthy.

## A Simple Way to Help Poor Catholic Missions

Save all cancelled postage stamps of every kind and country and send them to Rev. F. H. Barral, Hammondon, New Jersey. Give at once your address, and you will receive with the necessary explanation a nice Souvenir of Hammondon Missions.