

ment, what might we expect from the tender mercies of a Parnellite Parliament, dominated by a bigoted and intolerant priesthood? I enclose my card, and beg to remain yours faithfully, A PROTESTANT LAYMAN, Dublin, December 28th, 1889.

THE number of Roman Catholics in the United States and in the British Colonies has grown from 190 000 in 1786, to 9 930 000 in 1886. But the 2 700 000 Protestants have multiplied to 47 000 000. There are 1 353 514 Roman Catholics in England, with 2,252 priests, and 1,252 churches. That is to say, the Roman Catholics are far less numerous than the Salvation Army, which has sprung into existence during the last twenty years. In 1786 there were in Europe 37 000 000 Protestants, 40 000 000 of the Greek Church, and 80 000 000 Roman Catholics. In 1886 there were 85 000 000 Protestants, 83 000 000 of the Greek Church, and 154 000 000 Roman Catholics. So that while the Catholics increased by less than twice their former number, and the Greeks a little more than twice, the Protestants increased nearly two and a half times.—*Living Church.*

ORDINATIONS were held on St. Thomas' Day, the fourth Sunday in Advent, by two Archbishops and twenty-seven Bishops of Eng., when there were a large number ordained, 266 being admitted to the diaconate and 319 deacons advanced to the priesthood. Of these 433 were graduates, Oxford men numbering 194, Cambridge 148, Durham 34, Dublin 30, Lampeter 21, London 14, Glasgow 2, and Madras University singularly contributing 1. Of the remainder 35 were educated at the London College of Divinity, 14 at the School of Cancellari at Lincoln, 13 at King's College, London; 11 at St. Bees, 10 at Chichester, 6 at Aidan's, Birkenhead; 5 at Lichfield, 4 at Gloucester, 2 each at Salisbury, Truro, Queen's, Buckingham, Cuddesdon, and Dorchester, and 1 at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the C.M.S. College at Islington, Southwark, and Bishop's College, Lennoxville, Can. The remainder were literates.

THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

By THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

(Being an Extract from his Lordship's recent Charge.)

In entering upon the anxious and difficult subject of the authority of Holy Scripture, and of what it is now our duty to teach and to preach thereon, it would seem to be the best and simplest course to ascertain, in the first place, as far as we are able to do so, what the general teaching of the Church of England is in regard to Holy Scripture and its authority in matters of faith and practice.

Shall we be wrong in saying that the substance of the teaching of our mother Church is distinctly as follows:—First, that the canonical books of the Old and New Testament constitute and are God's Holy Word. Secondly, that by the term "canonical books" we are to understand those books of which the authority was never doubted, or perhaps, to speak more exactly, was not ultimately doubted in the Church. Thirdly, that by the term "the Word of God" we are to understand this most certain and most blessed truth, that God was pleased to cause these Scriptures to be written; and so that He used mortal men for His instruments, teaching them by His Holy Spirit, and, especially in the holy Apostles, guiding them into all truth. Fourthly, that Holy Scripture authenticates the three Creeds. Fifthly, that the Holy Scrip-

tures contain exclusively and inclusively all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ; and, lastly, that the Scriptures are to be guided and framed. The relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament—now a subject of interesting importance—is only defined negatively—viz., that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New.

There is obviously much that is left untouched and undefined. Nothing is said, except in the most incidental manner, as to the authorship of the different books, nothing as to the nature and extent of inspiration. We cannot, however, correctly infer from this that these questions were consciously, still less designedly, left open. For, in the first place, hardly any of the now current questions of authorship had then been raised; and, in the next place, the question of inspiration would have been regarded as included in the oft-repeated term "God's Word," or in the fuller forms "God's holy Word," "God's most holy Word," which we meet with from time to time in the reverent utterances of our Prayer Book. Further, no Church which uses in her most solemn service the Nicene Creed, or, in the same service, describes the Commandments as the direct utterance of Almighty God, can be supposed for one moment to have had any other conviction or belief than this, that the men by whom God caused His Word to be written, spoke and wrote, being moved by the Holy Ghost. We must then be cautious in admitting the popular and current statement that the Church has left open the subject of inspiration, or is indifferent to the subject of the ascription of the books of Holy Scripture to the authors whose names have been associated with them from the first.

Let us, however, at the very outset guard ourselves against the assumption that there now exists any collection of well-established results of modern criticism which it becomes our duty to incorporate with the principles and teaching of the Church as already enumerated. As I felt it my duty distinctly to say last year in my address to our diocesan conference, there are really no such well-established results. All we can say is, that there are sober views and reverently expressed persuasions as to the relations between the different parts of God's holy Word, and that these certainly tend to bring out the *Polymeros* and *Polutropos* which an inspired writer distinctly specifies as the characteristic of the communications vouchsafed by Almighty God to the prophecy and holy men of old.

REVELATION PROGRESSIVE

Careful meditation on this principle of the Divine communications to the human recipients certainly predisposes us to the belief that God communicated to His chosen servants in each age exactly the measure of light and Divine truth that he age could realize and assimilate, the light growing brighter, and the truth more vivid and manifest, as the long centuries passed onward toward the blessed epoch when light and truth were vouchsafed in all their fulness to the children of men.

This we may safely and profitably teach and preach—nay, more, not only may we preach it, but we ought to preach it. The Bible has been confessedly far too much regarded as a single document, every part of which was to be regarded as of equal spiritual and moral validity. But if our Church be right, and the *vera causa* of the Holy Scripture having been written was that man might learn what God alone could teach, then the assumption that revelation was progressive, and that to each age no more was imparted than the age could fully make its own, seems so consonant with the very order and successive contents of the holy writings that the assumption may be rightly regarded as really a legitimate expansion of the specified principle—that Scripture was written for our learning.

What light this expansion bears with it when we pause to consider the nature of the different portions of Holy Scripture and the sequence in which they have come down to us! How the very order in which the Holy Scriptures are presented to us enhances the conviction that we have here no merely surviving remains of the literature of an ancient nation, but progressive revelation and spiritual continuity, all preparing us for what the soul feels *must be* the issue and development. How as we turn from Scripture to Scripture, the primal promise seems to grow brighter and clearer until, as we part with the last prophet, those simple but most blessed words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," seem to be the natural and historic sequence of all that has preceded, and in them the Old Testament and the New Testament to be united and one.

Let us further notice that this expansion of the teaching of our Church on the nature and authority of Holy Scripture is not only thus helpful in enabling us thus, as it were, experimentally to realize the interdependence of all the parts, but casts side lights on the nature of the prevailing influence, and on the confessedly profound and difficult subject of inspiration. Modern thought claims to have solved the difficulty by the broad statement that the writers were inspired, but not the books. But can we accept this as the ultimate explanation, when each book of Holy Writ, as we take it into our hands and reverently study it, seems to force upon us the conviction that in it there is *something*—a breath, a spirit, an influence—that makes us feel that the book does verily contain more than its mere form expresses? Take, if you will, the earliest passages of Genesis; yes, but there is more in them than early history, according to the generally received meaning of the words; there is a tone, a suggestiveness, a latent purpose—an element that, define it or try to define it as we will, no truly sensitive spirit can fail to receive. What is it? Be it poetry, be it prophetic utterance, the same remarkable good. Let all disclosures of the supernatural, all relation of the miraculous, be ruled out, and there will still be found in what remains just that ultimate tone of transcendence, that higher flight of quickening thought, that no other poetry or exalted outpouring of the inner life has ever communicated to the reader. What can be done? What but the *Divine gift*, just in the proportion that it was given to the author, permeating the written words, and living in the transmitted record? All the difficult conceptions of *degrees of inspiration* may thus practically be set aside, and yet *certain truth*, that each Scripture is Divinely inspired, be consistently maintained. Let it only be admitted that each writer, whether he who drew those wonderful outlines of cosmic history with which revelation opens, or he who beheld the exalting visions with which revelation closes—let it only be admitted that each one was spiritually equipped to bear his part in the progressive work, and the conception will not be difficult that the equipment has left its traces on the record, and that we must faithfully adhere to the old principle that not only to the writer, but to the writings must the term "inspiration" be applied.

We have seen that on two subjects at least—the authorship of the books of Holy Scripture, and the nature of the contents of the books—no definite statement has been made. All that we have before us is the general and regulative statement, that the term "Holy Scripture" implies the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, and the indisputable inference deducible from numberless passages in the Prayer Book, that the term is distinctly synonymous with the expression "God's Holy Word." Subject, then, to the broad principle that what we are dealing with is God's Holy Word, and that it was caused to be written (whoever they were that wrote it) by God Himself, we are not