

that the revelation thus made is the final revelation of God to man. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us that "God spake unto the fathers in many portions," never at one time communicating to them the whole truth, but revealing it in parts, as they were able to bear it. The same authority declares that God "spake to the fathers in many fashions," sometimes in dreams and visions of the night, while at other times the Word of God came to the Prophet with such distinctness that he could preface his message with the sacramental words, "Thus saith the Lord"; and while the Catholic symbol of the Faith declares that the Holy Ghost "spake through the Prophets," the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that "God spake unto the fathers in the Prophets."

Hence, the minute and reverent study of the Divine Word must always be necessary, and will always be profitable. The time will never come when men will not be obliged to combine the separate portions of God's Word, to study the fashions in which they were given, and to consider the operation of the Holy Ghost both in and through the sacred writers. And the time will never come when the honest student of God's Word will not require and will not welcome every critical appliance which the Providence of God may furnish, to cast a new light upon the sacred page.

It would be faithless to think that the Christian religion has anything to fear from the critical study of the Holy Scriptures. "The Church of the present and of the coming day is bringing her sheaves home with her from the once faithlessly dreaded harvests of criticism." We devoutly thank God for the light and truth which have come to us, through the earnest labors of devout critics of the sacred text. What we deprecate and rebuke is the irreverent rashness and unscientific method of many professed critics, and the presumptuous superciliousness with which they vaunt erroneous theories of the day as established results of criticism. From this fault professedly Christian critics are unfortunately not always exempt; and by Christian critics we mean those who, both by theory and practice, recognize the inspiration of God as the controlling element of Holy Scripture.

The same Spirit who "in time past spake to the fathers by the Prophets," still speaks to us in the sacred page. He who heeds what God has thus revealed will be made "wise unto salvation." To him who heeds it not, though he be the greatest of all critics, the Scripture is a sealed book. The true corrective of the unrest of our day will be found in the devout use of the Holy Scriptures. If any man will search them as our Lord commanded, they will testify of Him. If any man will study them "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," he will not be disappointed; whatever may be the value of critical study, and however thankful we may be for the fact that no discovery of modern research, positively ascertained, is of a character to unsettle a Christian's faith in any particular, we must remember that the chief duty of every student, and especially of every teacher, is to learn what the Scripture says and what it means, so that he may be able faithfully to open the same Scripture to the help and healing of sinful men. Any instruction or any study which makes any part of the Bible less authoritative than it really is, which weakens faith in its Inspiration, which tends to eliminate Christ from the utterances of the Prophets, or which leads a man to think of miracles with a half-suppressed skepticism, is a pernicious instruction and a pernicious study. A great danger may beset the flock of Christ, not merely from false teaching, but through injudicious and ill-timed teaching, the effect of which is not to settle and confirm, but to undermine and weaken faith. This danger exists, and, unless it shall be conscientiously

avoided by every teacher of the Church, the coming generations may live to see "a famine in the land, not famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is a postulate of faith, not a corollary of criticism. It cannot lawfully be questioned by any Christian man, and least of all by men who have sealed their conviction of the certainty of the Faith with the solemn vows of Ordination. Outside of the domain of faith, there may be undetermined questions touching matters which, to some minds, may seem to be almost essential to the integrity of the Christian scheme, but which cannot be necessary to salvation. In this border land, thinking minds will appreciate, and reverently and conscientiously use the freedom which is accorded to them; but they will not carry their liberty over into the realm of adjudicated truth. Their obligations to God, as men and as priests, bind them in a holy and blessed servitude to the truth; and a consciousness of their own honest loyalty is essential to their self-respect.

Under the instruction of their Divine Master, the first ambassadors of Christ knew how fruitless even a high degree of evangelic activity must be without unflinching loyalty to a body of Doctrine once for all delivered and received. In the ages all along, since the first Council was held in Jerusalem, the safety and honor of the Church have been endangered as much by the inroads of disbelief in revelation, and by lax constructions of creeds and oaths of allegiance, as by the idolatry of the East, or the barbarism of the West.

Not less plain is this condition, and not less sharp is the test of obedience, in this land and at this time, in the matter of the Church's formularies of worship. Seductions to lawlessness abounding in a civilization showy rather than strong, in communities of eager enterprise, intellectual pride, social agitation, and vast material opportunities, lay upon the Church a solemn obligation to abide steadfastly in the unchanging principles of her commission and her confessions, and in the dignity and simplicity of her acknowledged offices and standards; not forgetting that spiritual life must decay, not only when pledges are emptied of their meaning, but when formularies are maimed of their integrity. No specious plea of progress, liberty, independence, or comprehension, can weaken in the least the constraining obligation of a covenant of conformity. A heresy which would seek at the altar protection from the penalty of a violated vow, forfeits the respect and tenderness due to honest doubt. We therefore earnestly entreat you, dear Brethren of the Clergy, that you 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free,' that you 'declare the whole counsel of God,' as this Church hath received the same, that you exercise discipline without fear, 'not handling the Word of God deceitfully,' 'holding the mystery of the Faith in a pure conscience,' and 'by manifestation of the truth commending yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

So exhorting you, dearly beloved in the Lord, and beseeching the Father of mercies to 'establish, strengthen, and settle' you and the flocks intrusted to our care, we 'commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all of them which are sanctified.'

SOME wealthy Australians having built a church by large contributions, proposed to Bishop Selwyn that pews should be allotted according to the amount given. The Bishop appeared to consent, and then asked how the largest donors were to be determined, since the widow with her mite was said to have given more than all.

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury's motto for his Diocese for the present year is "Cleanse and Defend."

A new Scotch Episcopal Church, opened at Piershill, Edinburgh, was originally a Wesleyan chapel, alterations having been made for the worship of the Church.

A Windsor (Eng.) correspondent hears that Mr. Vernon Staley's *The Catholic Religion*, which has had so large a sale, has been placed on the Index Expurgatorius at the Vatican—"somewhere in the same vicinity as M. Zola's *Lourdes*."

THE Archbishop of York, it is stated, has completed his task of visiting all the six hundred parishes in his diocese, the visitation having occupied three years. Many of the parishes had not previously been visited by a Prelate within living memory.

THE Rev. F. A. P. Shirreff, late Principal of St. John's Divinity School, Lahore, appointed to the Rectory of St. Dunstan in the East, London, is a well-known Urdu and Persian scholar, and will be of great service to the C.M.S. with respect to commentaries and versions of the Bible.

AT Westminster Abbey the organ has recently been renovated and enlarged, and it is now again being used for Divine service. The present organ was originally built by Schreider and Jordan in 1730, and it has since been frequently overhauled, particularly in 1843 and 1868. Ten years ago it was practically rebuilt.

Rev. Alexander Roberts, of Venice, writes: "In this land of Italy where, as late as 1851, Italians, and English visitors too, were imprisoned for reading the Bible, the annual circulation of the Bible now exceeds that of any other book, and it is taking its rightful place in the literature of the country as the Book of books."

A Roman Catholic layman wrote recently in the *Westminster Gazette* that, as a whole, in the United Kingdom the number of Roman Catholics has fallen off about a million and a half within fifty years. He says that in 1841 the Roman Catholics constituted 26 per cent. of the population, but in 1891 they had dropped to 16 per cent. This evidence of a decline in numbers has surprised many Roman Catholics.

UNDER the will of Mr. Robert Pringle Stuart, Tunbridge Wells, £5,000 is to be paid (on the death of life-renters) to the trustees of the Pusey Memorial Fund, to be held by them upon trust for the promotion of the study of Catholic theology and the inculcation of doctrine as set forth in the liturgies of the primitive Church, as well as the study of the ancient Fathers. For similar objects, and also for the promotion of the study of Keble's writings, £3,000 is left to Keble College, Oxford, to which also the ultimate residue of the testator's property will come.

THE Church Temperance Society, of New York city, arranged, at considerable cost, to secure social statistics of certain centres there. Some \$2,000 have been expended in the work; regular census-takers have been employed. The result in the first district examined (that around St. Augustine's chapel of Trinity