

are to strengthen and encourage individual members of The Church in true personal religion and definite work for God. (2.) To assist them in realizing the duties and privileges of corporate life and fellowship of union in prayer and associated endeavor for the Kingdom of God. The Bishop himself is the president, and all residents in the diocese, who have become communicants, are eligible as members, provided they accept the rules involved:

- a. Regular Communion, with due preparation and thanksgiving.
- b. Beginning and ending the day with prayer, adding the Guild Collect.
- c. Reading and thinking over at least one verse of the Bible daily.
- d. Due observance of Sunday.
- e. Forwarding the work of the Church generally, by material and personal assistance.

#### Diocese of Maritzburg.

The native work in this diocese appears to be making a fresh and more vigorous start. A new work is being organized at Verulam, and two new mission centres have been started near Table Mountain, at one of which a school has been opened. Another school has been opened near Manderston. A new church is contemplated in Maritzburg. Steady development is going on in Ladysmith, under Archdeacon Barker and Mr. Thompson's Mission, of which Inkhlobo is the centre, gives very great promise.

#### Diocese of Pretoria.

At St. Mary's, Johannesburg, during Holy Week, addresses were given in the morning at 10, and in the evening at 8, and on Good Friday the "Three Hours" service was conducted by the Rev. Father Douglas, with addresses on the "Last Words," to a congregation numbering between 400 and 500 persons. On Easter Day there were four celebrations of Holy Communion, that at 8 o'clock a.m. being choral. There were 504 communicants at these services and the church was crammed, people being obliged to go away unable to obtain even standing room. The offertories from the parish during the day amounted to £137. During the year there had been 956 baptisms. The offertories for the year show an increase of £149 over that of the previous year, and donations an increase of £330.

We see that the *Southern Cross* contains a "Wanted": "Two priests for European work in the Zululand diocese"; and at St. Mary's, Johannesburg, an assistant curate is wanted; the stipend offered being £250, with rooms.

### Contemporary Church Opinion.

#### *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette:*

It is almost impossible to make English people realize the feelings with which Irish Church people are watching the progress of the Home Rule Bill in Committee. They one and all fully understand that their Church is face to face with a crisis second to none—not excepting the time of disestablishment—through which it has been called to pass. Not one, but every interest of theirs, is now at stake and it is with a full consciousness of this fact that they day by day watch the efforts of their friends to save them from the great betrayal with which for their loyalty they are treated.

The wondrous unanimity with which the Church of Ireland in every part of the country has protested against Home Rule Bill is a striking indication of the effect which the members of that Church know that the Bill will have on

them. Out of the 1229 incumbencies recorded in the *Irish Church Directory* for 1893 no fewer than 1203 forwarded protests. There were fourteen incumbencies returned as having no parochial organizations, or no select vestry; twelve parishes, including one vacant one, and one case of inaction owing to 'terrorism,' sent in no protests, making a total of twenty-six incumbencies not represented. Not only were the expenses of issuing these protests paid by the contributions received from the several parishes, but the Committee were enabled to undertake a large amount of additional valuable work in printing and circulating a full report of the Synod, specially convened to make known the voice of the Church with reference to Home Rule.

#### *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette:*

Cardinal Vaughan and his fellow prelates of the "Italian Mission" have given England a new Patron Saint. It is the Pope who suggests the step. The "Holy Father"—claiming boldly Divine suggestion in the matter ("God prompting us")—exhorts "the faithful of England to follow the example of their forefathers, and by a solemn religious rite, to dedicate and consecrate the whole country to the Most Holy Mother of God and to the blessed Prince of the Apostles." The Roman Catholic prelates proceed, interpreting history in their own peculiar way, to show how appropriate is this dedication. Braced up by a variety of bold assertions, they at last reach the astonishing conclusion "that it is the glory of this country, as it is of Ireland and Scotland, that almost every one of her Martyrs has died in the cause of St. Peter. The *Record* says:—"The majority of English people may look on these proceedings with amused contempt, but it must be remembered that they have a serious side. They witness once more to the strenuous endeavour of Rome to seize and hold every possible coign of vantage in our land." The *Church Times* says:—"It is strange that this step was not taken years ago, and we can only account for it by the fact that Cardinal Vaughan's predecessors had not quite reached that point of audacity at which it was possible to assume the entire oversight of this benighted country. So long as a successor of St. Augustine is seated in St. Augustine's chair, the English nation will have little real regard for the brand-new throne at Kensington. In going to these lengths the Roman Catholics are making a mistake."

#### THE SOCIETIES FOR PRODUCING, AND CIRCULATING, CHRISTIAN LITERATURE—RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR.

BY ROBERT NEEDHAM CUST, LL.D.

The Bible and the Bible alone, is the basis of all Christian literature, but none the less, auxiliary societies are required to assist the student, and promote the study of that Book. The Bible Society keeps to its unique and proper duty. In London there exist two notable Societies, which carry out a very great and blessed work, and neither of them attract the attention and support which they deserve.

It so happens, that the Old and new Testament—the Divine Library of Jerome—on their human side, occupy a very peculiar position. The thoughtful mind is struck by the remarkable phenomenon of a library, the volumes of which extended over fifteen hundred years, and the actions described in which touched, only just touched, the three great monarchies of Western Asia, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, the solitary African monarchy of Egypt, and the

two great Empires of Greece and Rome. Now the Bible can only be understood in all its allusions after a study of the contemporary literature of those countries, and the advance of knowledge has been so constant and rapid, that no books of a date of more than a quarter of a century are of any value. We live in an age of progress. The old grandmotherly style of the preachers and teachers of the Georgian period is of no use at all now. Our knowledge of geography, and archaeology has wonderfully expanded. Comparative philology has come into existence. A new and correcter idea of history has been formed. The Book of non-Christian Religion, and the buried records of Egypt and Assyria, have become accessible, and the desire to arrive at Truth has been aided by the continued exertion of the two Societies to which we allude.

Here a caution must be introduced. The Bible never grows out of date or falls below the high-water mark of human knowledge. No suggestions of alteration, or new editions, of the Bible can be tolerated, but the work of these auxiliary Societies is specially human, liable to change, modification, and actual supersession by later and fresher treatises. This principle is enunciated distinctly, as in some Societies the right of this generation to modify, alter and re-edition the tracts of the good men of the last generation is disputed, and actually the children of writers of tracts of the last generation protest against any alteration being made in the works of their revered ancestors.

The Christian Knowledge Society (S.P.C.K.) has a great many branches of usefulness, but our remarks are restricted to those, which relate to literature. They are twofold: the Foreign Translations Department, and the supply of books in the English language. It is difficult in a few lines to describe the excellent work of the Foreign department in several score of languages of the five divisions of the world. An enormous amount of good has been done without attracting the notice which it deserves. Bishops and missionaries come home from their distant spheres with their manuscripts, the result of long tedious years of labour, and seek a publisher, that they may carry back a supply of printed copies for their flocks. The Society steps in, prints without cost, under the superintendence of the authors, and presents a supply to the delighted applicant. It really is missionary work of the truest character. In the case of missionary Societies, it is a great relief to their funds. Branch Societies in different central stations, and missionary printing presses, supported by grants, are doing the same good work. The kind of literature supplied consists of Commentaries of the Bible, Hymns, the Book of Common-Prayer in shortened form, Selections of Picture-Cards, Grammars, Vocabularies, Catechisms, and Translations of esteemed English works.

In the English language there is a supply of serials, books, maps, pictures for the walls of school-rooms, literature of a most interesting and improving character, with a sound healthy tone pervading the whole. There is something to suit all tastes, but, as it is a Church of England Society, the great bulk of the books are in harmony with the views of that Church, but in the Supplemental Catalogue, place is found for esteemed books, such as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Great liberality is displayed in grants to missionary Societies abroad, or institutions at home, and members of the Society are entitled to 25 per cent. reduction of price. Printing presses are granted to missionary stations in every part of the world. Encouragement is given to the preparation, as well as printing, of important works, and the revision of translations, for instance, of the Book of Common Prayer, which will exert an important influence upon native churches growing up into independence under their own Bishop. More might be written, but the scope and the merits