

them to be a thoroughly sincere, conscientious, upright, and zealous body of men and women, all working, as they best knew how, for the spread of Christianity, and far more anxious to build up a pure Church than to multiply nominal converts. The agents of the different sects abstain from even the appearance of rivalry, and meet for friendly counsel, and instead of perpetuating such separating names as Episcopalians, Baptists, Congregationalists, &c., "the disciples are called **CHRISTIANS FIRST.**" (The capitals and italics in this extract are Miss Bird's.)

Without indulging in any unreasonable expectations, says Miss Bird, it cannot be doubted that the teaching of this large body of persons, and the example of the unquestionable purity of their lives, is paving the way for the reception of the Christianity preached by Japanese evangelists with the eloquence of conviction, and that every true convert is not only a convert but a propagandist, and a centre of the higher morality in which lies the great hope for the future of Japan.

ART. IV.—THE CHURCH PASTORAL AID SOCIETY.

PART II.

OUR attention was occupied last month with the circumstances attending the origin of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and the controversies which have arisen respecting its principles and management. We must now proceed to consider the actual progress and work of the Society during the forty-five years of its existence. The amount which it has from time to time been able to accomplish has, of course, depended upon the funds annually placed at its command. These amounted during the first year after its formation to £7,363. Increasing at the rate of about £2,000 per annum, they reached £29,941 in the eleventh year. During the next two decades the rate of increase was only half as great, the Society's income in its twenty-first year (1856-7) being £41,708, and in its thirty-first (1866-7), £47,829. During the subsequent thirteen years, the average income has been about £52,000. It must be remembered that these amounts do not include the sums raised in the parishes aided in order to supplement the amount granted by the Society towards the stipend of the curate or lay assistant.

From the earliest years of the Society, there have been always some cases in which it has only rendered partial assistance in providing the salary of the agent, leaving the rest to be made up from local sources. Thus, in 1839, when the Society's

income was £16,176, the additional sum so made up was £3,800, or nearly one-fourth. In 1869-70, the proportion was nearly one-third, being £16,505 as compared with £51,994, and in 1879-80 it had risen to more than two-thirds, being £32,343, while the income of the Society was £45,868. It is necessary to bear this in mind when comparing the financial condition of the Church Pastoral Aid Society with that of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Additional Curates. The practice of the latter Society is to reckon in its income all sums raised and paid from other sources to meet the grants made from its General Fund, including even those contributed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Thus, in 1878, when it appeared, from the Annual Report of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, that its income was £56,644; the Additional Curates' Society claimed to have received an income of £74,329. But of this, £35,602 was paid from other sources towards supplementing its grants in the same way that, during the same period, £32,242 was raised to supplement grants from the Church Pastoral Aid Society. Of course, the position of the two Societies cannot be compared without estimating their funds in the same manner. The supplementary sums must be either omitted or reckoned in both cases. If the former course be adopted, our Society's income for the year in question appears as £56,644 and that of the sister Society as £38,727; if the other computation be preferred, the two figures become £88,886 and £74,329 respectively.

The great increase during late years in the sums contributed from local or other sources, as compared with the income of the Society, is due partly to the general rise which has taken place in the salaries of curates, with no corresponding augmentation of the amounts granted by the Society, partly to the practice which the committee have more and more been disposed to adopt of giving partial grants for curates of £50 or £60 in lieu of £90 or £100—the amounts formally regarded as full grants for a deacon or priest, as the case might be—and partly to the general reduction of the grants by £10 each, which was made last year owing to the state of the Society's finances.

With the funds entrusted to its disposal, the Society, as proposed in the original Statement, to which I referred last month, made grants from time to time towards the building and fitting up of churches and rooms for Divine service. But it was found that other instrumentalities existed for this object, and that the demands on the Society for the supply of living agents were more than its whole income was sufficient to meet. Only sixty-four structural grants in all were therefore made; the last of these being in 1856, since which time the practice has been wholly abandoned. Indirectly, however, the Society's aid has

often led to the erection of a new church. On receipt of a grant from the Society, an incumbent has assigned a district in his populous and extensive parish to the exclusive charge of the curate supported by the grant. The curate has visited the people and collected them for service in a school or mission-room, which has speedily proved inadequate for the increasing congregation. Funds have then been collected for the new church, the necessity of which has become apparent; the edifice has been erected, and the district has been created a separate ecclesiastical parish. No fewer than 216 instances are recorded of churches having been built, and 127 instances of places of worship having been purchased or kept open, as the result of a grant for the living agent from the Society.

As respects the work to which the Society has more especially devoted itself, in the first year of its existence it made grants for the employment of 40 additional clergymen and 13 lay assistants. Ten months later these figures had risen to 92 and 18 respectively. Two years afterwards (December, 1839), the clerical grants were 246 and the lay grants 33. Since then the numbers have gradually increased with the growth of the Society's income. In March, 1876, at the close of the forty-first year of its existence, they stood at 630 and 240 respectively. The present numbers are somewhat less—namely, 543 and 193. Of course, there are always a certain number of the grants out of operation, owing to the grantee being unable to meet with a suitable curate or lay agent either at the moment when the grant is first made, or as an immediate successor to one who has hitherto occupied it. The records of the Society show that there is generally no difficulty in finding an occupant for a lay grant, and the number of these which are vacant is usually not more than five per cent. On the other hand, the average number of vacant curates' grants is over twenty per cent. This discrepancy between the amount of grants on the Society's books and those actually in operation accounts for the mention which is always made in the Annual Report of its liabilities as standing at a much higher figure than its actual expenditure. The sum set down as liabilities represents what the annual expenditure would be, if all the existing grants were occupied during the whole twelve months. Experience having proved that, as a matter of fact, they never are so, the committee are justified in incurring this nominal liability in excess of the estimated income of the Society.

A few years ago the Society, stimulated by a special donation which had been given by a friend for the purpose, made small grants towards the printing and other expenses connected with the holding of special missions in destitute parishes. This practice, however, was found inconvenient, and speedily aban-

done, and now, with the exception of one or two grants towards the income of incumbents, the resources of whose benefices are utterly inadequate to their support—a species of grant, however, which the committee do not desire to perpetuate—the whole funds of the Society are devoted to the support of curates and lay agents. The value of this work can best be understood by considering its effect in a single instance. An incumbent finding himself alone and unaided in a parish of 6,000 or 7,000 poor, is almost helpless. He knows not where to begin his work or how to make an impression on the people. He cannot hope to produce any result whatever without such superhuman exertions as must speedily break him down. With the grant of a curate, or even a scripture-reader, all is changed. It is not a doubling of the working power in the parish; it is the creating of a power where, from the sense of isolation and depression at the hopelessness of the task, there was absolutely none before. Services can now be conducted without exhausting fatigue, schools can be organized, Bible classes and cottage lectures started, and a more or less systematic visitation from house to house carried on. Some of the Society's grants are of course for a second or third assistant to an incumbent in an overgrown parish, which even then is not over-manned; but it may safely be said that the above is an accurate picture of the effect of the grants in many out of the 611 parishes among which they are at present distributed.

Having now briefly traced the progress of the Society to the present time, the question naturally presents itself to us, What are its prospects for the future? Is it destined to remain as a permanent institution of the Church of England, or will its work in time either be altogether accomplished or else pass into the hands of other agents? To one of these questions the answer is easy. There is no prospect of the work coming to an end. The causes productive of the state of things which called for the formation of the Society continue, after the lapse of nearly half a century, in full operation. Population still increases, and that more potent cause of spiritual destitution, the condensation of population into particular areas, utterly swamping the existing parochial system in the new place of their abode, is still rife in our midst. Consequently, notwithstanding all the new parishes which have been created, and the new churches which have been built, the means of grace are still in many places grievously inadequate to meet the requirements of the people. It is a remarkable fact that, in spite of the subdivision of the parochial areas which has taken place in the interval, the average population under the charge of each incumbent aided by the Society is, at the present time, rather over than under what it was forty years ago. It was then

7,375, when the number of parishes aided was 275 ; it is now 7,665, as the average of the 611 parishes at present assisted. There is clearly, therefore, as great a need in our Church as ever there was for a supply of curates and lay agents. Shall, then, this Society continue to be the instrument of supplying them, or can the annual outlay involved in the working expenses of the Society, its offices and printing, the salaries of its officers, and the stipends and travelling expenses of its association secretaries be saved, and the required parochial agency be provided by other means—by the incumbents themselves, or out of the resources of the parishes which require it, or by diocesan or other local societies ?

The first two alternatives may at once be laid aside. It is true that during the last fifty years there has been an increase in the stipends of incumbents. To take as examples those aided by the Society, who are as a rule among the poorest, the average of their stipends has risen from £163, the figure at which it stood forty years ago, to £343 ; and whereas half of them were then without parsonage-houses, only one-fourth are so at present. But the salaries of curates have also increased in the interval, and the value of livings in general is clearly not yet, and it may be safely predicted that it never will be, sufficient to enable incumbents, except in a few favoured parishes, to provide themselves with adequate clerical or even lay assistance out of their own resources. We may go further, and say that, as a rule, it never ought to be so. The ancient provision for incumbents by means of tithes and glebe lands was never intended to support a second clergyman in the parish. The cases of wealthy pew-rented churches, and cases where from some other cause the emoluments of the living are abnormally large, constitute of course legitimate exceptions. But, putting these aside, it may be laid down that an incumbent ought not to be called upon to support a curate, except as a substitute for himself during his own temporary absence or incapacity for performing ministerial duties. Undoubtedly, the duty of providing a curate, where required, to assist the incumbent, rests primarily with the laity of the parish itself. But it is notorious that the poverty of many parishes renders this practically impossible. If the stipends of the grantees have on an average increased since the formation of the Society, we fear that the same cannot be said of the wealth of the parishes in which the densest masses of our population reside. Owing to the facilities of travelling and intercommunication which have sprung into existence, there has been a constant tendency on the part of well-to-do persons to migrate from the centres of our great towns into the suburbs, from the more crowded parishes into districts where they can breathe a purer

atmosphere, spending merely the actual hours of business in the heart of the town. Hence it happens that parishes which were formerly well off and able to assist their clergy are now unable to do so. The large houses remain, but each is let out in single rooms to several families. There are parishes aided by the Society in which the number of domestic servants employed may be reckoned upon the fingers; and one or two in which the parsonage-house is the only dwelling in which one is to be found. Employers of labour have ceased to dwell amongst their men; nay, more, the employment of labour has in many cases passed out of the hands of individuals into that of joint-stock companies, whose members have frequently no common tie of local association with their work-people. No doubt, in theory, both individual masters and companies ought to feel it their duty to provide for the spiritual wants of the parishes in which their employés are congregated, just as much as if they resided there themselves, but in practice they do not usually recognize this liability, or, if they do, it is not to an extent adequate in itself to meet the necessities of the case. The number of parishes, therefore, which cannot from their own resources provide for their spiritual wants, is as great if not greater than at the time when the Society was founded.

It only remains to be considered whether the wants of these parishes can be best supplied by funds collected in limited areas, or by the instrumentality of this, and I may add, also, of the Additional Curates' Society, for my present remarks will apply alike to both. Great efforts are, no doubt, at present made in many dioceses to raise funds for supplying the needy parts of the diocese with spiritual ministrations out of the superabundance of the wealthier parts. There is a growing disposition to regard the diocese as the ecclesiastical unit, and to consider that all church work should centre round the bishop as its president and be carried on through diocesan organizations. We may hail with feelings of joy and thankfulness the existence of such local funds. The establishment of them is to be regarded as a positive duty. For, just as a parish, if capable of supplying its own spiritual wants, ought to do so and not allow itself to be a burden to its neighbours, so a wider area, such as a town, or even a diocese, has a local duty to perform, and the wealthier portions of it ought to charge themselves with the assistance of the poorer parts. In this way, no doubt, a portion of the evil attendant on the separation of the richer and poorer classes can be redressed, for the wealthy parish in the suburb may send help to the poor parish in the centre of the town. But the inequalities between supply and demand are not confined to different parts of the same town or to different areas in the same diocese; they extend to different districts throughout

the country. The southern counties of England are less afflicted with spiritual destitution than the northern counties, and can afford to contribute towards the alleviation of it in the centres of industry. Moreover, persons who derive their wealth directly or indirectly from our mines and manufactories are not to be found exclusively in the dioceses in which the mines and factory hands are congregated. Their residences extend to other regions; and this is, of course, especially the case where the employers of labour are joint-stock companies. How, then, can the non-resident employers take their proper share of the burden, or the well-supplied south enjoy the privilege of contributing to the under-manned north, except through the medium of an England-wide organization such as the Church Pastoral Aid Society? That this Society does, in fact, act the part of a distributor of funds from one part of the country to another is evident from a glance at the tabular statements of its operations published at the end of its annual reports. We find, for instance, on turning to the last of these, that in the year 1879-80 the arch-diocese of Canterbury received aid from the Society to the amount of £375 and contributed £1,053 to its funds, while the Diocese of Chichester contributed £783 in return for assistance to the amount of £100. By means of the income derived from dioceses such as these the Society was able to spend during the year in the diocese of Chester a sum of £4,160 while receiving back only £2,252, in that of Manchester £6,155 while receiving £3,154, and in that of Worcester £4,240 while receiving £956.

But beyond this merely material advantage of an organization extending over the country, we hold that it has a distinct benefit in assisting to promote that feeling of the communion of saints which should pervade the members of a common National Church throughout the length and breadth of the land, and which finds its natural expression in, and is strengthened by, the acts of communicating and receiving spiritual assistance. Just as by subscribing to the Church Missionary Society a person becomes a helper of evangelistic effort throughout the world, so a gift to the general funds of the Church Pastoral Aid Society is a contribution to the relief of religious destitution throughout the whole of our own country. At the same time, while the Society encourages this catholic method of giving, there is nothing to prevent persons who are so minded from designating the districts or parishes to which they desire their offerings to be applied. The Society has, from time to time, been charged with the administration of some few such funds for particular objects. Chief among them is the Disney Robinson Memorial Fund of £10,000, created by Mrs. Disney Robinson in memory of her deceased husband, the income of which is to be applied

in making grants of £50 or £70, in addition to £50 from the general funds of the Society, for the support of curates in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It must be observed, however, that the Society only consents to hold these funds for specific objects on the terms that the grants made out of them shall be subject to the same conditions as the other grants of the Society; since it could never consent to depart from its principles and established practice at the dictation of an individual donor. Inasmuch, therefore, as the needs and circumstances of a particular locality and its ministers are constantly liable to fluctuation and cannot be foreseen from year to year, a multiplication of these special funds, especially if designated for a single parish, is to be deprecated as neither wise nor expedient.

It is easy to mention other advantages possessed by a widely-spreading Society over local and limited organizations. What the Archbishop of Canterbury remarked the other day of diocesan colleges may be said also of diocesan associations, that there is a tendency in them unconsciously to contract narrow and one-sided views and practices. A society extending over the whole country is exempt from this risk; the Church Pastoral Aid Society, in so far as it can be called a narrow society, of which more hereafter, being so avowedly and on principle. Again, though on the one hand the administrators of diocesan funds may be presumed to have more accurate knowledge of the wants of the particular parishes of the diocese, yet from their very local connection with those parishes they are exposed to the risk of unintentional partiality and bias in dealing with their respective claims. The committee of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, on the other hand, in their office in London, are free from any special predilections in favour of one applicant for assistance over another. While obtaining from the most trustworthy special sources, to which they have the opportunity of applying, all possible information as to the state and requirements of the parishes for which assistance is solicited, they can form an unbiassed judgment on the comparative claims of each. It would be ridiculous to assert that mistakes are never made, for no body of men is infallible; but, to whatever cause they are due, they certainly cannot be laid to want of patient investigation on the part of the committee through the medium of the sub-committee which I described last month. The features of every application for aid are carefully considered, and, if they appear to be such as merit assistance from the Society, the applicant's name is placed on a list of cases waiting for aid. From time to time, as the state of the Society's funds appears to warrant it, this list is overhauled by the sub-committee and the most necessitous and deserving cases singled out to be the recipients of new grants. Every grant is made for one year

only, and *ipso facto* lapses on the death or removal of the incumbent to whom it is made. At the end, therefore, of every twelve months, and also on every change in the incumbency, an application for its renewal or continuance comes before the sub-committee; and the circumstances of the case are then reviewed. If they appear to be the same as heretofore, the grant is renewed; but if not, it is either modified or withdrawn as appears expedient. Amid the endless diversity of the different parishes receiving or expecting aid from the Society it is, of course, impossible that the decisions of the committee can give universal satisfaction. On one point, for instance, they cannot make inquisitorial investigations—namely, the private means of the incumbents who are aided. To any one who is notoriously wealthy they, of course, decline assistance; but in other cases reliance must be placed on the good faith of the applicants themselves, who, it must be presumed, would not apply for assistance of this eleemosynary character in competition with their poorer brethren if they were able to provide it out of their own resources.

In speaking of the Society as a widely-spreading organization I recalled to mind that many persons would style it, on the contrary, a very narrow institution. It is, of course, professedly and rigidly confined to one of the three parties, or, as some prefer to call them, schools of thought, in our National Church. I am convinced that it was both right and politic in its founders to stamp it with that character. I say this not merely out of individual sympathy with the Evangelical principles of the Society, but from general considerations. Full of charity as persons of different opinions ought to be towards one another, especially if they are members of the same Church, I believe that they will work better and more successfully apart from each other. For it is the men of strong views who are, as a rule, the most energetic and laborious, and most advance the undertakings in which they are engaged; and it is precisely these who cannot comfortably or even conscientiously submit to waive differences of opinion which others may think unimportant, and work with those whom they consider to be in error in important particulars.

But to return. While believing that the advantages of a central Society, which have been enumerated, are far more than worth the working expenses which they entail, I think that friends of the Society should not lose sight of this expenditure nor neglect any opportunities for diminishing it or keeping it down. Instances sometimes occur where a wealthy parish seeks to obtain a grant from the Society and seems to consider that it establishes an irresistible claim to assistance if it offers to return the whole amount which it solicits. It is forgotten that if every wealthy parish pursued the same course there would be no funds

for the destitute parishes for the relief of which the Society was founded. Moreover, a grant cannot be said to cost the Society nothing in case of a bare return of the whole amount of the grant, unless an additional sum is returned equivalent to a proportionate part of the Society's working expenses. Wealthy parishes ought to provide for their own wants themselves and also contribute to the Society for the aid of destitute parishes; or if they have a fancy to contribute to the Society with one hand and draw from it with the other for the support of a curate or lay-assistant in their midst, then their contributions ought to be largely in excess of the sum which they receive; otherwise they may be flattering themselves that they are aiding destitute parishes when, in fact, they are only providing for their own wants in a slightly disguised form.

The stipends of the association secretaries and their travelling expenses of course form a heavy item in the working outlay of the Society. It is in the power of its grantees and friends largely to diminish these travelling expenses, and to prevent the necessity of increasing the staff, and with it the cost of the secretariat, by themselves pleading the cause of the Society in their own and in neighbouring parishes. But to dispense altogether with salaried association secretaries will never be possible; and it is satisfactory to feel assured that the cost which they entail to the Society is not all mere expenditure on machinery. In many cases, and chiefly, perhaps, in small country parishes, where his visit is productive of the smallest pecuniary result to the Society, the association secretary breaks in upon the stagnant routine of the ordinary ministrations, and puts a fresh life and vigour into incumbent and people alike, both by his private intercourse while entertained at the parsonage-house, and by his addresses from the pulpit and platform. In this way, the money spent on his stipend and journeys may be regarded as to a certain extent laid out upon direct spiritual work, no less than that contributed towards the salary of the curate or scripture-reader.

One word, in conclusion, as to the spheres of usefulness at present open to the Society if it had the funds wherewith to step in and occupy them. There were at the end of October, 1880, the names of no fewer than ninety-eight incumbents on the list kept by the committee of cases waiting for aid, to none of which is the Society able to render that assistance which the entry of them on the list proves that they are regarded as requiring. Some of these had been kept waiting ever since the end of 1875. Nor does this figure, large as it is, represent the total number of deserving applications which the Committee have been obliged to refuse during the last five years. For, with the list in such an over-burdened state, they felt it only right to

decline at once many supplicants for aid, whose claims they fully recognized and would, under other circumstances, gladly have entertained, but who would only have been deluded with false hopes if they had been placed on the list to be considered in competition with so large a number of other cases, the statistics of which were stronger than their own. Great, therefore, as is the good which, through the blessing of God, the Society has been and is being enabled to effect, the work is ever growing upon its hands, and requires that the pecuniary support which it receives should not only be maintained but be largely and permanently increased.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.

ART. V.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

PART IV, INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

AS an inference from Canonicity and Inspiration, as already explained, the Protestant theologians are accustomed to predicate of Holy Scripture certain qualities, or attributes, which bear upon its fitness for the position they assign to it in the Church; such as Truth, Holiness, Sufficiency, Perspicuity, &c.¹ If Scripture is the Word of God it must be true and holy, and if no apostolic tradition is extant but the Canon, it must be supposed sufficient for its purpose. Of these properties Perspicuity and Sufficiency are of dogmatical import, and constitute points of controversy between the Protestant and the Romish churches. With the former, the subject of the present section, the Interpretation of Scripture, is intimately connected; the latter will come before us in the following one.

In fact, a principal argument with writers of the Romish communion against the fitness of Scripture to be the Rule of Faith is derived from its alleged obscurity; of which they produce as evidence the variety of interpretations of which it seems to be capable; both the Church and heretics appealing to it in support of their views, and in orthodox Christianity different sects, and even churches, drawing different conclusions from the same book. As to individuals, can two Christians be found who are absolutely in agreement as to the meaning of Scripture?

¹ "Affectiones primariæ sunt quæ S. Scripturæ formaliter spectatæ conveniunt, ut sunt *divina auctoritas, infallibilis veritas, omnimoda perfectio seu sufficientia, luculenta perspicuitas, scipsam interpretandi facultas.*"—Quenstedt, p. 1. c. iv. Thes. 8.