

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Romanism and a Free Bible

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What place does Romanism assign to the Bible, as a book for the people? This is becoming a question of grave interest in our country. Several minor issues concerning its use have sprung up in communities where the papal and protestant communions are mixed, showing that two widely different policies form the usage of the two denominations. The uniformity of action, and the persistency in it, shown by Romanism, make it evident that they are not experimenting to discover the true theory. They act as from principles settled and well-understood. Their action is as definite, as prompt, and as cordial, as is the protestant, in the use they wish to make of the scriptures, as a book for the people.

It is evident, and latterly there has been painful growth of the evidence, that the two theories of these two great divisions of Christendom are antagonistic.

It is a matter of the first consequence that the two parties understand each other. Probably an issue of greater moment to us could not be raised respecting our prosperity and perpetuity as a people, than the question, which of these two theories shall prevail. As we understand our history, our beginning, so fruitful in what makes a people truly great, lies far back in the wrenching of the Bible from the iron grasp of the hierarchy. The principal freight of the Mayflower was a free Bible. Plymouth Rock is but a common landing for any band of adventurers, till we discover that the English Bible of the Puritans is coupled with it. This book it is that, among us, has aroused the mind, freed and cleared the conscience, and defined and enlarged the limits of civil, social, and religious liberty. It is the Bible that has stimulated industry, and developed national resources and growth, till we span the continent and lay a hand on either ocean. In contrast with countries of the Old World, where the Bible is a prohibited book, our standing army is made up of Sabbath schools, and our police of secret watch are the prophets and the apostles.

Undoubtedly our national prosperity, from the landing of the Pilgrims hitherto, is largely from the influence of the scriptures, as a common and popular book. He, then, who would exclude it as a textbook for the popular mind, smites the people in the very hidings of their strength. To adopt the noble words of Webster, he "touches the very foundations of

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public law, and the Constitution, and the whole welfare of the State.”¹ A free Bible has been our strength, as it is our glory, and must be our guarantee for the future.

Romanism, however, has another theory and another practice. The ancient, comprehensive, and unchanged policy of the papacy is the suppression of the word of God in the mother tongue of a people. The ground of their objection to our Protestant management in the public use of the scriptures is not the difference between “hallowed” and “sanctified,” nor yet the division of the decalogue, nor the unfaithfulness of the common version, nor the exclusion of the Douay. Their objection is against having *any version* in popular and general use, as a book designed for, and common with, the multitude. Their scruples of conscience, and difficulties and objections, grow out of an ancient and leading principle in the Roman Catholic Church, that *the Bible is not for the people*.

It is the design of this Article to show the rise and prevalence, and general adoption of this principle, in the papal communion.

The pen of inspiration has always written in the language best understood by the readers more immediately intended. So Moses wrote in the language of his people. And from Moses to David, the golden age of the Hebrew tongue, the Hebrew was used as the medium of revelation, that the people might understand the words of God. And so it was from David to the captivity, though the language was less pure. When the Jews returned from the captivity, and had so far forgotten the Hebrew in their use of the Chaldee, as to be unable to understand the reading of the law in its original language, the Levites “gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading,” by translating the same into the Chaldee dialect. And afterward Ezra, Jeremiah, and Daniel wrote in this dialect to some extent. So careful was God lest his word should be shut up in a foreign language, and so be kept from the people. And so he caused the New Testament to be written in the language best understood by those for whom it was immediately intended. But because there were and would continue to be nations who could not understand the scriptures in their original tongues, he provided the gift of tongues and translators. So the apostles and their immediate successors took up the work of giving the scriptures to the nations in the mother tongue. So well did they carry out this design of God, that Eusebius says, A.D. 315, that the scriptures were translated into all languages, Greek and barbarian, throughout the known world, where the gospel had gone. When a nation that spoke a strange tongue was converted to Christianity, the scriptures were immediately translated into it. And so Theodoret, who died about A.D. 450, says that every nation had the scriptures in their own tongue. And to this agree Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine.

¹ Argument in the Girard Will Case, Works, Vol. VI. p. 142.

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And when, A.D. 561, one writer attempted to show that it was impossible to corrupt the scriptures, he gave as a reason that they were already translated into the languages of seventy-two nations or tribes.² Such were the theory, tendency, and prospects for a free Bible in the vernacular of a people in the earlier and purer ages of Christianity.

Of the decline of letters, the apostasy of the church, and the almost entire loss of primitive Christianity, it is needless to speak. The night was long and awful. It was even “a horror of great darkness.” The only thing that had light in itself was shut up in cloister and cave. The light that God had given to put on a candlestick, men had put under a bushel. The church was paganized, and had secured the making of the kings, and the controlling of the State. Her three greatest attributes were ignorance, despotism, and profligacy. When, therefore, in the twelfth century, the light of God’s word struggled to come abroad again, the struggles were as those chaotic ones that precede a creation. Waldo, the first to introduce the scriptures into any modern language of Europe, barely saved his life from the persecutions of the church, while his followers were the first to bear the crown of martyrdom in defence of a free Bible. Other versions and versifications followed, exposing the unsound faith and unholy life of the priesthood. These efforts at a reformation annoyed the hierarchy exceedingly. They readily saw that the greatest force brought against them was the open word of God. With a boldness and a policy, therefore, rarely equalled even in a good cause, they struck at the root of their troubles by the absolute prohibition of the scriptures to the laity. This was at the Council of Toulouse in 1229. The original of the infamous decree is as follows: “*Prohibemus, etiam, ne libros Veteris Testamenti aut Novi laici permittantur habere: nisi, forte, Psalterium vel Breviarium pro divinis officiis, aut Horas B. Mariae aliquis ex devotione habere velet; sed ne praemissos libros habeant in vulgari translatos arctissime inhibemus.*”¹ Since the days of Moses God has enacted otherwise. For centuries the contrary and apostolic theory and practice of the church had prevailed. Now Rome reverses all. Then and there, six hundred and thirty years ago, she turned the clasp on God’s word. And from that day to this her position has been: *no Bible in the vernacular for the people*. Exceptions to this position she has allowed, but under protest, and in pressure of circumstances, and seemingly rather than really.

From the date of the decree of Tolosa to the introduction of printing in 1440, and while translations must lie in manuscript, it was not very difficult to restrict their circulation. This remark, however, should be applied to Wiclif’s, with qualification. For Knighton, the papal historian of those times, says of Wiclif’s work: “In this way the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine, and that which was before precious both to clergy and laity, is now rendered, as it were, the common jest of both. The jewel of the

² Lewis’s Hist. Translations, Diss. p. XII. Bingham’s Christ. Antiqs. B. 13, c. 4.

¹ Concil. Tholosan. Cap. 14.

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church is turned into the sport of the people, and what was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made forever common to the laity.”¹

And in 1408 Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, secured the passage of the following decree, by a convocation of his clergy: “It is a dangerous thing ... to translate the text of the holy scriptures, out of one language into another.... We, therefore, enact and ordain that no one hereafter do, by his own authority, translate any text of scripture into English, or any other tongue, by way of book, libel, or treatise.”

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The introduction of printing multiplied, vastly, the difficulties of the hierarchy in suppressing the Bible. The vicar of St. Paul’s Cross, Surrey, went so far as to make the profound remark: “We must root out printing, or printing will root us out.”²

The translation of Tyndale, that appeared in 1526, was received with bitter hostility. Tonstal, bishop of London, announced to his archdeacons, that “some sons of iniquity, and ministers of the Lutheran faction, had craftily translated the holy gospel of God into our vulgar English,” and ordered all copies of it to be burned. The aid of Henry VIII. was invoked in 1531. And as he had borne the title of “Defender of the Faith,” for ten years, he was ready to do papal service. He therefore declared “that the having the whole scripture in English is not necessary to Christian men;” and so decreed that the “translation of scripture corrupted by William Tyndale, as well in the Old Testament as in the New, should utterly be expelled, rejected,” etc.³ Tyndale himself was imprisoned, strangled, and burned; many of his books destroyed, and many of his readers executed. And in 1543 it was enacted that no “artificers, prentises, iourneymen, serving men of the degrees of yomen or under husbandmen, nor labourers, were to read the bible or New Testament in English, to himself or to any other, privately or openly, upon paine of one month’s imprisonment.”¹

So virulent was this hostility to God’s law, in English, or even any portion of it, for the people, that bishop Bonner, by an order of Oct. 25, 1554, required all church-wardens, in the diocese of London, “to abolish and extinguish, so that they might not be read or seen,” all passages from God’s word, painted on the walls of the churches.²

Cardinal Pole, who succeeded Cranmer in the see of Canterbury, in 1556, removed, as is highly probable, all Bibles and prayer-books from the churches in his diocese, and all texts of scripture from the walls. He appointed commissioners, also, to visit the

¹ Dowling’s Hist. Romanism, p. 383.

² Lewis’s Hist. Translations, p. 55.

³ Lewis, pp. 59, 77.

¹ Lewis, p. 149. See also Neal’s History of the Puritans, I. 36, 42.

² Fox, Acts and Monuments, 3, 35.

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universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and effect a papal reform in them; which they did by burning all the English Bibles, and such other books as they judged to be heretical.³ And so, some years after, we find this entry in the account-book of the church-wardens of Crundal: "Paid for lack of a Bible at Canterbury, 1s. 3d."

When Elizabeth took the crown, and turned the State more fully with the Protestant Reformation, it would seem that the same question, of the Bible in the public schools, was then a party question between Protestants and papists, as it now is in our own land. For, in the second year of her reign, 1559, she addressed fifty-three articles of instruction and reform to the clergy and laity of the land; two of which read as follows:

"41. Schoolmasters shall exhort their children to love and reverence the true religion, now allowed by authority.

"42. They shall teach their scholars certain sentences of scripture, tending to godliness."⁴

But the hostility of the Roman Catholic church to a free Bible for the people, was as manifest in other countries as in England. A fact or two must suffice to indicate, where a volume might be given.

Before the Reformation, the Bible was an unknown book among the people of Scotland. Divine service was performed in Latin, of which even the leading ecclesiastics knew but little. Great care was taken to keep even a catechism from the laity. The importation of any of Luther's works was forbidden, under forfeiture of ship and cargo. A few copies of the English Bible were smuggled in and read, in secret and in conventicles. And till the death of the Fifth James, in 1542, many were those who went to the flames for using that Bible.¹

In 1523, the faculty of theology in Paris passed a decree, which, two years afterward, became a law of that realm, that "It is neither expedient nor useful for the Christian public that any translations of the Bible should be permitted to be printed; but that they ought rather to be suppressed, as injurious, considering the times."²

In the Netherlands, a similar hostility to vulgar translations was shown. In 1525, an imperial edict prohibited "all assemblies in order to read, speak, confer, or preach concerning the gospel or other holy writings, in the Latin, Flemish, or Walloon languages." In 1546, Charles V. issued an edict that specified the text books for the public

³ Townley, 2. 277, 285.

⁴ Neal, I. 180.

¹ M'Crie's Knox, Vol. I.

² Townley's Bib. Literature, I. 572.

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schools. Among those prohibited were *thirty-nine* different translations or editions of the Bible, in the Latin, Flemish, Dutch, and French languages.³

About the year 1500, the scriptures, or parts of them, had been brought into many of the dialects of Spain, through the great labor and peril of those who loved the Word.

But in fifty years, nearly all these had been ferreted out by the emissaries of Rome, and committed to the flames. And efforts at new translations were held in check by the decree of Ferdinand and Isabella, that “no one should translate the scriptures into the vulgar tongue, or have them in their possession, under pain of the severest punishment.”¹

This survey of papal hostility to the translation and circulation of the scriptures, in the vulgar tongue, brings us down to about the year 1550. The facts adduced are few compared with the mass from which they have been taken. Yet they are enough to make the Roman Catholic spirit, toward a free Bible perfectly evident. They explain and illustrate the decree of Tolosa with an overwhelming clearness. No Bible, in the vernacular of a people, is the principle that, during all these years, she has carried as far as her church has extended its limits, and enforced as fully as her power would permit.

Still Rome was losing ground. The Reformation was making rapid advances. Her efforts to bind the word of God were but partially successful. For, during the first thirty-six years of this sixteenth century, to the middle of which we have come in our survey, about six hundred editions of the entire Bible, and parts of it, had been printed, in different languages.² This fact it was, no doubt, that suggested to John Fox, the martyrologist, that noble passage of his, on the printing-press. “Hereby tongues are known, knowledge groweth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, the scripture is seen, the doctors be read, stories be opened, times compared, truth discerned, falsehood detected, and with finger pointed; and all through the benefit of printing. Wherefore, I suppose that either the pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over; or else, as this world standeth, printing doubtless will abolish him.”³

Does, then, Rome recede before the Bible? Does she recal her decrees against translations, and her anathemas against translators? Does she confess her error, welcome the printing-press, and throw open her dark domains to the in-coming light of God’s word? We shall see.

³ Townley, II. 62–66.

¹ Le Long. Biblioth. Sac. I. 361. Ed. of 1723.

² Townley, II. 151–4.

³ Acts and Monuments, I. 837.

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The Roman Catholic church is now in great straits. This entrance of God's word, through so many vernacular editions, has shed light on her corrupt faith, debauched life, and canonical trumpety. She is aroused, pained, agonized. It is with her as when the probe goes down into the rottenness of the bones. She makes a desperate effort for recovery. She calls in all her strength. A universal council is convened at Trent, and organized on the 13th of December, 1545. This was the last general council ever held by that church, and taking notice of the question before us. Its decrees, therefore, are supreme and unchanged authority on this question. It concerns us, therefore, to inquire into their import.

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One decree forbids any printer to print, any author to publish, any bookseller to sell, or any person to copy, read, lend, or possess, any book on religion that has not in it the printed or written certificate of approval by the inquisitors appointed for such purpose. Translations of the Old Testament are forbidden to all but the pious and learned, and they can have them only at the discretion of the bishop. But translations of the New Testament by heretics are forbidden to all.

But the Fourth Rule concerning prohibited books is worthy of an exact quotation. "Whereas it is evident from experience, that, if the sacred books be permitted in the vulgar tongue indiscriminately, more harm than utility arises therefrom, by reason of the temerity of men, in this respect let it depend on the discretion of the bishop or inquisitor, so that with the counsel of the parish priest or confessor, they can grant to them the reading of the books translated by Catholic authors in the vulgar tongue, such persons as they may consider may derive not injury, but an increase of faith and of piety from such reading, which power they may have with respect to the scriptures."¹ And so it appears, by the "infallible" judgment of the Holy Mother church, that a free Bible is of "more harm than utility." And her practice agrees with this judgment.

Rome has always been the very heart of Roman Catholicism, and Italy its fairest vineyard. Here, if anywhere, the Holy Church has been able to show its principles, press its policy, and make boast of its fruits to the world. It is a significant fact, therefore, that not one edition of the Bible appeared by papal hands in the Italian language during the seventeenth century. The church was "at peace" in Italy, and so such a thing as an Italian Bible was not "tolerable." And yet the College de Propaganda, instituted at Rome in 1627, printed at its own presses, during the first fifty years of its existence, works in forty-eight different languages. But though unsupplied, no Bible in the vernacular was printed in Italy during that same century. Two thousand and fifty editions of the Bible, or parts of it, in the Latin and oriental languages, were printed during this century, but only twenty-three of them at Rome. And of the more than nine hundred and forty in modern

¹ "Quam facultatem in scriptis habeant," — which privilege they must have in writing? — Buckley's Translation, Lond. 1851, p. 285.

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languages, *not one of them was printed at Rome, or in the temporal domain of the pope.* But there were printed at Rome during this time fourteen indexes or catalogues of prohibited books, and among them a vast number of editions of the scriptures.¹

For the illustration of the papacy in its principles and workings, Spain serves almost as well as Italy. What is the will of the one, is the word of the other. Having, therefore, seen the disposition at Rome toward vernacular Bibles, we are not surprised to find that, during the century in question, no Bible or New Testament in any language, ancient or modern, was printed in Spain or Portugal. Several expurgatory and prohibitory indexes were published there. In only one of them, the edition of 1667, *more than one hundred and seventy editions of the Bible are censured.* Many of them were ordered to be suppressed, and others were to be corrected and expurgated.² And yet, during that whole century, the Romish church found not the will nor the way to give one acceptable edition to those countries. What a commentary are those century facts on the theory and practice of the Roman Catholic church concerning a free Bible! Indeed, as long after as 1786, Dr. Geddes, himself a Catholic, observes in the Prospectus for his own English translation: "In Spain there is not, I believe, at this day, a single edited version of the whole Bible!" The Romish church has shown the fertility of her Christian genius, and the excellence of her typography, in Prohibitory Indexes, rather than in modern versions of the Bible.

In objection to this statement, does any one say, that she has the Rhemish Testament and Douay Bible for her members? It is true that in 1582, or two hundred and two years after Wiclif's translation, and after thousands, probably, of Protestant translations and editions, in different languages, had been published, Rome tardily gave the New Testament in English. And even this was not given willingly. Some statements, in their original Preface to it, deserve attention: "Which translation we doe not for all that publish, upon erroneous pinion of necessitie, that the holy scriptures should alwaies be in our mother tonge, or that they ought, or were ordained by God, to be read indifferently by all, ... or that we generally and absolutely deemed it more convenient in itself, and more agreeable to God's word and honour, or edification of the faithful, to have them turned into vulgar tonges, then to be kept and studied only in the Ecclesiastical, learned languages... We must not imagine that in the primitive church, either every one that understoode the learned tonges wherein the scriptures were written, or other languages into which they were translated, might without reprehension reade, reason, dispute, turne and tesse the scriptures: or that our forefathers suffered every scholemaister, scholer, or Grammarian, that had a little Greeke or Latin, straight to take in hand the holy Testament: or that the translated Bibles into the vulgar tonges, were in the handes of

¹ Townley, II. 457–465.

² Ibid.

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every husbandman, artificer, prentice, boies, girles, mistresse, maid, man, that they were sung, plaied, alleayed, of every tinker, taverner, rimer, minstrel; that they were for table talk, for alebenches, for boates, and barges, and for every prophane person and companie. No, in those better times men were neither so ill, nor so curious of themselves, so to abuse the blessed booke of Christ, neither was there any such easy meanes, before printing was invented, to disperse the copies into the handes of every man, as now there is."

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Of the effects of a free Bible on the people, this Preface speaks very openly, in contrasting a nation that has the Bible with one that has it not. After an experiment of two centuries, we are very willing to accept the issue offered; and, in the passage about to be quoted, we will contrast Protestant England with Catholic Spain; Protestant Scotland with Catholic Ireland, or the New England States with the Roman States or States of the Church. "Looke whether your men be more vertuous, your women more chaste your childrē more obedient, your servants more trustie, your maides more modest, your frendes more faithful, your laitie more iust in dealing, your Cleargy more devout in praying; whether there be more religion, fear of God, faith and conscience in al states now, then of old, when there was not so much reading, chatting, and iangling of God's word, but much more sincere dealing, doing, and keeping of the same. Looke whether through this disorder [of vulgar translations] women teach not their husbands, children their parents, yong fooles their old and wise fathers, the scholars their maisters, the sheepe their pastor, and the People the Priest." Why, then, do they give the New Testament, in the Rhemish translation, to their English readers? They answer: "We translate this sacred booke upon special consideration of the present time, state, and condition of our countrie, unto which divers thinges are either necessarie, or profitable and medicinable *now*, that otherwise, in the peace of the church, were neither moche requisite, nor perchance wholly tolerable." And so, more than two hundred years after the first translation of the New Testament into English, they, with great reluctance, and under protest that it is done in policy, and against principle, give a papal translation. And even then, when they *seemed* to publish it, they did not, in reality. For the first edition was kept from the people by the fewness of its number, and its great bulk and cost. A new edition was issued in 1635, and then *no other for one hundred and fifteen years*. When, therefore, Dr. Nary, a devoted papist, published his New Testament in 1718, he remarked, in his preface of the Douay Bibles: "They are so bulky, that they cannot conveniently be carried about for public devotion, and so scarce and dear that the generality of the people neither have nor can procure them for private use."¹

¹ Cotton, p. 299. "Rhemes and Douay. An attempt to show what has been done by Roman Catholics for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures in English. By the Rev. Henry Cotton, D. C. L., Archdeacon of Cashel, etc. Oxford, at the University Press, 1853."

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In 1792–97, Dr. Geddes, one of the best biblical scholars in the papal church at that time, proposed a new translation of his own. “My primary motive,” he says, “was to give a tolerable, and if I could a creditable, version of the Holy Bible for the use of the English Catholics. The greater part of the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland might be said to be without a Bible.”² The cheap and portable edition of Dr. Nary was a failure. The papists would not purchase it; while that of Dr. Geddes was condemned by three vicars apostolic, and the papists forbidden to use it.

In 1808, the only editions of the English Bible, in Ireland, were a large folio (Dublin, 1794), a quarto (1791), and an edition of 1796–1805, duodecimo, in five volumes; their prices varying from four pounds to one pound twelve shillings. And in 1825, Right Rev. Dr. Doyle stated, before the House of Commons, that they had a “Bible of small print and low price, to circulate among all.” Yet these cheap editions were three and five dollars a copy!

We have seen how they *seem* to give the Douay to all their English readers, while really they make the editions so expensive, and so wide asunder, and the copies so few, that it amounts to a practical prohibition and suppression of the book with the great mass. Or, according to the decrees of Trent, they so advise against the possession and use of the book, and so interpose the bishop and the father confessor with their convenient scruples and absolute judgments, between the layman anxious for the book and the book itself, that this often amounts to another prohibition and suppression of the scriptures.

But that the Roman Catholic hostility to a free Bible is to the book itself, as a book for the people, though it be their own authorized version, and gratuitously offered, is evident from many facts. One must suffice. In 1820 there was formed in Dublin, after mature consultation, a union Catholic and Protestant Committee, whose object was “the circulation of the Roman Catholic version of the New Testament, without note or comment.” Arrangements were made at once with Mr. Coyne for stereotype plates and twenty thousand copies of the work. As these were specially designed for distribution in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc., they were prepared for gift, or for sale at the lowest possible prices. At first there was a seeming approval of the measure among the papists. But the bishops soon became dissatisfied with the action, and withdrew their coöperation. They discouraged the circulation of their own Rhemish Testament, which bore the “approbation” of Dr. Troy, and was brought out by the printer and publisher for Maynooth. The whole endeavor was a failure. To save himself, Mr. Coyne added as a Supplement to many copies the “Notes” common to the Rhemish Testament, and so was able to sell them. And many copies found their way into the hands of a London

² Cotton, p. 62.

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bookseller, who worked them off under a false title. And so the effort ended in Dublin among the Catholics to give their Testament to their own people.¹

There is another source of information on the question under discussion: it is a wide field of facts; and as in drawing from other sources, we can take but few illustrative items from the vast mass.

The opposition of the Roman Catholic church to Bible Societies is well known; but how old, and varied, and intense this opposition has been, may not be so well known. In each and all cases, the hostility has been total; and whether the Society opposed was protestant or papal, seemed a slight thing; showing that the hostility was to the vernacular Bible among the people.

In 1814, there was a Roman Catholic Bible Society in Russia, and the archbishop of Mohilew approved it by a pastoral letter. This highly offended the pope, Pius VII., and he drew up a Bull against the archbishop, in 1816, censuring him severely for favoring such an institution. A similar Society being in operation in Poland, at the same time, the pope sent a Bull, drawn in no very pleasant mood, to the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of Poland, commanding him to oppose and put down such Societies.

A few passages from this mandate to the primate of Poland, will throw light from Rome on our American system of a free Bible. "We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device [Bible Societies], by which the very foundations of religion are undermined; and having, because of the great importance of the subject, conferred in council with our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the holy Roman church, we have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our pontifical authority, in order to abolish this pestilence, ... this defilement of the faith, so eminently dangerous to souls.... It becomes an episcopal duty that you, first of all, expose the wickedness of this nefarious scheme.... For it is evident from experience that *the holy scriptures, when circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, produced more harm than benefit....* It is therefore necessary to adhere to the salutary decree of the Congregation of the Index, that no versions of the Bible, in the vulgar tongue, be permitted, except such as are approved by the apostolic see, or published with annotations extracted from the writings of holy fathers of the church." ...

When such denunciations, against such a cause, issue from unchangeable and infallible Rome, are we to suppose that the late papal contests, in our public schools, arise on our translation, or division of the decalogue, or on the difference between "hallowed" and "sanctified," in the fourth commandment? Or does any one dream that the substitution

¹ Cotton, pp. 119–122.

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of the Douay for the Common version, book for book, would satisfy the Romanist? The difficulty is older than Douay or Wiclif, and deeper than any translation of the Ten Commandments.

But there are other voices, and they are not *ambiguas voces*, against Bible Societies, to be heard from Rome. Leo XII. uttered one in 1824. We extract a single sentence: "You are aware, venerable brothers, that a Society, vulgarly called Bible Society, audaciously spreads itself over all the land, and that in contempt of the traditions of the holy fathers, and against the celebrated decree of the Council of Trent, they aim with all their strength, and by every means, to translate, or rather to corrupt, the holy scriptures in the vulgar tongue of every nation," etc.¹

Pius VIII., though his pontificate lasted but twenty months, found time to utter his voice, in 1829, against "this most crafty device," "this pestilence," "this defilement of the faith," "this nefarious scheme." Gregory XVI. gave utterance twice against these Bible Societies: once in 1832, and again in 1844. From the last Bull we make some extracts: After endorsing the condemnations of Bible Societies, passed by many popes preceding him; and after condemning the Christian Alliance as well as Bible Societies, he proceeds to say: "You are consequently enjoined to remove, from the hands of the faithful, the Bibles in the vulgar tongue, which may have been printed contrary to the decrees above mentioned, of the Sovereign Pontiffs.... Let all know the enormity of the sin against God and his church, which they are guilty of who dare to associate themselves with any of these Societies, or abet them in any way. Moreover, we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, delivered in former times, by apostolic authority, against the publication, distribution, reading, and possession of books of the holy scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue."

We might follow these quotations with similar ones from the edicts of Innocent III., Clement XI., and Benedict XIV. But it is not needful. The utterances from Rome, on this subject, are one and the same. For on no principle or policy is the church of Rome so unanimous and free spoken, from age to age, as that the Bible must not be a free and common book, in the mother tongue of a people. And hence its scarcity where she is supreme. As illustration, take a few facts: In 1835, the Rev. Wm. Rule was laboring in Spain, under the patronage of the English Wesleyan Methodist Society. With the purpose of circulating a Spanish translation of the scriptures, he wrote to booksellers in thirty-six of the principal towns in Spain, inquiring whether they would sell Bibles. Only seven booksellers answered him favorably.¹

¹ Bowers's Popes, Cox's edition, III. 450.

¹ Rockwell's Foreign Travel and Life at Sea, I. 392.

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Says Borrow, in his "Bible in Spain:" "At the doors of village inns, at the hearths of the rustics, in the fields where they labor, at the stone fountains by the wayside where they water their cattle, I have questioned the lower class of the children of Portugal about the scripture, the Bible, the Old and New Testament; and in no one instance have they known what I was alluding to, or could return me a rational answer; though, on all other matters, their replies were sensible enough."

"I went into a bookseller's shop [in Cadiz] and made inquiries respecting the demand for literature; which, he informed me, was small. I produced a London edition of the New Testament in Spanish, and asked the bookseller whether he thought a book of that description would sell in Cadiz. He said, that both the type and paper were exceedingly beautiful; but that it was a work not sought after, and very little known."²

The late Prof. B. B. Edwards informs us that, in 1844 or '45, "a gentleman found it impossible to procure a Bible, in the vernacular tongue, at any of the book-shops in Rome." Nor was it fitting that one should be found there. For the Bull of Gregory XVI., against Bible Societies, was issued from this same city in 1844. Professor Edwards makes the further remark that, "in 1846–47, no copy of an Italian Bible could be found for sale in several of the largest cities of the country, except that of Martini, which is in several volumes octavo."³ And even Martini's Testament, of the editions of 1817 and 1818, was put in the Index of Prohibited Books, in 1819, by Pius VII. But in a country where the most active employment would seem to be begging, it was doubtless thought safe, in 1846, to leave the heavy octavos of Martini exposed to sale. But the scarcity of the vulgar scriptures, in Italy, is in full accordance with the spirit of pope Martyn V.; who, when his permission was requested to found a university at Copenhagen, granted the request on one condition: that the holy scriptures should be neither read nor explained within its walls; and the Lectures be confined to profane literature.¹

If the limits of this Article would allow, it would be exceedingly instructive, on the policy of the Romish church as to a free Bible, to unfold her practice on the missionary field. But one comprehensive fact must suffice, standing as an index: "Bagster's Bible of Every Land," embraces outline histories of all translations of the Bible, or of considerable portions of it, into modern languages and dialects, prior to the year 1848. Of these translations, there are but very few produced by the Roman Catholic missionaries. The testimony of the volume is singularly against the papal church, as a sect that does not make a common use of the scriptures.

² Carter's edition, 1847, pp. 16, 72.

³ Life and Writings, Vol. II. p. 41.

¹ Townley, I. 472.

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And so we find that, at home and abroad, in Italy and Congo, wherever Romanism prevails, the scriptures are unknown, or rare.

It is now due to the authors and defenders of such a theory and policy, that we give their statements of their position, and their reasons for it, in their own words. We introduce, first, an extract from a letter of the Bishops of Bologna to Paul III. It is an advisory letter. The reign of Paul III. began in 1534, and ended in 1549. During these years, the Reformation was in vigorous progress. Coverdale's, Matthews', Cranmer's, and Taverner's Bibles, appeared in English; and the current was setting strongly toward free scriptures on the Continent. "Lastly (which, among the counsels and directions given to your holiness at this time, is chiefest and most weighty), the greatest care and diligence must be used, that as little of the gospel as may be (especially in the vulgar tongue), be read in those cities which are within your dominions. Let that little suffice, which is wont to be read in the Mass: and more than that, let no mortal be allowed to read. For, so long as men were content with that little, your affairs succeeded according to desire; but quite otherwise, since so much of the scriptures was publicly read. In short, *this is the book, which, above all others, has raised these storms and tempests.* And truly, if any one read that book, viz. the scriptures, and observe the customs and practices of our church, he will see that there is no agreement betwixt them; and that the doctrine which we preach is altogether different from, and sometimes contrary to, that contained in the Bible."¹

Dr. Milner, one of the most prominent English champions of the papacy, is free to confess that "substituting the dead letter of the Text for the living voice of the Church, was the ready mean of undermining the Catholic Faith."² And the same author, in his "End of Religious Controversy," slurs and depreciates the Bible, while he shows why he could not encourage a free circulation of it. "The apostles, before they separated to preach the gospel to different nations, agreed upon a short symbol or profession of faith, called the Apostles' Creed; but even this they did not commit to writing; and whereas they made this, amongst other articles of it—'I believe in the holy church'—they made no mention, at all, of the holy scriptures. This circumstance confirms what their example proves, that the Christian doctrine and discipline might have been propagated and preserved by the unwritten word, or tradition, joined with the authority of the church, though the scriptures had not been composed."³ "If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn his religion from a *book*, namely the New Testament, he himself would have written that book, and would have enjoined the obligation of learning to read it, as the first and

¹ Pagano-Papismus. By Joshua Stopford, B. D. York, 1675. London edition, 1844. pp. 395, 396.

² Memoirs of English Catholics, p. 244. Ed. 1820.

³ Letter, X. § 3.

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fundamental precept of his religion; whereas, he never wrote anything at all; unless, perhaps, the sins of the Pharisees, with his finger, upon the dust."¹

All this makes the word of God a secondary affair, as a means to a Christian life, and to the spread of Christianity. "Tradition, joined with the authority of the church," could do very well, "though the scriptures had not been composed." A Roman Catholic may very well say this. Very likely it is true, that Romanism would succeed better, with only "tradition joined with the authority of the church," as its guide, than it would with the light and control of the holy scriptures, as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." This has been the experience of the papal church. She has gained strength, numbers, and territory by the use of tradition and church authority; and lost these, where God's word was a free book, in the tongue of the people. Hence her policy, and aversion to a free circulation of the scriptures. Hence, where she must give them, in the common language, she invariably insists that they shall be accompanied by her notes and applications. And hence we see the cause of Rome's deep and intense hatred of the liberty of the press. In his Bull of 1832, Gregory uses these words: "Hither tends that *worst and never sufficiently to be execrated and detested* LIBERTY OF THE PRESS, for the diffusion of all manner of writings, which some so loudly contend for, and so actively promote."

These are some of the principles and sayings we remember when we are asked to ease their religious scruples against saying "hallowed" instead of "sanctified," and against the repetition of the decalogue divided in the common way, and against saying "give us, this day, our daily bread," instead of saying, in the way of the Douay, "give us, this day, our *supersubstantial* bread." These scruples, of which they would be relieved, and that some think might be yielded to as trifles, are as the fleecy clouds that portend the line-storm. It is an utter folly, and the entire history of this question for six centuries shows it, to attempt any settlement by a compromise of this issue now forced on us. It is an antagonism of two great principles, of two universal policies, of two Christendoms; and a compromise is both an absurdity and an impossibility. Rome cannot accept a compromise, except as the basis for a new demand. Nothing but the absolute exclusion of the scriptures from the public schools, will satisfy her; and nothing but policy prevents her making the full demand at once. This is her historical testimony, and this the principle of her ablest living men.

It may seem to some that in unfolding this system of the Roman Catholic church concerning a free Bible, we have quoted only ancient authorities and foreign precedents, and that, therefore, this presentation of their system is not just to the policy and spirit of modern Catholicism. Such objector needs to have a more lively remembrance of the fact

¹ Letter VIII. § 1.

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that in the opinions and principles of the Romish Church there is *nothing new*. She scorns the imputation. The fathers and tradition, — these are her great storehouse. He who varies from these, or adds to them, is a heretic. Her great doctrines, like the one in question, are those which have been held *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*. She knows nothing of centuries as a modifying power. And go when Pius VII., in 1816, addresses a letter to the Archbishop of Mohilew on the suppression of Bible Societies in Russia, he quotes largely from the letter of Innocent III., written to the faithful of Metz in 1199, against the use of the scriptures in the vulgar tongue, — six hundred and seventeen years before! This great iron bedstead of Og, king of Bashan, is not enlarged by heat, or contracted by cold, nor is it affected by change of latitude or longitude, or by lapse of ages.

Yet for any who may think our quoted authorities too aged, though the major part of them fall within six hundred and seventeen years, we will cite more modern witnesses.

A few years since there was published in England a series of tracts, entitled: "The Clifton Tracts. By the Brotherhood of St. Vincent of Paul. Published under the Sanction of the Bishop of Clifton, Cardinal Wiseman." They are cheap, popular tracts, designed, they say in the Preface, to "furnish inquirers with a plain and simple statement of Catholic doctrines, principles and practices." "The work was undertaken with the warm approval of his Lordship, the Bishop of Clifton," "with the encouraging sanction of all the Catholic bishops of England." "The editors have also the gratification of being able to add, that his Holiness the Pope, unsolicited, was graciously pleased to send them his benediction upon the work." It was "Republished with the Approbation of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York," by Dunigan and Brother, New York, 1856. The original editors commend the work "To 'Our Lady of Good Counsel,' and their holy patron, St. Vincent."

Having thus showed that the work is both modern and authoritative, we proceed to commend some passages in it to any lady of good counsel, and to any reader as our patron. "We believe that it was the purpose of Almighty God that we should learn our faith, not from a book, but from a living teacher, that teacher being his church." "The church's principle, then, is this, that, as she is the sole infallible interpreter of holy scripture, so she is its sole authorized dispenser, and that it is both her right and her bounden duty to give or to withhold it, as shall seem to her most conducive to the spiritual benefit of her children, of which she alone is the judge."¹

In the Tract next following in the same volume, viz. "The Church our Instructor in Scripture," we find the same usurpation of revealed light. "The church is our appointed instructor in divine truth and the way of salvation. It is this knowledge — emphatically

¹ "Clifton Tracts." Vol. I. Tract: "The Church, the Dispenser of Scripture," pp. 4, 6.

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this, and not the mere text of the Bible—which it is the object of the church to impart. But inasmuch as the Bible is the inspired word of God, and a treasury of divine truths, when her children are sufficiently instructed in the faith, and have sufficient humility to derive benefit from the immediate perusal of the written word *under her guiding interpretation*, she freely and joyfully puts *part* or the whole of it into their hands, that they may nourish their souls and grow thereby." "The New Testament was not intended as a promulgation of the faith to those who had it not, but it constantly presupposes that faith as already received. Thus the church, and not the Bible, is the teacher commissioned by God."¹

Here the scriptures are made secondary to the teachings of the church. Those teachings are her commentaries; the scriptures are what holy men of God recorded as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In the primary teaching of Christianity, whether to adult or child, the church imparts her own lessons, and not God's. The true faith is to be learned, "not from *a book*, but from a living teacher." At length, when one has "sufficient humility" to profit by the direct use of the Bible, "under the guiding interpretation" of the church, "part or the whole" is given. If a man will question nothing and believe everything that the priest tells him, he may possibly gain access among us to a *part* of the Bible. But until the man will, of a certainty, make the scriptures say nothing but what the priest has previously taught him to say, he cannot have even a "part" of them. He has not yet "sufficient humility to derive benefit" from them. So does the Romish church, assuming to be the "Dispenser of Scripture," and the "Instructor in Scripture," over-ride the word of God by her traditions, and press in her "guiding interpretation" between the Great Teacher and his disciples. And the words of Prof. Park in his Duddleian Lecture before the University of Cambridge, 1845, are too full of truth and aptness to be omitted in this place: "She has given us creeds which claim to be inspired, and by thus compressing her doctrines into a narrow compass, has saved her disciples from the invigorating toil of a study like that of the Bereans. One of her greatest sins against the intellect is, her elevating the digests of her councils into an infallible standard of truth. She has made them equal to the Bible in authority, and superior in ease of reference, in systematic arrangement, in precise definitions. Hence the New Testament loses its appropriate place in her esteem; it is neither studied by her clergymen as the highest criterion of truth, nor read by her laymen as their familiar guide."¹

But more significant testimony remains. We now quote from "A General Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures. By the Rev. Joseph Dixon, D. D., Professor of Sacred Scripture and Hebrew, in the Royal College of St. Patrick, Maynooth, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of all Ireland." The work is designed to fill a place, in the Catholic church, that

¹ "Clifton Tracts." Vol. I. Tract: "The Church, the Dispenser of Scripture," pp. 1-7.

¹ Bibliotheca Sacra, II. 454, 455.

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Horne's Introduction fills in the Protestant. Quotations from such a work, by such an author, and filling such a position, need no preface. "The practice of the Christian church, at all times, upon this head, has been quite irreconcilable with the supposition that the Founder of the church, or his apostles, imposed any obligation upon all Christians, generally, to read the scriptures."² "As to the simple faithful, the rule in the Christian church has always been, that they should learn the doctrines of religion, and their duty to God, by means of the instructions of the constituted teachers in the church. The private study or perusal of the sacred volume, has never been made obligatory upon them."³ "We lay it down as certain, that no divine precept exists, imposing upon the laity an obligation to read the scripture.... The reading of the scripture is not necessary to the laity, for the purpose of knowing either what must be believed, or what must be practised, in order to gain eternal life." "The people [in distinction from pastors and teachers] have only such a right to read the scriptures, as the church sanctions and approves." "We have arrived, now, at these two conclusions: First, that the simple faithful are bound by no divine law to read the scriptures. Second, that whatever right the simple faithful have to read the scripture, is not a right independent of the sanction and approval of the pastors of the church."⁴

But the archbishop has said that the reading of scripture may be granted to those "who bring the proper dispositions," and who fulfil certain conditions. He then proceeds to specify four "conditions upon which the church has a right to insist, before that the scriptures shall be thrown open to the people."

"First—That those who could read the scripture in a version, must procure a Catholic version.

"Secondly—The church has, also, a right to require that even a Catholic version, i.e. a version made by a Catholic author, shall not be put into the hands of the people, until it shall have received the approbation of the proper ecclesiastical authority.

"Thirdly—The church, when it pleases, has a right to require that the people shall read those versions only which are accompanied with explanatory notes, taken from the fathers or approved Catholic Commentators.

"Finally, the pastors of the church have a right to prohibit the reading of the scripture altogether to those who are, at the same time, unlearned and unstable—more likely to

² Vol. I. p. 145.

³ Ib. p. 146.

⁴ Ib. pp. 149, 152, 154.

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indulge in their own curious speculations, to the great danger of their faith, than to be guided by the notes of learned Catholic writers."¹

Here is a distinct enunciation of the position that God did not design the scriptures to be read by all his people. They are rather a professional than a popular book. It is laid down as "certain," that no divine precept imposes this duty. The laity have no need to read the Bible to know what they must believe or practise. The rule has always been, in the church, that they must learn these things from their priests and pastors. If they have the scriptures at all, and in any fragments, it is as a gratuity and favor from the church officers, and not of right, or in any necessity. And so the scriptures are, to the Roman Catholic people, what tables of logarithms are to a ship's company: they are for the officers alone, who navigate the vessel. Crew and passengers have, of right, nothing to do with them. And if, through the condescension and grace of the priest, a Catholic layman obtain God's word, in part or wholly, it must be a "Catholic version," that has received the sanction of "the proper ecclesiastical authority," and that is accompanied with proper "explanatory notes." And the man must bring and prove the "proper dispositions" to receive, without questioning, the teaching of the notes, as the true import of the text; otherwise, the text will do him more harm than good, through his "curious speculations," and so must be withheld from him. This is the design of God, and the traditional usage of the church, concerning the scriptures, according to the primate of all Ireland. This is the right of the people to the Bible, and this the distribution of it, that the holy church is solemnly obligated to make.

Was ever assumption more arrogant, or a despotism more absolute in its claims? The scriptures of God are given to us, the people, that we may make them common to all eyes, as if by writing them "upon the door-posts of our houses, and upon our gates," that we may "teach" them as the Great Teacher commanded, and search them as the commended Bereans did. But this assumption of the papal church to be the sole keeper and dispenser of them, makes the whole world a suppliant at the foot of a priest, if it want but a chapter of gospel. Had the quotations first made, been taken from a some homily of the twelfth century, they might be turned aside as obsolete opinions, like so much of the monkish rubbish of those dark days. But they come fresh from Maynooth. They are from volumes in their first decade. They were written when this question of the Bible in the public schools was under warm debate, as a great practical question, in Ireland. They were written by a leader and champion of the English Catholic church, of whom they are proud, and who has since been made primate of all Ireland. These volumes of Dr. Dixon are reprinted in this country, says the American Preface, that the papists here may have the means in their hands of replying to the attacks of the protestants. "They [the

¹ Vol. I. pp. 154, 155.

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protestants] must be reminded that they have *no right to the Bible*.... They are unjust prevaricators against the law of God, if they attempt to use, *in any way*, that which belongs, of right, only to the church.... *If they use it without her authority, they are robbers, and robbers, too, of sacred things.*"

This is the principle, and this the teaching, in the Roman Catholic church to-day. This issue in the public schools, therefore, over the decalogue and the pater noster, is but an incident in a great work. The motion in the particles of sand, at the feet of our children, indicates that the mountain has begun to slide. The thing done is, to the thing they would do, as the dew to the deluge. For "we have no right to the Bible;" and, having it now without Rome's authority, we are "robbers of sacred things," and must come under arrest by Rome's spiritual police.

Soon after the publication of these volumes by Dr. Dixon, they received an able review from the pen of cardinal Wiseman. He is believed to be the only one filling the bishopric of a people speaking the English tongue, who has attained to the dignity of a cardinal's hat. In his words, therefore, Rome speaks to all readers of English. The review devotes the most of its space to a discussion of our present question. As such, it was fitted to be an admirable tract for the times, and so was printed by Richardson and Son, Dublin, under the title of "The Catholic Doctrine on the Use of the Bible." From a tract so authoritative in its utterances, and so singularly apt for our purpose, in its origin and circumstances of publication, we wish to make a few extracts.

In speaking of the high ground that the Catholics must take in opposition to those who claim an open Bible, his Eminence the cardinal says: "We must deny to Protestantism *any right to use the Bible*; much more, to interpret it."¹

A holy horror seems to seize him when he sees the fruits of Protestantism so widely diffused.

"The holy, the sublime, the awful word of God, over which saints have meditated in cells, for years of ineffable sweetness, yet of solemn reverence, which the silver voice of virgins or the deep tones of holy monks have chaunted in breathless midnight, that no earthy sound might disturb the depth of their meditation, etc.; this noblest, greatest, divinest of things unsacramental, is put, indiscriminately, unceremoniously, into the hands of every one. It is the school boy's task book, it is the jailor's present, it is the drunkard's pawned pledge, it is the dotard's text-book, it is the irreverent jester's butt, it is the fanatic's justification for every vice, blasphemy and profaneness that he commits. For into every one's hand it must needs be thrust, from the Chinese to the Ojibbawa, from the Laplander

¹ p. 11.

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to the Bosjman, from the child to the dotard, from the stuttering peasant to the glib, self-righteous old dame." " 'In the worst inn's worst room,' in the ship's forecandle, in the shepherd's cottage, the well-known binding of the Society's Bible is to be seen."¹

Of the fruits of its free circulation, he speaks in very sorrowful terms: "It is only now that the experiment is being tried on a great scale of what the indiscriminate reading of the Bible will make a people. It has been tried in the dominions of Queen Pomare, with unexampled success. It has, under the judicious management of evangelical missionaries, transformed a mild and promising race into a pack of lazy, immoral infidels." "In Christian countries it has begotten heresies and sects that are fast plunging them into rationalism and infidelity."²

"If, therefore, we be asked, why we do not give the Bible indifferently to all, and the shutting up (as it is called) of God's word, be disdainfully thrown in our face, we will not seek to elude the question, or meet the taunt, by *denial*, or by attempts to prove that our principles on this subject are not antagonistic to those of Protestants. THEY ARE ANTAGONISTIC, AND WE GLORY IN AVOWING IT."

"1. We answer, therefore, boldly, that we give not the word of God indiscriminately to all, because God himself has not so given it."

"2. We further say, that we do not permit the indiscriminate and undirected use of the Bible, because God has not given to his church the instinct to do so." "Wherever it prevails, church government declines, insubordination of judgment springs up, and a spirit of self-sufficiency and pride takes the place of religious humility and docility."

"3. In fact, in answer to the question proposed, we answer that we cannot and must not adopt the Protestant course, because we have no reason to admire its fruits, or its expectations." "We do not see morals improving, or crime diminishing, but rather the contrary."¹

In showing the evils of a free Bible, Dr. Wiseman refers to Germany, and the fruits of Luther's labors: "Away were to go confession, and fasting, and mortification, and monachism, and celibacy, and penances, and restitution, and the indissolubility of marriages, and evangelical councils, and priestly admonition, and ecclesiastical censures," etc.² Yes, doubtless, much of all this must go away before the open and free word of God in the mother tongue of a people. And if confession and mortification,

¹ pp. 12, 14.

² pp. 15, 16, 17.

¹ pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

² p. 25.

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monachism and celibacy, councils and censures, as held and practised by the Romish church, are to be preserved, the Bible must be kept out of the way. The two can never go together. "They are antagonistic, and we glory in avowing it."

What is in store for us, if Rome ever gain the ascendancy here, is thus gently hinted by the Cardinal: "The time is perhaps approaching, when a fatal disease will break out again amongst us, and physicians will forbid us the use of delicious and generally wholesome food. And only because experience has shown them those who have partaken of it lying dead around them. In early times there was no need of legislation on the subject. The indiscriminate reading of scripture was an impossibility; few could read, manuscripts were rare and expensive," etc.³

If that possible time come, which the Cardinal says "is perhaps approaching," Protestantism may again be subjected to such mandate as Bonner, Bishop of London, issued to all parsons and vicars in that diocese, "to abolish and extinguish, so that they might not be read or seen," all and any texts of Holy Writ inscribed on the walls of the churches.¹ The bigoted and intolerant papist could not bear to see the words of the law written for the eye of the people upon the door-posts of the house of the Lord, and upon its gates. But even this would not be shutting up the word of God according to Dr. Wiseman. For, "in Catholic countries, such as can read, or do read, have access to the *Latin version without restraint!*"² A safe liberty, we think, and that the Catholic laity are not in any immediate danger of abusing.

More than this. The church reads the scriptures to her children. "When she unfolds it and solemnly reads from it, to her children, the smallest passage of her Spouse's life, she orders the tapers of the sanctuary to burn around it, and the incense to perfume the very atmosphere in which its words shall resound. And when the priest, kissing the blessed text, whispers his prayer: 'Per evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta,' he expresses more confidence in the gospel of Jesus, than all the speeches in Exeter Hall can match."³ And all this, probably, in Latin. For Dr. Cheever says: "I have been, personally, in almost all the Roman Catholic countries, and attended the Romish service; and I do not remember that I have ever seen the service performed in a language that the people could understand."⁴ And all this is but following the pious will and judgment of pope Gregory VII.: "In our frequent meditations upon the holy scriptures, we have discovered that it has been and still is pleasing to Almighty God, that his sacred worship should be

³ p. 23.

¹ Fox, Acts and Monuments, III. 107.

² p. 26.

³ p. 30.

⁴ Third Lecture on "Hierarchical Despotism."

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performed in an unknown language, in order that the whole world, and especially the most simple, may not be able to understand it. In a known language, the service would soon excite contempt and disgust; or it would happen that the common people, by repeating so often that which they could not comprehend, would fall into many great errors, from which it would be difficult to withdraw the heart of man."

And so we have this papal question, of the Bible for the public, placed before us in its historical origin and unfolding. Six hundred and thirty years ago the council of Toulouse solemnly forbade the laity to possess the scriptures in the vulgar tongue. Six centuries of struggle and intrigue, aided by banishment, the dungeon, and the stake, have illuminated, exemplified, and established that decree, so far as Rome had power. It is a part of the policy of an infallible church, that the simple word of God, in the mother tongue of a people, cannot be allowed. And his Eminence, cardinal Wiseman, "glories in avowing it."

It is this principle of popery, strengthened, hallowed, and stereotyped by this lapse of time, and by these pontifical and prelatical names, that we now meet at the door of our public school room. And we are to meet it, urged and defended by all the power, spiritual and temporal, learned, logical, jesuitical, that this ancient hierarchy can wield. It will be no child's play. No voting once, merely, in town or city, no management in one legislature or state, will settle it. More likely, it will be a vigorous contest for the remainder of this century. Grown old and wise in managing, the Romish church will yield the point when, *but only while*, she must. This historical gleaning has been made to show that the Bible or no Bible, in the public school, is no question of yesterday, likely to be settled to-morrow; nor yet any local and rather private issue, nor yet a question limited to the school-room. The gleaning has been made to show that it is a very broad question, coming home to the people in their solemn assemblies, in their households, and in their closets. Whether we may have an English Bible in our colleges, and churches, and families, and in our retirement—that is the question, as it has been for centuries. Rome has said: No; many others, thousands, have said: Yes, and they have burned for it. We may come to monosyllables again on it.

It is true, the papists deny the wish to give this question so broad a bearing. The bishop of Boston, in his letter of March 21, 1859, to the School Committee, says: "Whenever and wherever an effort has been made, by Catholics, to effect such changes as they desired, the question has been distorted from its true sense, and a false issue has been set before the non-Catholic community. It has been represented that the design was to eliminate and practically annihilate the Bible. This has never been true; and yet this has always been believed." And in view of the entire history of the Romish treatment of the scriptures, as a book for the people, it is exceedingly difficult to believe otherwise. Very likely "the

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design," in each movement of this kind, has not been, to accomplish, at that time, and by that movement, all that the bishop cautiously denies; but only some particular and, perhaps, small part of it. The agents of the papacy, in labors to suppress the scriptures, may not, in every case, be possessed of the ulterior and broad purpose of that church. It is as a deduction from the aggregation of facts in the Romish management of the scriptures, when we say that the design of that church seems to be to "eliminate and practically annihilate the Bible."

The present issue, that the papists have seen fit to raise with our school system, devolves on us the necessity of closing or continuing a struggle of centuries. This historical outline will enable us to do the one or the other understandingly. It is not necessary to delay its conclusion by showing what we have to gain or lose in the result. Our origin as a nation, our prosperity and perpetuity, have evidently had the Bible, in our vernacular, as a basis. Because of this, our way has been prosperous, and we have had good success. It was not our purpose to make an argument on so grave a question; but simply to develop a policy. Our whole aim has been to show, from authentic sources, what the policy of the Roman Catholic church has been, on this question. The unfolding of such a system must be its best refutation. It is presumed to be safe to show their aim among us, by their actions and avowals elsewhere; and so leave the whole matter with an intelligent community.

We have been standing on a good foundation. We should be very slow and very reluctant to leave it. We have stood strong and safe only on the Bible. We stand only while on it. The Greeks fabled a giant, called Antaeus, and born of Earth. He was famed for strength and victories in wrestling. He always triumphed; because, standing on his mother Earth while he struggled, she constantly renewed his strength. He finally engaged with Hercules in a wrestling match. Hercules had learned the secret of Antaeus's strength; and so, lifting him high in air, and above the strengthening touch of his mother Earth, he crushed him to death in his arms. We should not suffer ourselves to be lifted from our sure footing and source of national strength by this papal wrestler among the nations. Let it suffice that we look at Italy, and Tuscany, and Spain. And let us plant the feet of our little ones in a sure place, remembering that it is a foundation of God, for us and for our children, forever.³

³ Barrows, W. (1860). "Romanism and a Free Bible". *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 17(66), 323–355.