

... and all the traditions of the Christian world.—The Catholic Church is not the enemy of the Bible. I affirm it, and I shall prove it. She has not been its enemy. She has been the guardian of its purity and the preserver of its existence through the chances and changes of eighteen hundred years. In the gloom of the Calcombs, and the splendour of the Basilica, she cherished that Holy Book with equal reverence. When she saw the seed of Christianity sown in the blood of the martyrs, and braved the persecutions of the despots of the world,—and when those despots bowed before the symbol of Redemption, and she was lifted from her earthly humbleness, and “reared her mitred head” in courts and palaces, it was equally the object of her unceasing care. She gathered together its scattered fragments—separated the true word of inspiration from the spurious inventions of presumptuous and deceitful men—made its teachings and its history familiar to her children in her noble liturgy—translated it into the language which was familiar to every one who could read at all—asserted its Divine authority in her councils—maintained its canonical integrity against all gainsayers—and transmitted it, from age to age, as the precious inheritance of the Christian People. The Saints whom she most reveres were its sagacious commentators, and of the army of her white-robed martyrs, whom she still commemorates on her festal days, there are many who teach their immortal crowns by refusing, on the rack and in the flames, to desecrate or deny the Holy Book of God. And when time passed on and barbarism swept over the earth from its northern fastness, and the landmarks of the old civilisation vanished away, and rude violence and savage ignorance threatened to crush for ever the intellect of Europe, the Bible found its shrine in her cathedrals, and its sanctuary in her cloisters; there it took refuge and was saved. Whilst savage conquerors did homage to the defenceless majesty of her Pontiffs, and her sacred voice sounded above the din of battles, bringing order from the chaos of convulsed nations, heralding the advent of a new social state, giving security to property, supremacy to law, dignity to woman, and freedom to the slave—the Monks of old—holy, and laborious, and unselfish men—men like the Monk you see before you, branded as a blasphemer of the Revelation of his Master—laboured, by day and by night, in their cells and their scriptoria—and multiplied copies of the record of that Revelation, adorning them with rare illumination and gorgeous blazonry, and perpetuating and diffusing them throughout the world. And the scholars of those times were adepts in Holy Writ, for, as is testified by the Rev. Mr. Maitland, the very learned librarian of the Archbishop of Canterbury, “the writings of the dark ages are made of the Scriptures. . . . The writers thought and spoke, and wrote the thoughts, and words, and phrases of the Bible, and did this constantly and habitually as the natural mode of expressing themselves.” And men of action, then, who, if not abounding in literary knowledge, were rich in love, and faith, and knightly honours, and Christian chivalry, vied with the scholar and the monk in deep reverence for the Word of God, and testified that reverence, as best they might, by lavishing their wealth upon it, and clothing it with silver, and gold, and precious stones, and placing it in the open library of the monastery, and beside the high altar of the church, that all men might have free access to its Divine teachings. And of that mediæval time the same learned Protestant, whom I have already cited, strongly says:—“I do not recollect any instances in which it is recorded that the Scriptures, or any part of them, were treated with indignity or with less than profound respect.” So far, the Catholic Church did not prove herself the enemy of the Bible, when there was unity in Christendom, and none presumed to check the development of her true policy and the manifestation of her real spirit. She had no reason for subterfuge or management. She was supreme and unassailable, and, in her freedom and her power, she guarded that which, by excellence, she named “The Book,” through the gloom of ignorance, the fury of civil strife, the wreck of nations, and the revolutions of the world. So, and so only, the Bible was preserved, in the cloister and the school, and by the endless labours of devoted men, until Printing came to give wings to thought and universality to knowledge. And how did the Catholic Church then deal with the Sacred Word? As if to consecrate the birth of the wondrous art, its earliest employment of importance was devoted to the preparation of copies of the Scriptures, which, to this hour, are matchless in their splendour and unequalled in their worth. In the middle of the 15th century the Mazarine Bible commanded the wondering approval of the learned of Europe; and at its close the great Complutensian Polyglot was devised by the magnificent Ximenes.—The presses of Europe teemed with versions of the Scriptures. France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain were rich in them. Two hundred editions of the Vulgate appeared after the invention of printing and before the completion of Luther’s Bible, and more than fifty editions in the vernacular tongues of the various nations were circulated during the same period. Surely these facts, and they are only a very few out of a multitude, to which it is impossible even to allude in this place and on an occasion such as this, demonstrate that the Catholic Church has not been the enemy of the Bible—has been through all times, its willing, earnest, and reverent protector.—has not regarded it with dislike or apprehension. But what further proof of my position do I need than this very prosecution? Here stand the officers of the Crown prosecuting a Catholic Priest, and the prosecution is grounded on no modern statute, on the act of no modern parliament, but on the old common law of England, established on deep and strong foundations—by sage judges, and enforced by great kings, and sanctioned by holy Prelates—ages before Protestantism had risen into being—on that old common law which identified the Scriptures with Christianity, and Christianity with the Constitution, and made punishable an assault upon the Word of God as an assault upon the Constitution and upon Christianity itself. And that common law had reference not merely to the ancient Vulgate, but to the translation into the language of the land, of which Sir Thomas More has said—“The Holy Bible was, long before Wycliffe’s days, by virtuous and well-learned men, translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness well and reverently read.” It seems to me that, on such an occasion, I cannot fitly say more on such a subject. But men will argue that, though all this be true, we in this land of Ireland are so unfortunately placed, as to be denied the benefit of the reading of the Bible—that here, at least, the Catholic Church fears its influence, and forbids its circulation. The statement is wholly false. In Dub-

lin alone one eminent publisher, Mr. Duffy, with the sanction of the Catholic Archbishops, has issued three editions of the Douay version within seven years, and disposed of 42,500 copies, and within that period it is well established that more than 100,000 copies have been spread through Ireland. In Belfast, during the episcopates of two dear and venerated friends of mine, one of whom has departed, leaving an illustrious memory, and one of whom still survives, as his worthy successor, above 305,000 copies of the same version were printed and circulated at the instance of the Catholic Bishops. And all this has been done, though the issue of the Douay version of the Scriptures must be accomplished in the face of great discouragement, for, whilst the printer of the authorised version has a deduction of 25 per cent. on the duty on paper, not one farthing is allowed to those who supply the Word of God, in the translation they accept, to the poorest people in the world. Yet that translation is now spread abroad at prices ranging from 6d to 9d per copy, and is brought within the reach of the very humblest in the island. It is, therefore, entirely false to say that, here or elsewhere, the Catholic Church is the enemy of the Bible; but it is entirely true that she asserts her authority as the divinely commissioned Teacher of the Nations to expound its meaning—that she does not approve the unadvised and undirected perusal of it by all people, of all ages, and at all times,—and that she holds the “version appointed to be read in churches” in many respects erroneous and unfit for the safe instruction of her people. And is it not notorious that her doctrine as to the indiscriminate perusal of the inspired volume in all its parts, by old and young, learned and unlearned, has been approved by the wisest men of the Protestant communion? And is it not equally true that her objections to the authorised version have been and are sustained by a great body of the soundest Protestant opinion? What says Dr. Whately of the various versions of the Bible? This—a statement which, to some ears, will be strange and startling:—
“It is, however, important to remark that when our Church speaks of ‘Holy Scripture’ as being the rule of faith, and the standard to which everything must be referred in our religious teaching, the term ‘Holy Scripture’ means—not, as some seem to imagine, our authorised version, nor any other version—but the original, as written by the inspired authors themselves, in Hebrew and in Greek. It is to the very works that they composed that the term ‘Scripture’ is strictly and properly applicable. It is often, indeed, applied to translations of Scripture, and there is no objection to such a use of the word, provided we take care not to be misled by it, and that we do not apply the word ‘Scripture’ to one translation more than to another. Our Church attributes inspiration to the Apostles and Evangelists, and other writers of those books which we call, collectively, the Bible; it does not attribute inspiration to any translators of the Bible. We have good reason, indeed, to believe that many translations of Scripture into various languages are substantially correct in sense, and give, on the whole, a just view of the meaning of the sacred writers, and of the great doctrines of the Gospel. And one translation may give the sense of the original more exactly than another; but no man has a right to apply the name ‘Bible’ more to one translation than to another. As for our authorised version—the one in common use in this country—it is so called from its being the one ‘authorised to be read in churches,’ in order to secure uniformity in our Divine Service, but it was never authorised as the standard of our Church, in the sense of being that ‘Holy Scripture’ by which it is declared all doctrine is to be proved. Indeed, it was not even composed till several years after the framing of the Thirty-nine Articles, which declare Scripture to be our rule of faith. The version which was at that time in use was one commonly called the ‘Bishop’s Bible,’ parts of which are retained in our prayer books—namely, the Psalms and the sentences from Scripture introduced into the Communion Service. But, as I have already said, the framers of our Articles meant by ‘Holy Scripture’ neither that nor any other version, but what is most literally and strictly so-called—the very works composed by the inspired writers themselves.”
Learned and candid Protestants have no sympathy with the spirit of blind bibliolatry with which ignorant and shallow men presume to deny the imperfections of the Anglican Bible. They invite criticism upon it, and amendment of it, and in the current number of the *Edinburgh Review* I find the authorised version condemned as having been executed in a spirit antagonistic to the true spirit of Christianity, and the reviewer relies on the opinion of the Archbishop of Canterbury as to the Calvinistic influences with which it was accomplished, to ground his argument. But, more than this, he recommends, as some remedy for so great an evil, the appointment of a perpetual committee to purify the text of the translation, and do somewhat of that needful service to the integrity of the Word of God, which it has been the unceasing and successful endeavour of the Catholic Church, in all countries and at all times, to achieve for Christendom. On the other hand, Catholic Prelates, whilst they have condemned the corruptions and perversions of the Anglican Bible, have been ever ready to recognise its literary worth. The great Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, in his examination before the House of Commons in 1825, was asked:—
“Do you consider the authorised translation of the Church of England as of a sufficiently perverse quality to merit the description of the gospel of the Devil?” And his answer was—“God forbid that I should so consider it, for though it has many errors, I consider it one of the noblest works—one of the ablest translations which has ever been produced. This, I say, whilst I look upon it as abounding in inaccuracies, and having in it many errors.” And a similar opinion in the same year was given jointly to the Commissioners of Education by the four Catholic Archbishops of Ireland. They were men eminent in ability, and learning, and devotion to the faith which they adorned, and they unanimously said through the Primate, Doctor Curtis—“We agree that the authorised version of the Established Church is a very noble and a very fine work. It uses pure language. It surpasses ours by far in point of language—it is in the nature of a paraphrase, and ours is more literally correct; but we cannot take it, and have not done so, though we have all in our controversial works praised this translation.” I state these things to demonstrate to you that the chiefs of the Catholic Church, whilst they guard with earnest jealousy the faith of the people, and sternly resist any interference with it in any way, are not animated by any spirit of intolerant fanaticism such as the Attorney-General appears to attribute to the traverser. They have no spirit like to

that which found expression on the face of the English statute book, until a very recent period, in the infamous enactment by which “Popish Missals and Rituals” containing a great proportion of the Sacred Scriptures, and other “Popish books” of a like character, were required to be seized and burnt, and by which the Crucifix was ordered to be defaced and so returned to its owner. In darker times the Rhemish Bible was openly burnt, I believe in obedience to the spirit of this statute, and I grieve to say that that spirit still shows itself horribly, though the statute be abolished, in the iconoclastic fury of a vulgar and impious intolerance, and the open desecration of the sign of our Redemption. How does that evil spirit contrast with the opinions I have quoted, and still more how does it contrast with the solemn declarations of the same illustrious man to whom I have referred, and of another distinguished Prelate of the Catholic Church, the late Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, upon this very matter of the public and contemptuous destruction of the Bible? Before the parliamentary committee of 1825 these Catholic Bishops were examined, and thus they spoke:—
“To Dr. Kelly—Is it your experience, or have you heard it in such a manner as to believe it, that there have been any particular acts of distinction of the Testament in the authorised version in the west of Ireland, either executed or enjoined by the Roman Catholic Clergy?”
“Dr. Kelly—The directions given by the Roman Catholic Clergy in the archdiocese of Tuam are, that if the versions of the Scriptures are not approved of by the Catholic Church, the Faithful are to refuse to take them; but if they should be induced to take them they are to be given up into the hands of the Clergymen; but I have not known any instance of any Clergyman destroying by fire or otherwise any of these Testaments.”
“Have you heard of sixty, or any number of Testaments, having been thrown into the river at Ballinasloe?”
“Dr. Kelly—I have not.”
“Should you think such an act deserving of censure?”
“Dr. Kelly—I think it an improper act to destroy such a book.”
“To Dr. Doyle—What is your opinion upon that point?”
“Dr. Doyle—I think the same. I think it improper to treat the Word of God in that kind of way.—If a single individual, through error or mistake, did such a thing I might overlook it, but I should think it very wrong.”
I might bring living witnesses so to depose in multitudes. I might put upon that table Ecclesiastic after Ecclesiastic, ready to adopt these opinions and affirm this judgment; but evidence such as this, given without reference to any pending cause or for any temporary purpose, uttered as it were from the honored graves of wise and holy men, must be of power, if anything in the world can be so, to correct misconception and silence calumny and establish truth. I have labored, so far, to remove a prejudice calculated to work deep injury to my client and his cause, and I trust I have done something to gain for him and an impartial hearing. I wish you at least to believe on the authority of the facts I have feebly stated and the proofs I have most imperfectly arrayed, that the traverser is not to be condemned upon any assumption that the Catholic Church is the adversary of Holy Scripture, or that he must be its adversary because he is her Minister. If I have so far opened your minds that you can yield me a fair audience, and regard the merits of my case, my task is accomplished, and I have saved my client. For, on the simple truth of that case, and the evidence which really affects it, I rely for your verdict with an unflinching confidence. This is that case told in plain, brief words. The Redemptorists, of whom Father Petcherine is one, are an Order of religious men in the Catholic Church, devoted to the teaching of the people—to their moral teaching, and to that exclusively.—They lead lives of poverty and self-denial. They pass from place to place with incessant and enormous labor, toiling for God’s honor and the salvation of human souls, seeking no earthly recompense, rejecting all pecuniary remuneration content if they can obtain the poorest food and the humblest raiment. They are forbidden to preach controversy. They do not seek for proselytes. They do not go out on the highways to insult or irritate their fellow-men—to force their opinions upon others, and stir up evil passions, in the name of that Gospel of love, which should bind all humanity in one universal brotherhood.—They came to Kingstown. They labored in the pulpit and the confessional for many days, and a part of their teaching there, as everywhere, was aimed to induce their vast congregations to avoid the reading of obscene and immoral and infidel books. They have been in England, and they know that such publications are poured abroad in a foul and noisome flood upon its corrupted people, assailing everything that is sacred in our religion and noble in our nature—proclaiming property a robbery and marriage a bondage—familiarising men and women with crimes which should not even be named in a Christian land—encouraging adultery and incest, and making a jest of murder—mocking at all authority and trampling on all law—scoffing at morality as a folly, and religion as a fraud, and with open and unchecked audacity denying the existence of the Almighty God. With the horrible results of such things elsewhere the duties of these zealous Priests have made them too well acquainted, and they have sought to ward away the evil from the Irish people. So far that people, in its suffering and its poverty, has been full of hope in Heaven, and wonderfully free from the gross vices which have desolated other and more prosperous nations. Here, at least, infidelity has yet found no abiding place. We have deep reverence for religion and loving trust in the Redeemer of mankind, and, thanks to Divine Providence, there is still manly faith and the stainless purity of woman amidst—
The green hills of holy Ireland.
To maintain this faith, and to preserve this purity, the Redemptorist Fathers have held it their solemn duty to resist the introduction of evil books, creeping too fast amongst us, because they know that such books are devilish agents for the destruction of the bodies and the souls of men—that to the individual they bring debasement, and to the state decay—deforming the beauty and abasing the grandeur of man’s moral being, and making him a brutal sensualist and a godless reprobate, whilst they sap the foundations of social order and the authority of law, which have their only security in the high sanctions of a nation’s virtue and religion. Therefore, at Kingstown, where

the mission wrought vast improvement in the Catholic population, Father Petcherine preached against these books, and urged his hearers not only to abstain from the perusal of them, but, for the avoidance of temptation, to follow the example of the Christians of the Apostolic times, and bring them in and give them to the Priests. He did not preach against the Bible in any version—he did not ask that any copy of it should be delivered up—he abided strictly by the policy and by the law of his order, avoided all manner of controversy, and denounced immoral works, and immoral works alone. And the people obeyed his call, and multitudes of books were brought to him—pamphlets in bundles—infamous publications, which are weekly polluting the popular mind of England—translations of sensual novels from the French, vile English novels, whose very names are an abomination, and many others, and he directed the burning of the books so brought, in the full belief that they were all of the class he had denounced, and without the least conception that any Bible, of any version, was amongst them. This is the simple truth—consistent even with the facts of the case as already detailed in evidence—consistent with the preaching of the missionary, with all his conduct, and with all his words. He burned no Bible—he knew not that any had been burned—he would not have permitted the public and contemptuous burning of any, if he had learnt that any had reached his house; he is absolutely innocent of the act and of the purpose which the indictment charges. I asked one of the witnesses whether the book which I hold in my hand (“The Mysteries of London”) was not one of those amongst the bundles brought to Father Petcherine. And he answered that it was, and that multitudes of the numbers of it were heaped together. I might have further asked him as to other books of the same class and character, but I confined myself to this, as a sample of the whole. I have looked through portions of it; I had never seen it until I entered this court today; and I tell you that it presents a mass of bestial and revolting impurities, calculated, if sin can do so, to bring down God’s avenging wrath upon the unhappy people who, in thousands and tens of thousands, week after week, delight to wallow in them. Look at these obscene pictures; regard the tales of worse obscenity which they illustrate; consider the effects they must produce on the heart and understanding of the multitude; remember that they circulate through the length and breadth of England, and tell me if he is not a benefactor to our country who forbids the diffusion of their poison here? Of such books as these—more devastating than the pestilence, more terrible than interminable war, because they pollute the spirit of man and kill his immortal hopes—my client has been the enemy. Against these, he raised his testimony, in warning, and entreaty, and vehement denunciation, and deemed that he was laboring in his Master’s service, and advancing the highest interests of his fellow-beings, when he devoted them to the flames. In the mode of his proceeding there may have been ground for captious objection. It may have been misunderstood by honest men; but in itself, in its design and its results, it was wholly blameless.—Still, I desire to say that, however innocent it may have been, and was—! lament, and he laments, that, in a country such as this, occasion even of imagined offence should have been given to any man. By Father Petcherine none was intended; he did what he deemed an act of usefulness and duty; but it was open to misconception, and it was misconceived; and that which was done only in advancement of the public morals, has been taken as an insult to the opinion and the feeling of some of the Protestant community. For myself, I say with perfect truth that I regret this very deeply. I have been from my earliest days the familiar friend of Protestants. They were the companions of my boyhood, and the competitors of my youth. From them, I gained much of the secular knowledge and the training for public action which have enabled me to battle with the world.—And now they are not merely the associates of my daily life, but many of them my dear, and honored, and trusted friends. And though I am a Catholic, from the fullest conviction of my intellect, and with all the assurance of a docile and humble faith, I feel sincerely, claiming for myself full freedom of thought and speech, the respect which is due to the principles, the convictions, even the honest prejudices of those who differ from me. Therefore, I lament that any occasion of offence should have been given to any man through inadvertence, or want of knowledge, or consideration of the peculiar circumstances of this distracted kingdom.—And so does my Rev. client. It is his province and his duty to combat error and proclaim the truth, “unearring consequences.” But of the desire to treat with public contumely the opinions of any class of Irishmen he has been, and he is, incapable, as he is unconscious. And now let me ask you, having told my client’s simple tale as to his motives and his acts, is there any evidence, in this case, upon which you possibly ground a conviction? Does my statement commend itself to your understandings, as reasonable, and probable, and compatible with all the established facts which have been urged on your attention? You are not to presume the guilt of the accused—you are to presume his innocence, till guilt is proved against him. You are not to convict on suspicion, or on surmise, or the straining of evidence, or the suggestions of ingenious lawyers. Your conviction must go on testimony, positive, conclusive, and coercive—or it will be a mockery of law and an outrage upon justice. Nay more, in a case like this, in which the proof is, at best, circumstantial, so far as it affects the traverser, you are bound to exhaust all reasonable possibilities consistent at once with the facts and with his innocence, before you find him guilty. Regarding these principles, which are rudimental and settled in our law, ask yourselves, first—Were Bibles burnt at all? Is it quite clear to you that there has been no misconception or misrepresentation in this regard? Are you entirely certain that some of the witnesses to the fact may not be deceiving, and some of them deceived? Is it impossible that management and contrivance may have had to do with the production of those bits of a Bible that have been so ingeniously multiplied and so pompously displayed? But, suppose that one Bible and one Testament were actually consumed, and more, it is perfectly demonstrable there were not, according to the evidence, remains the question—is Father Petcherine answerable for that? He is not, if he did not counsel, or command, or knowingly aid in commission of the act; if his purpose was to destroy immoral books, and he was ignorant of the presence of the Bible and the Testament in the burning pile. What proof is there to fix him with such knowledge, command, or counsel? His lips are sealed; he cannot tell you what he knew, or thought, or purposed. Of all living men, he could aid you best to reach the truth on this vexed question, but he is accused, and he must be silent. So far as he is sought to be affected by counsel or command of his, I shall offer to you the most decisive evidence, which will relieve you from all difficulty; but of his knowledge