

human enactments, whenever opposed to the dictates of revelation, the mind was freed from an intolerable yoke, and "brought out of darkness into marvellous light." As long as they maintained the sufficiency and sole authority of Scripture, they were invulnerable. Canons and decrees availed nothing at all. Papists said, "Hear the church." Protestants replied, "Search the Scriptures." And men *did* search; nor did they search in vain. The discoveries they made excited at once their astonishment and indignation. They had asked food of their ghostly mother, and she had given them the biting scorpion. The word of the living God had been supplanted by the traditions of men. For truth, they had received foolish fables and lying legends. Pride had been flattered by the doctrine of merit, and vice nourished by priestly confession. Thousands upon thousands had been plundered during life, cheated in death, and ruined for ever. But at length the light arose, and revealed the horrible mischief. Then those who were of the light came forth from their obscurity. Numbers more followed their example. A continued use of these means disclosed greater and greater abominations. It was not a time for peace or compromise. When men contrasted the "glorious church" of the New Testament with the corrupt community of Rome, they saw the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning antichrist, and felt that they must obey the voice which said, "come out of her, my people." The reformation restored the Bible to Christendom, and the Bible sustained and established the reformation. Had it not been for that mighty movement, the word of God would have been little known to the people at large; and had it not been for the free and general use of Scripture, the efforts of the reformers would have been fruitless.

Some idea may be formed of the force with which this spiritual engine was brought to bear upon the ignorance and superstition of the age, from a statement of the number of editions of the Scriptures, or parts of them, printed during the first thirty-six years of the sixteenth century. They amount to no fewer than five hundred and sixty-eight. Of these, one hundred and four were in Hebrew, or other oriental dialects, and Greek; two hundred and seventy-eight in Latin, then the common language of the learned of all nations; and the remaining one hundred and eighty-six in the spoken tongues of Europe.

The Papists were deeply conscious of the injury sustained by their cause through these efforts. As long as the circulation of the Scriptures was chiefly confined to the Vulgate Latin editions, or to small impressions of the vernacular versions, badly executed, and accessible to few persons, but little opposition was made. The bulk of the people were still totally ignorant of the heavenly oracles; and those who possessed the book, so far from regarding it as the only rule of faith, admitted the concurrent authority of tradition, and were content to receive the interpretation of the Divine word from the church, that is, the priesthood, by which means the force of the testimony was completely neutralised, and Popery remained safe. But when the advancement of education multiplied everywhere the number of readers, and the Scriptures as translated by the reformers were constantly appealed to, as the only authority in matters of religion, a hostile policy was immediately adopted, and enforced with customary rigour. The history of the sixteenth century abounds with instances. In 1525, the university of Paris solemnly censured the proposition, "that all Christians, but especially the clergy, ought to be persuaded to study