

All letters and remittances are to be forwarded, free of postage, to the Editor, the Very Rev. Wm. P. McDonnell, Hamilton.

THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10.

CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE.

At the last Anniversary Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, it was stated that the fund had been well sustained this year:—total amount received £95,095. The annual expence has been for the last years above £100,000 per annum. The total expenses, since the commencement, three millions sterling!! There are 2,277 associations in Great Britain for the circulation of the scriptures: total in all the world, 7,420. Upwards of 1000 public meetings have been held in the Metropolis and the provinces, which had been attended by prelates and dignitaries of the Church. The total issue of Scriptures, last year, 815,551. From the depository at home, 584,544, which is more than a copy every minute of the year, day and night. Above half a million of copies in Welsh, and for the Jews, near fifty thousand of which are in Hebrew. The total issue by the home depository, since the commencement of the Society in 1804, 14,038,914. The grand total, including the issues by the Foreign Societies connected, is 23,335,274 copies of the Word of God!—*Exchange Paper.*

CUI BONO? TO WHAT PURPOSE ALL THIS?

The Devil, who quoted the Bible to tempt the Saviour, makes use more successfully of the same sacred book, and its acknowledged authority, to tempt from the unity of truth, and lead astray in a bewildering labyrinth of endless errors, the followers of the Saviour; those at any rate who, at the fiend's suggestion, will not follow the only sure guide, nor listen to the sole inspired interpreter of that mysterious book, which he has so clearly pointed out to them. *He, who will not hear the church, said he, let him be unto thee as a Heathen and a Publican.* Matt. xviii. 17. *Faith comes by the hearing, says St. Paul; and hearing by the word of Christ.* Rom. x. 17. Now the hearing is not the reading, and judging every one for himself. We are not commended by the Saviour to read, but to hear. *He who hears you, says he, speaking to his lawful pastors, hears me: and he who despises you, despises me: and he who despises me, despises him who sent me.* Luke x. 16. It is true, he bade the Jews search the Scriptures; for in them you think, said he, to have life everlasting; and these are they which bear testimony of me. John v. 39. This was but a challenge to the Jews, who prided themselves in having the Scriptures; and thought in them, like our Protestants of all denominations, to have life everlasting; though they had it not; for they understood them not; otherwise they would, from the signs and clear prophecies recorded in them, have recognised him for their promised Messiah. So that the having and reading of the Scriptures, without the hearing of those lawfully commissioned to teach us, does not secure to

us their true sense, and preserve us in the unity of that faith, *without which, as St. Paul says, it is impossible to please God.* Heb. xi. 6. Nay, according to St. Peter, it but exposes us to err, when we presume of ourselves, without the teaching medium, to determine the sense of the inspired writings. For, speaking of St. Paul's epistles, he says: *in which are certain things hard to be understood; which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures, to their own damnation.* 2 Peter iii. 16. And he affirms, directly contrary to the Protestant's rule of faith, that *no scripture is made by private interpretation.* 2 Peter i. 20.

In the old law, the scriptures, or ordinances of God, were (as in the Catholic Church, or the new) always subject to the pontifical (the only legal and authorized interpretation). For thus we read in that very Bible, which Protestants consider as their rule of faith: "If thou perceive that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment, &c., thou shalt come to the Priests of the levitical race; and to the judge that shall be at that time; and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall shew thee the truth of the judgment; and thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say that preside in that place which the Lord shall choose: and what they shall teach there according to the law; and thou shalt follow their sentence, neither shalt thou decline to the right hand; nor to the left. But he, who will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge; that man shall die; and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel. And all the people hearing it shall fear; that no one afterwards swell with pride." Deut. xvii. 8, &c.

The evil-spirit, the spirit of error, who deceived our first parents in Paradise, has instructed, like them, their posterity, who listen to his suggestions, to tamper freely with the word of God; and to subject his divine revelations, every one, like Eve, to his own proud and whimsical conjectures. He has thrown among them the apple of discord, the material printed bible, "the dead letter," without its sure meaning; "the letter that kills, without the Spirit that gives life." 2 Cor. iii. 6. Hence we see them every where, as St. Paul describes them, "carried about with every wind of doctrine: always learning, but never arriving at the knowledge of truth; always growing worse and worse; erring and driving into error; having itching ears (for sermons); choosing teachers for themselves," &c. And for this purpose does "the prince of this world," who sought to tempt the Saviour with the sight of all its riches (Matt. iv. 9.), heap upon his worshipping messengers, who propagate his delusion, the enormous weight of his mammon of iniquity; sums, capable, according to their own showing, of more than cancelling the national debt; but which vanish quite as soon as counted, without producing the least visible good to the contributing public! Who could believe that rational and reflecting beings could be caught in such an obviously tended snare?

SOMETHING FOR THE BIBLICALS.

The Bishop of Salisbury, (England) has caused some excitement amongst those foolish Propagandists called Biblicals, by dissolving his connexion with the Bible society.—Like Dr. Ravenscroft of North Carolina, many years ago, his Lordship of Salisbury, has so startled the religious prejudices of young misses, and old ladies, and some would be men with little more brains, that he finds it necessary to state the true reasons which led him to withdraw his Episcopal signature from the list of Biblical Abettors. To the Bishop, a Bible meeting appears little better than a pack of heretics of every shade and color that the frenzied speculations of men can devise; a den of clerical hypocrites, who, as it were, in the spirit of craven cowardice dare compromise the truth so far as to reduce the revelation of heaven to a cold system of mere indifference, and therefore deserving the anathema of his lordly reprobation.—*U. S. Catholic Miscellany.*

"Whoever" remarks his Lordship, "has been in the habit of attending the meetings of the Bible Society, is aware that they are composed of persons belonging to every variety of religious denomination, and holding every shade of opinion which is compatible with the acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as a revelation from God. All these persons meet together, and from the nature of the occasion which assembles them with an appearance of recognized equality in a matter touching upon the foundation of religious belief. The Independent, the Baptist, the Quaker, the Socinian, assemble on the platform by the side of the members of the Church, on a common understanding that the differences are *pro hac vice* to be laid aside, and their point of agreement in receiving the Bible as the Word of God, and being zealous for its distribution, is alone to be considered. Do not let me be misunderstood as implying that a dishonourable compromise of opinions on the part of any one is required by the constitution of the Society. On the contrary, I know that "union without compromise" is a sort of watchword in it. But what I do say is, that the necessary tendency of a meeting so composed is to magnify the point of agreement between its members, and to sink, as of comparative insignificance, their respective differences. Whoever has been in the habit of attending meetings of the Bible Society, must be familiar with such expressions as that the members of that Society are only separated by "unimportant differences," and are joined in "essential unity," whereas an examination of what these "unimportant differences" are, will show, that in one quarter or another, they comprise most of the chief doctrines, and all the ordinances of the Christian religion; and are so clearly recognized in the constitution of the Society as to make it impossible for a meeting of persons assembled to promote the distribution of God's word to unite in worshipping him in prayer.

I have felt, therefore, that the practical tendency of such meetings is to foster a spirit of indifference to the most vital doctrinal truth, as well as yet more clearly to exhibit a disregard of the distinctive cha-

acter of the Church, as the body to which that truth is intrusted. A member of the Church at such meetings is always liable to hear statements made on these topics, which must either be replied to at the risk of very inopportune discussion, or apparently be sanctioned by being passed over in silence."

THE CONFESSIONAL.

COMMITAL OF A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

We have just learned, says the Belfast Vindicator, from a correspondent, the particulars of a transaction which we deemed impossible in the present times, and which undoubtedly had been impossible before Lord de Grey came to hold the rod of power in Ireland. A Catholic priest has been committed to prison for refusing to break his oath, and to disregard a sacred obligation which has not been violated since St. Peter sat in the chair of Rome. The circumstances are so strange and startling, that a simple relation of them will be sufficient exposition of the atrocity of the case.

On the 1st instant, the Rev. Daniel M'Gettigan, P.P. Letterkenny, was summoned before a Bench of Justices to give information against an alleged horse-stealer, on whose account he had made restitution to the owner, "having obtained whatever knowledge of the case he possessed through the means of the confessional. The rev. gentleman, as in duty bound, refused to give in evidence the facts which he learned in the chair of confession, whereupon the local magistrates, enraged at finding all their efforts to move him fruitless, actually committed him to prison, and detained him in custody, in Letterkenny bridewell, during that and the following day and night! Not satisfied with this, and, as if eager to heighten the atrocity of the proceeding, they sent him off to Lifford on the morning of the 3rd instant, where he probably still remains.

As may easily be conceived, the people of the locality are in a state of the utmost excitement; indeed, to such a pitch were their feelings raised on the occasion of the committal of the rev. gentleman, that, but for the timely interference of the Right Rev. Dr. M'Gettigan, the bridewell and all the buildings connected with it would have been destroyed.

The Magistrates, who, by a legal fiction, are presumed to be gentlemen of education, seem to have been wholly ignorant of the fact, that every priest of the Catholic Church is bound, by oath, never to disclose, to mortal ears, a secret committed to his keeping, under the solemn and sacred seal of confession. They were, also, it seems, unaware that, irrespective of this great religious security to Catholics, honour, religion—every thing that can appeal most forcibly to the heart of the Confessor, conspire to prevent the revealing of penitential admissions. In fact, to obtain such a disclosure is, humanly speaking, a matter of impossibility.

We trust that the matter will not be allowed to rest here. It is really too serious; the question involved in it is of too deep import to be made the subject of mere ephemeral comment. The religious feelings of many millions of her Majesty's