

to be the only safeguard against Romanism, has been so long current, and so long identified in the public mind with orthodoxy, that none of the Protestant Sects can now either gainsay or resist it. And it is lamentable that even good men in the bosom of our own Church—a Church never committed to this bald proposition—alarmed by the dread of Popery, misguided by erroneous notions, or influenced by the Sectarian spirit, imported or flowing in from without, should indirectly and unintentionally encourage these impostures and delusions, while they even imagine that they are honoring the Bible, and doing God service.—Alas! there is nothing which, in the end, tends more to the disadvantage of truth and the discredit of the Bible, than this dogma carried out to its natural and legitimate results. The very strongest and most effective argument which Romanists can bring against Protestantism, is the fearful fruits of this dangerous principle. Under the shadow of high authority and example, and acting in accordance with this license, Protestant Christendom is filled with heresy and schism in a thousand forms; and imposture and fanaticism walk abroad with an unblushing front, claiming all the truth and piety in the world!"

Here we have a condemnation given from a Protestant pulpit, of the false and dangerous principle of unrestrained private interpretation, than which, we might defy even Italian or Germanico-Italian apostates to point out a severer, either in Pope's encyclical or Bishop's pastoral.

The next extract from the second part of the Sermon, is no less strong than the foregoing; and if it excite not the anger and misrepresentation of the favorers of private interpretation, against Mr. McCullough, it must not be because he has not condemned their principles as openly, and unequivocally, as needs be.

"Where, then, lies the origin of the evil?—What is the prolific source of these bitter and poisonous waters? How comes it that such innumerable and dangerous errors and heresies, and such wide departures from Apostolic and primitive institutions, have sprung up under the auspices, and been patronized by the authority, of men who profess to be instructed and guided by 'the Bible and the Bible alone?' Must Eternal Truth itself be regarded as the source and spring, the parent and guardian, of all theological falsehood? If not, who, or what, must be held responsible for that hateful and pestilent brood of

'Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire,'

which in these latter days swarm over the earth like the 'locusts' engendered in the 'smoke of

the bottomless pit,' and to whom 'was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power?' The answer to this question, as regards Protestant Christendom, is simple, obvious, and incontrovertible,—It is *the false and dangerous principle of unrestrained private interpretation of the Scriptures*. This principle is acted upon, and carried out, when each individual, regardless of the light, the testimony, and the authority of the Primitive and Universal Church, and the well-known Catholic Faith of all ages and nations, goes directly to the Bible and interprets it for himself, and according to his own preconceived notions, his prejudices, his interest, or his theological system, making it speak according to his own private judgment, thus biassed and perverted. The same principle is substantial' acted upon when the systems of particular men, or classes of men, or sects, are adopted, and individuals, with the rule and square, the rack and crucible, thus furnished, torture, garble, dilute, and wrest the Holy Scriptures so as to make them support their private opinions, or sectarian creeds. The Bible is thus used like a musical instrument of great compass and power, upon which every man plays his favorite tune. And if the result be bad, the Bible is no more responsible than such a musical instrument for the discords produced by the performers.

"Now, the experience of many centuries, especially of the last three, is amply sufficient to demonstrate that this is a dangerous, and often fatal, and therefore a false principle. The present state of the Ultra-Protestant portion of Christendom, and its evident tendencies to the opposite and disoordinate results of superstition, fanaticism, transcendentalism, and infidelity, clearly prove the earthly (if not worse) origin of this doctrine of private interpretation. There have always been men—sometimes of no little talent and ingenuity, eloquence and address—who if allowed to assume the office of teachers, and frame their own creeds from the Bible as interpreted by themselves, or men of like character and tendencies, would, like the 'unlearned and unstable' of old, 'wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.' And there have always been, still are, and will always be, multitudes of ignorant, weak, credulous, and fanatical persons, who furnish ample and pliant materials for the plastic powers of these religious system-mongers and demagogues. While this is the case, what can be fraught with more danger to truth, order, and the interests of religion, than the encouragement of this principle? If all who undertake to teach were themselves taught of God if all were guided by the Holy Spirit: if all were intelligent, wise, and holy, and free from pride, passion, prejudice and ambition—if all were com-