

vernacular tongues, in that period of religious vertigo, which followed the outbreak of the Reformation, and in which men's minds dwelt in an effervescence of excitement, incapable of calmly and dispassionately judging any question. In issuing this temporary decree, Pius IV. gave his reason for doing so, in these words ; "that experience had made it manifest, that the permission to read the Bible indiscriminately in the vulgar tongues had, *from the rashness of men*, done more harm than good." And the Pope was not alone of this opinion, for many others were of the same opinion ; and the learned Gerson himself, who cannot certainly be accused of having favoured the maxims of the Ultramontanists, felt himself constrained to avow, that the alleged right of reading and interpreting the Bible, was the *empoisoned source* from which came forth and daily increased, the errors of all innovators ; that it was "the source of errors and evils, without number." The decree in question, however, as I have said before, was merely a disciplinary regulation of a temporary and local character, and it has long since ceased to be of binding force in any part of the Catholic Church. Any rescripts which may have been since issued, regard not the reading itself of the Bible, but only the false and corrupted versions of it, which some people in their zeal and bigotry would force upon the attention of Catholics. There is no prohibition whatsoever, against any Catholic reading an approved version of the Bible, accompanied with explanatory notes taken from the Fathers, or approved Catholic commentators. On the contrary, they are urged to read it, as any one may see by referring to the letter—published at the beginning of approved editions of the Catholic Bible—of Pope Pius VI., to Anthony Martini, the translator of the Italian version, in 1778. In that letter the Pope says : "At a time that a vast number of bad books, which most grossly attack the Catholic religion, are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures ; For these are the most abundant sources which ought to be left open to every one, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate errors which are so wildly disseminated in these corrupt times." These are the words of the Pope himself, published in every Catholic Bible, and, still, we are never done hearing the slander repeated, that the Catholic Church hates the Bible and forbids her children to read it. There are no people so blind as those who have eyes and will not see ; and such are they who are constantly rehashing this slander at Bible society meeting's &c., about the Catholic Church.

I have now done with the consideration of the chief reason given by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson for his being a Protestant. "I am a Protestant," he said, "*because I hold the Holy Scriptures a sufficient rule of my faith, and myself responsible for searching them.*" I have endeavored to ascertain whether this