

apprehension lay in their own misrepresentations. The sovereign pontiff, has merely guarded the faithful against the efforts of certain Bible societies whose editions of the Scripture are not acknowledged by the Catholic world, and has directed their attention to the great principles of Christian orthodoxy, which must always serve as the protection of their faith.

From the observations we have made, it follows, in the first place, that the Catholic church has always desired to see the Holy Scriptures in the hands of her children. Secondly, she has placed no restriction upon the use of the Bible among the laity, if we except a short period subsequent to the reformation, when the circumstances of the times imperiously demanded some such regulation.—Thirdly, this disciplinary restriction was only adopted in some countries, and at the present day it no longer exists. The only requirement now on this point is, that the version used by the people be approved, and illustrated by commentaries from the fathers and other Catholic writers.

But, in sanctioning the reading of the sacred volume by the faithful in general, the Church has at all times expressly avowed, and acted upon the principle, that the Scriptures, independently of an unerring guide, are not adapted to the discovery or the preservation of religious truth; and she might appeal, for the accuracy of this principle, to the admissions of Protestants themselves.—They have, ever since the period of the reformation, deplored the lamentable divisions which the liberty of private interpretation produced; but in vain have they endeavoured to remedy the evil, which will always be exhibited amongst the sects consisting of as many judges of the faith as there members belonging to them. When Luther had once opened the flood-gates of error, he contemplated with dismay, but he could not check the ravages of the impetuous torrent. “Men are now come to such a pitch of disorder,” he says, “that they stand no longer in need of any teachers. Every man now gives the law to himself.” Mosheim relates that, in certain parts of Germany, fanaticism had been carried to such an extreme as to invoke the interference of the civil power, which forbade the reading of the Scriptures.—Melancthon acknowledged that, “the whole Elb could not supply water enough to bewail the dissensions of the reformation.” Such was the language, too, of Calvin, Dudith, and all the leading men who contributed to the religious revolution of the sixteenth century. Many of the most distinguished Protestant writers have gone much farther than this, and with a strange inconsistency, have acknowledged the impracticability of discovering revealed truth or maintaining it in its purity, without resorting to the Catholic rule of faith.—

“The ignorant and the simple,” says Jurieu, “are not only incapable of finding out the truth by reading the Bible, but I allow that such means of finding out the truth is absurd and impossible, and utterly beyond the reach of the public.”—The celebrated Claude has expressed the same opinion. As to the use of the Scriptures without a guide, Archbishop Bramhall observes that, “the unrestricted liberty of reading the Bible is more injurious to religion than all the restraints of the Catholics.” The learned Seldon declares that “those two words *scrutamina Scripturas*’ (search the Scriptures) have undone the world;” and for the same reason have several learned members of the Anglican church avowed their unequivocal opposition to the efforts of our modern Bible societies, convinced, as Dr. Norris remarks, that they are “fraught with danger to the best interests of truth and unity, throughout the world.” We shall conclude these hasty observations with the following extracts, one of which is from a distinguished Protestant minister, and the other from one of the brightest luminaries of the primitive Church:

“If it be the wish of men that the Bible should not become useless and ever dangerous; if on the contrary it ought to be a fixed rule of faith and conduct; it ought then essentially to be accompanied by a tribunal, established to fix and decide its sense. And this tribunal, in order to perform such office, should be invested with an **INFALLIBLE** authority. Such has, in all ages, been the opinion of the most eminent and distinguished members of the Church of Christ.”

“Disputes must necessarily be endless, where men appeal only to the Scriptures to decide them. In this case each party may grant and deny, and deny and grant for ever. The victory in all such contests must remain always doubtful; and the effect will be that each side will claim it equally, and even continue each the more fixed in its own opinion. And what therefore is the method which, on the occasion of such contests, men ought in their prudence to adopt? Why, let them look for that **AUTHORITY**—for those pastors to whom the depositum of faith has been confided, and to whom the Scriptures themselves belong. It is from these that we receive both the true Scriptures and the true sense of the Scriptures.”

W.

At Ventry Chapel, on Sunday last, Hugh Connor and Wife, two of the deluded votaries of the Irish Society, appeared in the garb of public penitents, for their defection from the Faith.—Newry Examiner.