

of the regular and ordinary authority of Christ's Church, without mission, without miracles introduced all these changes of religion—as great changes as those which were sanctioned by the miraculous and divine missions of Moses and Jesus Christ. All this infatuated collection of compiled and invented, of ancient and modern heresies, he taught his deluded disciples to call a reformation of religion.

But this was only the beginning of the evil. In spite of the prohibition and curses of Luther, his disciple soon claimed their master's privilege of believing and teaching what they pleased. Actuated by this rule and principle, they soon formed more systems of religion, than you or I can enumerate. From the operation of this unholy, this licentious principle, in a few years Zuinglianism, Calvinism, Anabaptism, Arminianism, Socinianism, and twenty other sects sprung up on the continent, and were soon transplanted into this country.—From the operation of this same principle in our island, which was then Catholic, some adopted the opinions of Henry or Seymour, of Cranmer or Elizabeth, of Presbyterians, Puritans, Unitarians, Independents, Dippers, Quakers, Methodists, Swedenborgians, and so forth, down to the last of our Protestant prophets and reformers, whether male or female. From the operation of the same principle, while I still adhere to the old creed of my fathers, of your fathers, who saw the beginning of every modern sect some of my neighbours follow one religion, some another, trying all, except the right one, by turns, and sticking long to none.—After three hundred years of industry, the reformation is not completed; and it never will be completed as long as men usurp the authority of believing what they please.

Of all these various and discordant sects, only one can be the true Church. Can you tell me which I am in conscience bound to obey, to the exclusion of all the rest? Can you give me a satisfactory reason, why I should prefer the reformer Luther to the reformer Arius: why I should prefer Elizabeth to Knox, Wesley to Priestly, or any of them to Mrs. Southcotem? I defy you to do so, without violating the principle from which all these reformations sprung: a principle which, if it be condemnable in one sect of Protestantism, is condemnable in all.

My point is proved, I hope you now admit it.—Our religion is essentially fixed. Yours is essentially changeable.—Ours is wedded to unity. Yours is a stranger to it.—Ours was delivered. Yours invented.—We in Peter's ship are held by a sheet and hold fast in our moorings. You are afloat on the ocean of conflicting opinions without a pilot, without a compass, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. iv. 14. Enjoying this consistency of faith and security of conscience, believe me, Mr. Hardman, we Catholics see nothing to envy in that mobility, of faith which is so natural, that uneasiness of conscience which is so common and so reasonable among the various sects of

reformed Christians. Neither do we feel the slightest temptation to exchange our apostolic and immutable rule of faith for the Protestant privilege of believing as many errors as we please: but while you profess the creed of the apostles of the reformation, "I believe whatever I please;" let the Catholic, without censure, enjoy so much of your privilege, as to profess his rule of faith in the Creed of other Apostles: **I BELIEVE THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

Gentlemen, I must reserve my reflections and reply for my next Letter. I am, &c.

JOHN HARDMAN.

As an undeniable proof that the Catholic clergy withhold not the scriptures from the Laity; we subjoin the following official documents on the subject from the first authority in the Catholic Church.

WHEN the Rev. Anthony Martini, of Turin, afterwards Archbishop of Florence, published his Italian translation of the Sacred Scriptures, he presented a copy of it to the late Pope Pius VI.—The present was not only graciously accepted by his Holiness, but he moreover condescended to send him a letter of thanks on the occasion. In this he tells him that "*he judged exceedingly well, that the Faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these, he adds, are the most abundant sources, which ought to be left open to every one, to draw from them purity of morals, and doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are widely disseminated in these corrupt times. Optime sentis, si Christi Fideles ad lectionem divinarum litterarum mag-nopere excitandos existimes, Illi enim sunt fontes uberrimi, qui cuique patere debent ad hauriendam et morum et doctrinæ sanctitatem.*"

In 1797, a new edition of Bishop Challoner's Bible, which had long been wanted, and was anxiously sought for, was given at Edinburgh, by the venerable Bishop of Daulis, Dr. Hay. Some years before, he had visited Rome; and had there, and in other parts of Italy, himself witnessed, how much the Pope's letter was applauded; and how favorably Martini's edition was received by his countrymen. He therefore translated the Pope's Latin letter into English and prefixed it to that edition. It was also prefixed to his Dublin's editions, by Archbishop Troy, who was on the spot when the letter was written, and was well acquainted with all the circumstances connected with it. Messrs. Syers and Haydock did the same in their Manchester editions, in folio; and I believe the examples of the two venerable prelates has been followed in every other edition previous to the year 1815: and I have no hesitation in saying, that the British Catholics were even more pleased with that letter, than the Italians. It is, in fact, to them a Goliath; a practical and unanswerable argument, which speaks of itself volumes: and carries more conviction with it, than any thing they had before produced in their answers to the objections of Protestants on this head.

Why then, let me ask, was it omitted in the stereotype edition of the New Testament in 1815; especially as the "Roman Catholic Bible Society," that stereotyped it, was formed for the express purpose of facilitating the distribution, and of course the encouraging the reading of the Holy Scriptures,

and particularly of the New Testament, amongst the poor of the Catholic communion. The letter itself is not only omitted but it is not even mentioned in the prefatory address!—And yet nothing, I conceive, could have answered their purpose better, than the insertion of it *at full length*, as Bishops Hay and Troy, and other editors had done before them. I therefore hope you will give it a place in your valuable Missellany, and that it never will be again omitted in any future edition of the Bible or Testament.

POPE PIUS THE SIXTH.

Beloved Son, Health and Apostolical Benediction.

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, your 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 the errors, which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the Sacred writings in the language of your country suitable to every one's capacity; especially when you shew and set forth, that you have added explanatory notes, which being extracted from the Holy Fathers, preclude every possible danger of abuse. Thus you have not swerved, either from the laws of the Congregation of the Index, or from the Constitution published on this subject by Benedict. XIV. That immortal Pope, our predecessor in the Pontificate, and formerly, when we held a place near his person, our excellent master, in ecclesiastical learning: circumstances which we mention as honourable to us. We, therefore, applaud your eminent learning, joined with your extraordinary piety, and we return you our due acknowledgments for the books, which you have transmitted to us, and which when convenient, we will read over. In the mean time, as a token of our Pontifical benevolence, receive our Apostolical benediction, which to you, beloved Son, we very affectionately impart. Given at Rome, on the Calends of April, 1778, the fourth of our Pontificate.

PHILIP BUONAMICI,
Latin Secretary.

To our Beloved Son, Antony Martini, at Turin.

[A translation from the Latin Original.]

And now, allow me just to observe before I close my letter that in the different communications, which of late have been made both to the *Catholic* and the *Orthodox Journalist*, on the subject of the Bible [Societies, the Catholic public would not have been the less edified with their labours, if while they exposed the absurdity of those who hold "*The Bible, the Bible, and nought but the Bible.*"

to be their *Rule of Faith*;—a principle which has introduced the confusion of Babel, where there should be but "*one mind, one body, and one soul, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism*;—they had, at the same time observed, that this, notwithstanding, *the Faithful should be excited to the reading*