

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

The readers of the daily newspapers would do well to cultivate a habit of wholesome scepticism. We do not mean that the newspaper reporters and interviewers intend to deceive; or that a newspaper which takes up a "cause" means to be dishonest. But in the rush of competition, there is scant opportunity for verification, and the news which is to be "exclusive" must rush ahead of all possible rivals. Moreover, when once it has committed itself, a newspaper feels bound, at almost any cost, to maintain its consistency. We may, therefore, be excused if we venture to "discount" the startling statements of the principles and practices of an American Protective Association which have filled so very many columns of one of the most trustworthy and responsible of the New York daily papers. Under so much smoke there is sure to be a good deal of fire, but sometimes the smoke makes the fire less dangerous. At least it gives warning of danger; and the people of the United States, if only they have time to reflect, are not in the least degree likely to be driven into a panic of persecution. But the subject of intolerance is itself highly important. What is religious intolerance? Is it an altogether unmixed evil? Within what limits are people permitted in civil society to give expression to their disapproval of what they believe to be false and dangerous opinions?

There is one communion which has never yet hesitated to give a clear and consistent answer to such questions as these, and that communion is the Roman Church under the Papacy. The Roman Church has always affirmed, and affirms to-day, that intolerance of false opinions, to the last extremity of persecution, is a religious duty. Through long periods of time, and over large parts of her jurisdiction, the necessity for that kind of persecution never arose, for two opinions were not possible. The minds of her subjects were stagnant, and her realm was as peaceable as a cemetery. Often, as in England, and as in the United States to-day, her practice has been controlled by the civil authorities only by the spirit of the age, but her principle has never faltered. The man who disbelieves the doctrine of the Church puts his soul in peril of everlasting damnation, and the man who tries to pervert other people to his own misbeliefs puts their souls in similar peril. To put a man's soul in peril of perdition is a far more serious crime than to pick his pocket or cut his throat, and should be punished, if possible, with far greater severity. Nothing can be more logical, and the Inquisition was the practical manifestation of the theory. But, indeed, the consensus of almost all civilized people is strongly in favor of intolerance. The Jews were intolerant. "Thine eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, but thou shalt surely kill him." The Mohammedans are intolerant. The Scotch Kirk, in its palmy days, outdid the Inquisition; the Puritans were an even match. All modern Socialistic movements must rest upon intolerance; that is to say, upon the forcible repression of all opinions which conflict with the accepted beliefs and principles of "the Government."

And yet, in spite of this consensus, the verdict of history is an emphatic condemnation of intolerance. There is no guarantee whatever, apart from some supernatural papal or sacerdotal infallibility, that the opinions of the rulers of a community, ecclesiastical or civil, shall be certainly right. There is even less guarantee for the infallibility of the numerical majority. As a matter of fact, the great leaders of mankind have always been in a minority. To say nothing of One who was higher than all, the Christian Apostles were right, against the whole Jewish nation and the Roman Empire. St. Athanasius was right, "against the world." Great reformatory movements do not begin at the bottom, and rise upward by some sort of capillary attraction; they begin at the top and gradually filter down. Great men are not the creatures, but rather the creators, of their age; and to stop all variations, or even eccentricities and extravagances of thought, would be to stop the progress of mankind.

Intolerance, especially when it takes the form of persecution, is the product of two very mean vices, cowardice and idleness. Very few people who really believe in the inherent power of truth would ever be induced to resort to persecution, were it not for an intellectual idleness which shrinks from the toil of dealing with truth in its own way. Impatient believers wish to reach the place they are making for by some short cut; and it seems—and indeed it is—far easier to change the conduct of men by pains and penalties than to convince their understandings. But to convince the understanding is the precise end and aim of truth, and apart from that, the change of conduct is, so to speak, irrelevant.

We confess that we have very little fear of such associations as the American Protective Association is said to be. The deep-rooted fairness of the American people will never allow a seventh part of their number to be virtually disfranchised and boycotted. Nevertheless, all such associations are dangerous and demoralizing. Satan will never help to cast out Satan. It is not by persecuting one an-

other, but by trying to understand one another, and by making the best of one another, that we can hope to come to Christian unity and the Christian life.

Some Curious Bibles.

The most sacred of all Books, and therefore the one on which the greatest pains should have been bestowed to secure accuracy, has not always escaped without being more or less marred at the hands of the printer. A variety of causes contributed to the general dissatisfactoriness of the earliest printed copies of the Bible. When type was much less regular and beautiful than it is now, and the impressions taken from it not nearly so distinct, no doubt there was a greater liability to overlook errors, of whatever kind they may happen to be. Another fruitful source of typographical blunders, and corrupted text, at first arose from the fact that the printing was undertaken by irresponsible persons with the sole object of making money. Copies were urgently wanted, so they hurried their sheets through the press, more eager to satisfy the prevailing demand than to insure correctness. Such a state of matters was bound to be attended by evil consequences. Blemishes of all kinds crept in, and, to make things worse, there was no authorized standard, as we have within easy reach, to which people could refer when they alighted on a more than doubtful passage. In those days, at least, the Church, with some show of reason, might claim the exclusive right of being able to interpret the Bible, according to the spirit of Scripture.

Some time before the execution of Charles I., and during the Commonwealth, in order to meet the pressing demand for copies, the greatest of Books was issued, bearing evidences of haste and carelessness that would now scarcely be tolerated in ephemeral literature. The only thing that can be said favourable to such culpable and indecent haste, is that it whetted the public appetite, and, faulty though these editions were, they created appreciation for the Sacred Writings as a whole, making them dear to the hearts of the common people, who found in them true aid to their highest aspirations.

Again, they prepared the way for liberty and order, at a time when these blessings were very much needed. To the accomplished Bible student, however, their objects presented many difficulties. One of the Harleian manuscripts states that the learned Archbishop Usher, on his way to preach at Paul's Cross, where was a wooden pulpit adjoining the Cathedral of St. Paul, in which some of the most eminent divines were appointed to preach every Sunday morning, went into a bookseller's shop, and enquired for a Bible of the London edition. His horror and consternation were great on finding that the text from which he intended to preach was not there. A complaint to the king resulted, and with a view to mend matters the printing of the sacred volume was created a monopoly. The profits, more than the honour, afterwards caused various printers to claim the right, among them one Field, whose "Pearl Bible" has the distinction of perhaps containing more errors than any other edition. Its "faults," by one authority, are given as three thousand six hundred. Some of them are very glaring, as for instance, at 1 Cor. vi. 9, the omission of *not* makes the text read "the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God." Worse still, Field is said to have accepted a bribe of fifteen hundred pounds from the Independents to corrupt Acts vi. 3, by substituting a "ye" for a "we" so as to support the claim of the people in the appointment of their pastors. Before and during the Civil War, Bibles printed in Holland, in the English language, were largely imported into England. On one occasion, twelve thousand copies of these Dutch Bibles were seized and destroyed, because of the infringement on the rights of the king's printers. However, they appear to have been "illegal" in other ways, for a large impression was burnt by order of the Assembly of Divines, on account of the errors they contained. Among other passages, exception was taken to Gen. xxxvi. 24, which read: "This is that ass (Anah) that found the rulers (mules) in the wilderness." Here the authorized version, it may be said, is susceptible of improvement, although, "rulers" was not a bit nearer to what Anah found than "mules." The Vulgate notwithstanding its other faults, has the correct rendering, *aquas calidas*, "warm springs."

A French Bible, printed in Paris in 1588, by Anthony Bonnemere, contains a preface which states that the French translator "has added nothing but the genuine truths, according to the express terms of the Latin Bible, nor omitted anything but what was improper to be translated." This is all very well, but in Exodus xxxii. 20, we get the following new and curious information: "The ashes of the golden calf which Moses caused to be burnt, and mixed with water that was drunk by the Israelites, stuck to the beards of such as had fallen before it; by which they appeared with gilt beards, as a mark to distinguish those which had worshipped the calf."

Further, we are told in the same chapter, "Upon Aaron's refusing to make gods for the Israelites, they spat upon him with so much fury and violence that they quite suffocated him."

Book collectors, generally fixing on some striking blunder, have got a name for most of these early editions of the Bible. One is known as the "Treacle" Bible, because in Jer. viii. 22, these words occur, "Is there no tryacle at Gilead?" The same verse gave rise to the Rosin Bible; rosin being substituted for treacle. The Bug Bible is so named, because the disagreeable insect was said by the printers to be the "terror by night" mentioned in the fifth verse of Psalm xci. The Breeches Bible, which was printed at Geneva in 1560, states, in Gen. iii. 7, that Adam and Eve made themselves breeches. The Vinegar Bible, issued from the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1717, represents the twentieth chapter of Luke's Gospel as containing the "parable of the vinegar," instead of vineyard; in the summary of contents at the head of the chapter, "Blessed are the place-makers" (peace-makers) was a blunder that in days of political corruption used to be quoted peculiarly as condoning the practices of the time.

The Vulgate of Pope Sixtus V. shows that then the occupant of the Papal chair could lay no claim to infallibility, when he resolved to have a correct and carefully printed Bible. Having acted as proof-reader himself, he was so certain of having attained to absolute exemption from errors in his edition that he prefixed a Bull to the first issue, excommunicating all printers who should make any alteration in the text. Instead of this Bible being one of the most correct, with a single exception, it is perhaps the most blundering. Scraps of paper had to be printed and pasted over the erroneous passages, and, as a curiosity, the "Scrap Book Bible" now sometimes changes hands at a fabulous figure.

The first Bibles printed that approached correctness were the Cambridge editions of 1629 and 1638. The printers were so confident of the accuracy of the latter, that they challenged all the scholars connected with the university to find a literal fault in it, and promised to reward the person who did so with a copy. One error at least was pointed out for them; a "ye" for "we" at Acts vi. 3 appeared, as in Field's edition.

Oxford did not escape making mistakes equally humiliating to the correctness of its press. An edition of 1711 is remarkable for the omission of the word "not" at Isa. lvii. 12, while another, of 1792, declared that Philip—not Peter—would deny Christ before cock-crow.

The difficulties of early translators were certainly many, and they overcame them very creditably. Still, they occasionally floundered, especially in passages requiring a knowledge of the flora and fauna of Eastern lands. Jacob's presents to Joseph (Gen. xliii. 2), as an example, tasked them severely. Among the other things Tyndale has "a courtesye balm." The Geneva of 1560 and the Douay of 1609 had "rosin" when we have "balm." Dr. Geddes introduces "laudanum" among the presents. Wycliffe in his manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, translates the first on the list as a "lytle of precious liquor of silcote," and then, as if to relieve our minds from any misapprehension regarding the "precious liquor," gives it as "ginne" in the margin.

The translators of St. Paul's Epistles into the Ethiopic language offered a rather neat apology, which probably gave the true reason for the numerous errors in their production. "They who printed the work could not read, and we could not print: they helped us, and we helped them—as the blind help the blind." The preface in those days served strange uses. When Dr. Castile published his Polyglot Bible it was dedicated to Cromwell, who allowed the paper to be imported free of duty. But at the Restoration the "patron's" name was omitted, and the preface set to the tune of "Long live the King." The different editions are now known as the "Republican" and "Royal." Temporizing in such a case is perhaps not to be condemned, any more than it was in that of the Catholic Bishop who translated the Scriptures into the language of his people, and left out the Books of Battle because they might add to their inclination for fighting.

A printer's widow in Germany, who took a little liberty with the text, though only to the extent of two letters, is said to have lost her life by it. Through substituting "Na" for the first half of "Herr," she made a passage, in which rule is promised to the husband, to read, "And he shall be thy fool."

When illustrations were given in these old Bibles they sometimes reached the height of absurdity. In one, Elijah is represented as ascending into heaven in a four-wheeled wagon. The Bishops' Bible, translated by Bishops, and published in 1568, had a portrait of the Earl of Leicester placed before the Book of Joshua, and another portrait of Sir William Cecil adorning the Psalms, for no better reason than they happened to be favourites of the Queen. Later on, a map of the Holy Land and the arms of Arch-