

nevertheless, when interpreted according to the right interpretation handed down from century to century, they can be filled with life and spirit.'

"I do not know that what was meant by 'the interpretation handed down from century to century' did much for Ruhn. But a strong vigorous understanding applied to the interpretation of Scripture, and the illumination and aid of the Holy Spirit, did a great deal. A new spiritual world was opened up to him, widely different from that in which, up to that time, he had contentedly lived. The passages printed in large type, with their asterisks, led his mind to perfectly different conclusions from those taught in the appended Catechism, and embodied in the formularies of his Church. He found nothing about the confessional, and he accordingly no longer frequented it. Rites and ceremonies which had no Biblical authority he quietly abstained from. Ideas even of concessions, which, as a member of Christ's Church, he had a right to demand from his parish priest, began to spring up in his mind. Meanwhile he did not put his 'light under a bushel, but on a candlestick.' The neighbours began to feel that a new and divine thing had appeared among them. They gathered round Ruhn, and he read the Scriptures to them. Then they bought for themselves other copies and other versions: last of all, Luther's followed. The existence of a body of awakened Catholics became a feature in the religious life of the little principality; but they showed no signs of a wish to leave the outward communion of their Church. All they sought was freedom to live out the truth, which, without human teachers, they had found in the Word of God.

"But this freedom was to be contested. The priests opposed and persecuted. The leaders were imprisoned. They appealed, and at last their case was brought before the highest Court in their little state. During the last session of the Court, the Prince himself listened to the proceedings from an adjoining room. It became clear to him that the accused were honest men, good citizens, and loyal subjects. It became equally clear that they were not men to tamper with their consciences, or abjure their faith. So, like a wise prince, he quashed the proceedings and set them free. From that day they remained unmolested.

"The Church changed its tactics. It ignored their non-appearance in the confessional, their abstinence from prescribed rites and ceremonies, fasts and festivals: yea, it went so far as, after a fashion, to administer to them the Communion in both forms, giving them the so-called 'rinsing cup' (Spülkelch). Thus there lived and grew in strength a little Protestant flock in the very bosom of the Romish communion.

"But times changed. The tolerant priests were followed by intolerant successors. The 'cup' was again refused. And in all this they saw the finger of God bidding them come out and be wholly separate. Thirty-nine adults—the youngest more than twenty, several more than seventy years of age—announced their intention of leaving the communion of the Church of Rome, and joining the Churches of the Reformation. All but four remained firm, and on the 2nd of February, 1858, the rest were received into the full fellowship of the Protestant Church. On the 2nd of September, 1860, they were followed by eleven more. All these, more or less directly, owe their conversion and present position to the reading of the small 8vo. Catholic Bible published in 1871, by the priests of the Teutonic Knights, as a weapon with which Protestantism was to be successfully combated, and the members of the Romish Church more firmly established in Roman doctrine.

"I cannot deny but that this Bible had a great interest for me; so I put myself in correspondence with the Christians of Bietinghausen, and inquired if the Bible were still in existence. I suggested our library as a fitting place in which so interesting a book should be preserved. The brethren sent it as a token of their love for a Society which has for its object the circulation of the holy volume, whose 'words,' to use the language of one of themselves, 'if they be but dead letters, have been filled with spirit and with life for all of them.'