

# WHERE WE GOT THE BIBLE

OUR DEBT TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY

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*Vicar General of Glasgow*



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*Dedicated to*

ALL LOVERS OF  
THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

“In which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.”

*2 Peter 3:16*

“I would not believe the Gospel unless moved thereto by the authority of the Church.”

*St. Augustine (Contra Epis. Manich., Fund., n. 6.)*



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## Chapter 3

**THE CHURCH PRECEDES THE NEW TESTAMENT**

So far, we have been dealing with rather dry material. We have seen how the Old Testament books came to be collected into one volume; now it remains to see how the Catholic Church also composed and selected and formed into another volume the separate books of the New Testament.

1. Now you will remember what I said before, that the New Testament was not, any more than the Old, all written at one time, or all by one man, but that at least 40 years passed away between the writing of the first and the writing of the last of its books. It is made up of the four Gospels, 14 Epistles of St Paul, 2 of St Peter, 1 of St James, 1 of St Jude, 3 of St John, together with the Apocalypse of St John, and the Acts of Apostles by St Luke, who also wrote the third Gospel; so that we have in this collection works by at least eight different writers, and from the year that the earliest book was composed (probably the Gospel of St Matthew) to the year that St John composed his Gospel about half a century had elapsed.

Our Blessed Lord Himself never, so far as we know, wrote a line of Scripture—certainly none that has been preserved. He never told His Apostles to write anything. He did not command them to commit to writing what He had delivered to them, but He said, “Go ye and teach all nations,” “preach the Gospel to every creature,” “He that heareth you heareth



Me.” What He commanded and meant them to do was precisely what He had done Himself, namely, deliver the Word of God to the people by the living voice, convince, persuade, instruct, convert them by addressing themselves face to face to living men and women; not entrust their message to a dead book which might perish and be destroyed, and be misunderstood and misinterpreted and corrupted, but adopt the more safe and natural way of presenting the truth to them by word of mouth, and of training others to do the same after they themselves were gone, and so by a living tradition, preserving and handing down the Word of God as they had received it, to all generations.

2. And this was, as a matter of fact, the method the Apostles adopted. Only five out of the twelve wrote down anything at all that has been preserved to us; and of that, not a line was penned till at least 10 years after the death of Christ, for Jesus Christ was crucified in 33 AD, and the first of the New Testament books was not written till about 45 AD.

You see what follows? The Church and the Faith existed before the Bible; that seems an elementary and simple fact which no one can deny or ever has denied. Thousands of people became Christians through the work of the Apostles and missionaries of Christ in various lands, and believed the whole truth of God as we believe it now, and became saints, before ever they saw or read, or could possibly see or read, a single sentence of inspired Scripture of the New Testament, for the simple reason that such Scripture did not then exist. How, then, did they become Christians? In the same way, of

course, that Pagans become Catholics nowadays, by hearing the truth of God from the lips of Christ's missionaries.

When the twelve Apostles met together in Jerusalem, and portioned out the known world among themselves for purposes of evangelisation, allotting one country to one Apostle (such as India to St Thomas), and another to another, how did they propose to evangelise these people? By presenting each one with a New Testament? Such a thing did not exist, and, we may safely say, was not even thought of. Why did Our Lord promise them the gift of the Holy Ghost, and command them to be "witnesses" of Him? and why, in fact, did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Twelve and endow them with the power of speaking in various languages? Why but that they might be able to "preach the Gospel to every creature" in the tongue of every creature.

3. I have said that the Apostles at first never thought of writing the New Testament; and neither they did. The books of the New Testament were produced and called forth by special circumstances that arose, were written to meet particular demands and emergencies. Nothing was further from the minds of the Apostles and Evangelists than the idea of composing works which should be collected and formed into one volume, and so constitute the Holy Book of the Christians.

And we can imagine St Paul staring in amazement if he had been told that his Epistles, and St Peter's and St. John's, and the others would be tied up together and elevated into the position of a complete and exhaustive statement of the doctrines of Christianity, to be placed in each man's hand as

an easy and infallible guide in faith and morals, independent of any living and teaching authority to interpret them. No one would have been more shocked at the idea of his letters usurping the place of the authoritative teacher, the Church, than the great Apostle who himself said, "How shall they hear without a preacher? how shall they preach unless they be sent? Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." The fact is that no religion yet known has been effectually propagated among men except by word of mouth, and certainly everything in the natural and spiritual position of the Apostles on the one hand, and of the Jews on the other, was utterly unfavourable to the spread of Christianity by means of a written record.

The Jewish people were not used to it, and the Gentiles could not have understood it. Even Protestant authors of the highest standing are compelled to admit that the living teaching of the Church was necessarily the means chosen by Jesus Christ for the spread of His Gospel, and that the committing of it to writing was a later and secondary development.

Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Durham, than whom among Anglicans there is not a higher authority, and who is reckoned, indeed, by all as a standard scholar on the Canon of Scripture, says:

In order to appreciate the Apostolic age in its essential character, it is necessary to dismiss not only the ideas which are drawn from a collected New Testament, but those also, in a great measure, which sprung from the several groups of writings of which it is composed.

The first work of the Apostles, and that out of which all their other functions grew, was to deliver in living words a personal testimony to the cardinal facts of the Gospel—the Ministry, the Death and the Resurrection of Our Lord. It was only in the course of time, and under the influence of external circumstances, that they committed their testimony, or any part of it, to writing. Their peculiar duty was to preach. That they did, in fact, perform a mission for all ages in perpetuating the tidings which they delivered was due, not to any conscious design which they formed, nor to any definite command which they received, but to that mysterious power ... The repeated experience of many ages has even yet hardly sufficed to show that a permanent record of His words and deeds, open to all, must co-exist with the living body of the Church, if that is to continue in pure and healthy vigour.’<sup>1</sup>

And again:

The Apostles, when they speak, claim to speak with Divine authority, but they nowhere profess to give in writing a system of Christian Doctrine. Gospels and Epistles, with the exception, perhaps of the writings of St John, were called out by special circumstances. There is no trace of any designed connection between the separate books, except in the case of the Gospel of St Luke and the Acts (also by St Luke), still less of any outward unity or completeness in the entire

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<sup>1</sup> *The Bible in the Church*, pp. 53 ff.

collection. On the contrary, it is not unlikely that some Epistles of St Paul have been lost, and though, in point of fact, the books which remain do combine to form a perfect whole, yet the completeness is due not to any conscious cooperation of their authors, but to the will of Him by whose power they wrote and wrought.

What a contrast there is, in these clear words of the great scholar, to the common delusion that seems to have seized some minds, that the Bible, complete and bound, dropped down among the Christians from Heaven after the day of Pentecost; or, at the least, the Twelve Apostles sat down together in an upper room, pens in hand, and wrote off at a sitting all the Books of the New Testament!

And allow me to give one more short quotation to drive home the point I am labouring at, that the written New Testament could never have been intended as the only means of preaching Salvation. "It was some considerable time after Our Lord's Ascension," (writes the Protestant author of *Helps to the Study of the Bible*, p. 2), "before any of the books contained in the New Testament were actually written. The first and most important work of the Apostles was to deliver a personal testimony to the chief facts of the Gospel history. Their teaching was at first oral, and it was no part of their intention to create a permanent literature." These, I consider, are valuable admissions.

4. But now, you may say, "What was the use of writing the Gospels and Epistles then at all? Did not God inspire men to write them? Are you not belittling and despising God's

Word?” No, not at all; we are simply putting it in its proper place, the place that God meant it to have; and I would add, the Catholic Church is the only body in these days which teaches infallibly that the Bible, and the whole of it, is the Word of God, and defends its inspiration, and denounces and excommunicates anyone who would dare to impugn its Divine origin and authority.

I said before, and I repeat, that the separate books of the New Testament came into being to meet special demands, in response to particular needs, and were not, nor are they now, absolutely necessary either to the preaching or the perpetuating of the Gospel of Christ.

It is easy to see how the Gospels arose. So long as the Apostles were still living, the necessity for written records of the words and actions of Our Lord was not so pressing. But when the time came for their removal from this world, it was highly expedient that some correct, authoritative, reliable account be left of Our Lord’s life by those who had known Him personally, or at least were in a position to have first-hand, uncorrupted information concerning it. And this was all the more necessary because there were being spread abroad incorrect, unfaithful, indeed altogether spurious Gospels, which were calculated to injure and ridicule the character and work of Our Divine Redeemer. St Luke distinctly declares that this was what caused him to undertake the writing of his Gospel: “For as much as *many have taken in hand* to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:1

He goes on to say that he has his information from eye-witnesses, and has come to know all particulars from the very beginning, and therefore considers it right to set them down in writing, to secure a correct and trustworthy account of Christ's life. So St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John, penned their Gospels for the use of the Church, the one supplying often what another omits, but yet none pretending to give an exhaustive or perfect account of all that Jesus Christ said and did, for if this had been attempted, St John tells us, "the whole world would not have contained the books that would be written" about it.

The Gospels, then, are incomplete, and fragmentary, giving us certainly the most important things to know about Our Saviour's earthly life, but still not telling us all we might know, or much we do know in fact now and understand better, through the teaching of the Catholic Church, which has preserved traditions handed down since the time of the Apostles, from one generation to another. These Gospels were read, as they are now among Catholics, at the gatherings of the Christians in the earliest days on the Sundays, not to set forth a scheme of doctrine that they knew already, but to animate their courage, to excite their love and devotion to Jesus Christ, and impel them to imitate the example of that Beloved Master, Whose sayings and doings were read aloud in their ears.

Well, now, what I said about the Gospels is equally true of the Epistles, which make up practically the whole of the rest of the New Testament. They were called into existence at various times to meet pressing needs and circumstances;

were addressed to particular individuals and communities in various places, and not to the Catholic Church at large. The thought furthest from the mind of the writers was that they should ever be collected into one volume, and made to do duty as a complete and all-sufficient statement of Christian faith and morals.

How did they arise? In this natural and simple way. St Peter, St Paul, and the rest went forth to various lands, preaching the Gospel, and made thousands of converts, and in each place founded a church, and left priests in charge, and a bishop sometimes (as for example St Timothy in Ephesus). Now these priests and converts had occasion many a time to consult their spiritual father and founder, like St Paul, or St Peter, or St James, on many points of doctrine or discipline, or morals; for we must not imagine at that date, when the Church was in its infancy, things were so clearly seen or understood or formulated as they are now. It was, of course, the same Faith then as always; but still there were many points on which the newly made Christians were glad to consult the Apostles who had been sent out with the unction of Jesus Christ fresh upon them, points of dogma and ritual and government and conduct which they alone could settle.

And so we find St Paul writing to the Ephesians (his converts at Ephesus), or to the Corinthians (his converts at Corinth), or to the Philippians (his converts at Philippi), and so on to the rest (14 Epistles in all). And for what reason? Either in answer to communications sent to him from them, or because he had heard from other sources that there were some things that required correction in these places.



All manner of topics are dealt with in these letters, sometimes in the most homely style. It might be to advise the converts, or to reprove them; to encourage them or instruct them; or to defend himself from false accusations. It might be, like that to Philemon, a letter about a private person as Onesimus, the slave. But whatever the Epistles deal with, it is clear as the noonday sun that they were written just at particular times to meet particular cases that occurred naturally in the course of his missionary labours, and that neither St Paul, nor any of the other Apostles, intended by these letters to set forth the whole theology or scheme of Christian salvation any more than Pope Pius the Tenth intended to do so in his Decree against the Modernists, or in his Letter on the Sanctification of the Clergy.

The thing seems plain on the face of it. Leo XIII writes to the Scotch Bishops on the Holy Scriptures, for example; or Pius the Tenth to the Eucharistic Congress in London on the Blessed Sacrament, or publishes a Decree on Frequent Communion; or, again, one of our Bishops, say, sends forth a letter condemning secret societies, or issues a Pastoral dealing with the new Marriage Laws; are we to say that these documents are intended to teach the whole way of salvation to all men? that they profess to state the whole Catholic creed? The question has only to be asked to expose its absurdity.

Yet precisely the same question may be put about the position of St Paul's Epistles. True, he was an Apostle, and consequently inspired, and his letters are the written Word of God, and therefore are a final and decisive authority on

the various points of which they treat, if properly understood; but that does not alter the fact that they nowhere claim to state the whole of Christian truth, or to be a complete guide of salvation to anyone; they already presuppose the knowledge of the Christian faith among those to whom they are addressed; they are written to believers, not to unbelievers; in one word, the Church existed and did its work before they were written, and it would still have done so, even though they had never been written at all. St Paul's letters (for we are taking his merely as a sample of all) date from the year 52 AD to 68 AD; Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven leaving His Church to evangelise the world, 33 AD; and we may confidently assert that the very last place we should expect to find a complete summary of Christian doctrine is in the Epistles of the New Testament.

There is no need to delay further on the matter. I think I have made it clear enough how the various books of the New Testament took their origin. And in so explaining the state of the case, we are not undervaluing the written Word of God, or placing it on a level inferior to what it deserves. We are simply showing the position it was meant to occupy in the economy of the Christian Church. It was written by the Church, by members (Apostles and Evangelists) of the Church; it belongs to the Church, and it is her office, therefore, to declare what it means. It is intended for instruction, meditation, spiritual reading, encouragement, devotion, and also serves as proof and testimony of the Church's doctrines and Divine authority; but as a complete and exclusive guide to Heaven in the hands of every man, this it never was and never could be.

The Bible in the Church, the Church before the Bible, the Church the Maker and Interpreter of the Bible, that is right. The Bible above the Church, the Bible independent of the Church, the Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Christians, that is wrong. The one is the Catholic position; the other the Protestant.

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## Chapter 11

**ABUNDANCE OF VERNACULAR SCRIPTURES  
BEFORE WYCLIFF**

I have said that people who could read at all in the Middle Ages could read Latin; hence there was little need for the Church to issue the Scriptures in any other language. But as a matter of fact she did in many countries put the Scriptures in the hands of her children in their own tongue.

1. We know from history that there were popular translations of the Bible and Gospels in Spanish, Italian, Danish, French, Norwegian, Polish, Bohemian and Hungarian for the Catholics of those lands before the days of printing, but we shall confine ourselves to England, so as to refute once more the common fallacy that John Wycliff was the first to place an English translation of the Scriptures in the hands of the English people in 1382.

To anyone that has investigated the real facts of the case, this fondly-cherished notion must seem truly ridiculous; it is not only absolutely false, but stupidly so, inasmuch as it admits of such easy disproof; one wonders that nowadays any lecturer or writer should have the temerity to advance it.

Now, observe I am speaking of the days before the printing-press was invented; I am speaking of England; and concerning a Church which did not, and does not, admit the

necessity of Bible-reading for salvation; and concerning an age when the production of the Scriptures was a most costly business, and far beyond the means of nearly everybody. Yet we may safely assert, and we can prove, that there were actually in existence among the people many copies of the Scriptures in the English tongue of that day.

To begin far back, we have a copy of the work of Caedmon, a monk of Whitby, in the end of the seventh century, consisting of great portions of the Bible in the common tongue.

In the next century we have the well-known translations of Venerable Bede, a monk of Jarrow, who died whilst busy with the Gospel of St. John.

In the same (eighth) century we have the copies of Eadhelm, Bishop of Sherborne; of Guthlac, a hermit near Peterborough; and of Egbert, Bishop of Holy Island; these were all in Saxon, the language understood and spoken by the Christians of that time.

Coming down a little later, we have the free translations of King Alfred the Great who was working at the Psalms when he died, and of Aelfric, Archbishop of Canterbury; as well as popular renderings of Holy Scripture like the Book of Durham, and the Rushworth Gloss and others that have survived the wreck of ages.

After the Norman conquest in 1066, Anglo-Norman or Middle-English became the language of England, and consequently the next translations of the Bible we meet with are in that tongue. There are several specimens still known,

such as the paraphrase of Orm (about 1150) and the *Salus Animae* (1050), the translations of William Shoreham and Richard Rolle, hermit of Hampole (died 1349). I say advisedly “specimens” for those that have come down to us are merely indications of a much greater number that once existed, but afterwards perished. We have proof of this in the words of Blessed Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England under Henry VIII who says: “The whole Bible long before Wycliff’s day was by virtuous and well-learned men translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness well and reverently read.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, “The clergy keep no Bibles from the laity but such translations as be either not yet approved for good, or such as be already reprov’d for naught (i.e., bad, naughty) as Wycliff’s was. For, as for old ones that were before Wycliff’s days, they remain lawful and be in some folks’ hand. I myself have seen, and can show you, Bibles, fair and old which have been known and seen by the Bishop of the Diocese, and left in laymen’s hands and women’s too, such as he knew for good and Catholic folk, that used them with soberness and devotion.”

2. But you will say, that is the witness of a Roman Catholic. Well, I shall advance Protestant testimony also.

The translators of the Authorised Version, in their “Preface,” referring to previous translations of the Scriptures into the language of the people, make the following important

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<sup>1</sup> Dialogues III

statements. After speaking of the Greek and Latin Versions, they proceed:

The godly-learned were not content to have the Scriptures in the language which themselves understood, Greek and Latin . . . but also for the behoof and edifying of the unlearned which hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and had souls to be saved as well as they, they provided translations into the Vulgar for their countrymen, insomuch that most nations under Heaven did shortly after their conversion hear Christ speaking unto them in their Mother tongue, not by the voice of their minister only but also by the written word translated.

Now, as all these nations were certainly converted by the Roman Catholic Church, for there was then no other to send missionaries to convert anybody, this is really a valuable admission. The Translators of 1611, then, after enumerating many converted nations that had the Vernacular Scriptures, come to the case of England, and include it among the others. "Much about that time," they say (1360), "even in our King Richard the Second's days, John Trevisa translated them into English, and many English Bibles in written hand are yet to be seen that divers translated, as it is very probable, in that age. . . . So that, to have the Scriptures in the mother tongue is not a quaint conceit lately taken up, either by the Lord Cromwell in England [or others] . . . but hath been thought upon, and put in practice of old, even from the first times of the conversion of any nation."



This testimony, from the Preface, (too little known) of their own Authorised Bible, ought surely to carry some weight with well disposed Protestants.

Moreover, the “Reformed” Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, says, in his preface to the Bible of 1540:

The Holy Bible was translated and read in the Saxon tongue, which at that time was our mother tongue, whereof there remaineth yet divers copies found in old Abbeys, of such antique manner of writing and speaking that few men now be able to read and understand them. And when this language waxed old and out of common use, because folks should not lack the fruit of reading, it was again translated into the newer language, whereof yet also many copies remain and be daily found.

Again, Foxe, a man that Protestants trust, says: “If histories be well examined, we shall find, both before the Conquest and after, as well before John Wycliff was born as since, the whole body of Scripture by sundry men translated into our country tongue.”

“But as of the earlier period, so of this, there are none but fragmentary remains, the ‘many copies’ which remained when Cranmer wrote in 1540 having doubtless disappeared in the vast and ruthless destruction of libraries which took place within a few years after that date.”

These last words are from the pen of Rev. J. H. Blunt, a Protestant author, in his *History of the English Bible*; and

another Anglican dignitary, Dean Hook, tells us that “long before Wycliff’s time there had been translators of Holy Writ.”

One more authority on the Protestant side, and I have done: it is Mr. Karl Pearson (Academy, August, 1885), who says: “The Catholic Church has quite enough to answer for, but in the 15<sup>th</sup> century it certainly did not hold back the Bible from the folk; and it gave them in the vernacular (i.e. their own tongue) a long series of devotional works which for language and religious sentiment have never been surpassed. Indeed, we are inclined to think it made a mistake in allowing the masses such ready access to the Bible. It ought to have recognised the Bible once for all as a work absolutely unintelligible without a long course of historical study, and, so far as it was supposed to be inspired, very dangerous in the hands of the ignorant.”

We do not know what Mr. Pearson’s religious standpoint may have been, but he goes too far in blaming the Church for throwing the Bible open to the people in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, or indeed in any previous age. No evil results whatsoever followed the reading of that precious volume in any century preceding the 16<sup>th</sup>, because the people had the Catholic Church to lead them and guide them and teach them the meaning of it. It was only when the principle of “Private judgment” was proclaimed that the Book became “dangerous” and “unintelligible,” as it is still to the multitudes who will not receive the true interpretation of it at the hands of the Catholic Church, and who are about as competent

to understand and explain it by themselves as they are to explain or prophesy the movements of the heavenly bodies.

3. There is no need, it seems to me, to waste further time and space in accumulating proofs that the Bible was known, read and distributed by the Catholic Church in the common language of the people in all countries from the 7<sup>th</sup> down to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. I have paid more attention to the case of England because of the popularity of the myth about Wycliff having been the first to translate it, and to enable the poor blinded Papists, for the first time in their experience, to behold the Figure of the Christ of the Gospels in 1382. Such a grotesque notion can only be due either to ignorance or concealment of the now well-known facts of history. One would fain hope that, in this age of enlightenment and study, no one valuing his scholarship will so far imperil it as to attempt to revive the silly fable.

But supposing it were as true as it is false, that John Wycliff was the first to publish the Bible in English, how in the name of reason can it be true at the same time that Luther, more than 100 years afterwards, discovered it? Really, people must decide which story they are going to tell, for the one is the direct contradictory of the other. Wycliff or Luther, let it be; but Wycliff and Luther together—that is impossible.

4. Now, it may seem somewhat irrelevant to our present subject, which is simply “where we got the Bible,” to wander off to foreign lands and see how matters stood there at the date at which we have now arrived; but I should not like to pass from this part of the enquiry without setting down a few facts which are generally unknown to our separated

brethren, as to the existence of plenty of Bibles in those very countries which they think were, and of course still are, plunged in the depths of superstition, illiteracy and degradation. They flatter themselves with the idea that it was the knowledge of the Scriptures which produced the blessed Reformation the world over; and will tell you that it was all because the Holy Book was sealed and locked and hidden away from the benighted Papists in Continental countries that the glorious light of the Reformation never broke, and has not yet broken, upon them.

There are, however, unfortunately for them, facts at hand, facts unquestioned, which explode this pious notion. The facts are these:

1. As was shown long ago in the *Dublin Review* (October, 1837), "it was almost solely in those countries which have remained constant to the Catholic Faith that popular versions of the Bible had been published; while it was precisely in those kingdoms, England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, where Protestantism acquired an early and has maintained a permanent ascendancy, that no printed Bible existed when they embraced Protestantism. Holland alone and a few cities in Germany were in possession of the Bible when they adopted the Reformed Creed."

Is it really the case then, you ask with open eyes, that these Latin countries allowed the Bible to be read and translated and printed before Luther? Listen and judge for yourself what rubbish is crammed into people's heads.

2. Luther's first Bible (or what pretended to be the Bible, for he had amputated some of its members) came out in 1520. Now, will you believe it, there were exactly 104 editions of the Bible in Latin before that date; there were 9 before the birth of Luther in the German language, and there were 27 in German before ever his own saw the light of day. Many of these were to be seen at the Caxton Exhibition in London, 1877; and seeing is believing.

In Italy there were more than 40 editions of the Bible before the first Protestant version appeared, beginning at Venice in 1471; and 25 of these were in the Italian language before 1500, with the express permission of Rome.

In France there were 18 editions before 1547, the first appearing in 1478.

Spain began to publish editions in the same year, and issued Bibles with the full approval of the Spanish Inquisition (of course one can hardly expect Protestants to believe this).

In Hungary by the year 1456, in Bohemia by the year 1478, in Flanders before 1500, and in other lands groaning under the yoke of Rome, we know that editions of the Sacred Scriptures had been given to the people.

“In all (to quote from M.C.L.'s useful pamphlet on the subject) 626 editions of the Bible, in which 198 were in the language of the laity, had issued from the press, with the sanction and at the instance of the Church,

in the countries where she reigned supreme, before the first Protestant version of the Scriptures was sent forth into the world.”

England was perhaps worse off than any country at the time of the Reformation in the matter of vernacular versions of the Bible; many Catholic kingdoms abroad had far surpassed her in making known the Sacred Word. Yet these lands remained Catholic; England turned Protestant; what, then, becomes of the pathetic delusion of “Evangelical” Christians that an acquaintance with the open Bible in our own tongue must necessarily prove fatal to Catholicism? The simple truth of course is just this, that if knowledge of the Scriptures should of itself make people Protestants, then the Italian and French and Spanish and Hungarian and Belgian and Portuguese nations should all have embraced Protestantism, which up to the moment of writing they have declined to do. I am afraid there is something wrong with the theory, for it is in woeful contradiction to plain facts, which may be learned by all who care to take the trouble to read and study for themselves.

5. Now, before passing on to another part of the subject, I should like you to pause for a moment with the brief historical review fresh in your memory; and I would simply ask this: How can anyone living in the light of modern education and history cling any longer to the fantastic idea that Rome hates the Bible—that she has done her worst to destroy it—that she conceals it from her people lest it

should enlighten their blindness, and that the Holy Book, after lying for many long dark ages in the dungeons and lumber rooms of Popery, was at last exhumed and dragged into the light of day by the great and glorious discoverer, Martin Luther?

O foolish Scotchmen, who hath bewitched you? Do you not see that Rome could have easily destroyed it if she had been so disposed during all those centuries that elapsed between its formation into one volume in 397 AD, and the sixteenth century? It was absolutely, exclusively in her power to do with it as she pleased, for Rome reigned supreme. What more simple than to order her priests and monks and Inquisitors to search out every copy and reduce it to ashes? But did she do this? We have seen that she preserved it and multiplied it. She saved it from utter destruction at the hands of infidels and barbarians and pagan tribes that burned everything Christian they could come across; she saved it and guarded it from total extinction by her care and loving watchfulness; she, and she alone. There was no one else to do it; she only was sent by God to defend His Blessed Word. It might have perished, and would have perished, were it not that she employed her clergy to reproduce it and adorn it and multiply it, and to furnish churches and monasteries with copies of it, which all might read and learn and commit to memory, and meditate upon. Nay, she not only multiplied it in its original languages (Greek and Hebrew), which would have been intelligible and useful only to the learned few, but she put it into the hands of all her people who could read, by translating it into Latin, the universal tongue; and even for those less scholarly she

rendered it into the common languages spoken in different countries. Truly she took a curious way of showing her hatred of God's Holy Word and of destroying it.

Many senseless charges are laid at the door of the Catholic Church; but surely the accusation that, during the centuries preceding the sixteenth, she was the enemy of the Bible and of Bible reading must, to anyone who does not wilfully shut his eyes to facts, appear of all accusations the most ludicrous; and to tell the truth, it is ridiculed and laughed out of court by all serious and impartial students of the question. With far more justice, it humbly seems to me, may the charge of degrading and profaning the Sacred Scriptures be brought against those highly-financed Bible Societies which, with a recklessness that passes comprehension, scatter among savages and pagans utterly uninstructed, tons of Testaments, only to be used for making ball cartridges or wadding, for wrapping up snuff, bacon, tobacco, fruit and other goods; for papering the walls of houses; for converting into tapestry or pretty kites for children; and for other and fouler uses which it makes one ashamed to think of. True, the versions thus degraded are false and heretical, which may mitigate the horror in the eyes of Catholics; but those who thus expose them to dishonour believe them to be the real Words of Life. On their heads, then, falls the guilt of "giving that which is holy to the dogs."



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