

**PUBLICATIONS OF
THE CATHOLIC TRUTH
SOCIETY. VOL. V**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649684083

Publications of the Catholic Truth Society. Vol. V by Catholic Truth Society

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THE BIBLE AND THE REFORMATION.

BY C. F. B. ALLNATT.

THERE has long existed amongst Protestants of all denominations a wide-spread delusion, that the "glorious Reformation" in this and other countries was mainly brought about by the printing of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular, and the copious dissemination of copies of the same amongst the people. No sooner we are often told, had the laity been put in possession of "an open Bible," than they at once discovered the errors of Popery, and hastened to embrace the true Gospel preached by the Reformers.

Now history tells us a very different tale. As regards our own country, for instance,—for it is with that we are now mainly concerned,—the Presbyterian Lord MACAULAY has observed: "A King, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile Parliament, *such* were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome. The work which had been begun by *Henry*, the murderer of his wives, was continued

by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest. . . . Of those who had any important share in bringing the Reformation about, Ridley was perhaps the only person who did not consider it as *a mere political job*" (*Essay on Hallam*).

I will not now stop to inquire into the *motives*—whether political or personal—which actuated the leaders of the revolt against the Church: it will be enough to state, in the words of another non-Catholic historian, what were the chief *means* by which their revolutionary work was accomplished. On this point Mr. LECKY says: "With the exception of Zuinglius and Socinus [the founder of the Socinian sect], all the most eminent Reformers advocated *persecution*; and in nearly every country where their boasted Reformation triumphed, the result is mainly to be attributed to *coercion*." (*Hist. of Ration. in Europe*, vol. ii. p. 45). This is confirmed by HALLAM, who remarks: "Persecution is the deadly original sin of the Reformed Churches, that which cools every honest man's zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading becomes more extensive" (*Constit. Hist. of Eng.* vol. i. ch. 3).

It is perfectly true that the royal tyrants named by Macaulay, and those who aided and abetted them in their nefarious designs, endeavoured to give a religious colour and sanction to their doings by the publication of English Bibles, and by *hypocritical* exhortations to the multitude to

read the same for themselves; but it has long been a notorious fact that all these Protestant versions of the Bible literally swarmed with the grossest and most flagrant corruptions—corruptions consisting in the wilful and deliberate mistranslation of various passages of the sacred text, and all directly aimed against those doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church which the “Reformers” were most anxious to uproot. They did give the people “an open Bible,” but *what* a Bible! I will now give only the following specimens of it:—

1. We have heard a good deal of late about the “continuity” of the Anglican Establishment with the old Catholic Church of this country. The “Reformers” held no such doctrine. They taught that “the whole of Christendom had been altogether drowned in damnable idolatry for the space of eight hundred years and more” (*Hom. on Peril of Idolatry*, part iii.), and they so abhorred the very name of the “CHURCH,” that they expunged it from almost every passage of the New Testament in which it occurs, and substituted in the place of it the word “congregation!” Thus, in St. Matt. xvi. 18, instead of “On this rock I will build My Church,” Tyndall’s Bible, Cranmer’s Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops’ Bible read: “On this rock I will build My CONGREGATION!” “Tell it unto the Church” (St. Matt. xviii. 17) is in the three first of these versions corrupted into, “Tell it unto the CONGREGATION;”

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and the same heretical perversion of course occurs in Ephes. i. 22; ch. v. 23—25; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. xii. 23, and various other passages. In the first English Bible the word "Church" did not once occur! It was not until a considerable number of the English people had been deceived, betrayed, and coerced into abandoning the ancient faith, and formed what might outwardly resemble a national Church, that their Protestant rulers ventured to restore the word "Church" to the English Bible!

2. So again, wherever the word "idols," or "idolatry" occurred in the New Testament, the early Protestant translators substituted instead "*images*," and "*image-worship*"—with the intention, of course, of inducing the ignorant people to believe that all images of our Lord and the saints had been forbidden in the Word of God! Where we now read, "Little children, keep yourselves from *idols*" (1 St. John v. 21), there the "open Bibles" of the Reformation had, "Babes, keep yourselves from *images*!"

"Covetousness, which is *idolatry*" (Col. iii. 5), is, in the Bibles of 1534, 1539, 1568, turned into "covetousness, which is *worshipping of images*." "How agreeth the temple of God with *idols*" (2 Cor. vi. 16) reads, in the Bibles of 1534, 1539, 1557, 1562, "How agreeth the temple of God with *images*?"

3. Wherever Apostolic "*Traditions*" were commended in the New Testament, the word was

carefully expunged, and the word "*ordinances*" put in its place; whilst, on the other hand, the word "*traditions*" was in several instances foisted into the text (as in 1 St. Peter i. 18), where it did not occur in the original Greek, for the purpose of making the very name odious in the eyes of the ignorant Protestant multitude! St. Paul says: "Hold fast the *Traditions* ye have received of us" (2 Thess. ii. 15; iii. 6); but this did not at all suit the doctrine or conduct of Tyndall, Cranmer, and the rest; so, as I have said, they expunged the word in these texts (see also 1 Cor. xi. 2, corrected in the "Revised Version"), though they took care to retain it in those passages of the Gospels in which the *false* "*traditions*" of the Pharisees were condemned by our Lord.

Protestant writers and lecturers would have us believe that the earlier Bible of WICKLIFFE had been prohibited by the Church authorities of his time simply on account of their general hostility to the Word of God in the vernacular. Nothing could be more contrary to the truth. A better informed Protestant writer, the Rev. E. CUTTS, D.D., in a work published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, observes:—"There is a good deal of popular misapprehension about the way in which the Bible was regarded in the middle ages. Some people think that it was very little read, even by the clergy; whereas the fact is that the sermons of the mediæval preachers are more full of Scripture quotations and allu-

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sions than any sermons in these days; and the writers on other subjects are so full of Scriptural allusion, that it is evident their minds were saturated with Scriptural diction. . . . Another common error is, that the clergy were unwilling that the laity should read the Bible for themselves, and carefully kept it in an unknown tongue, that the people might not be able to read it. The truth is, that most people who could read at all could read Latin, and would certainly prefer to read the authorized Vulgate to any vernacular version. But it is also true that translations into the vernacular were made. . . . We have the authority of Sir Thomas More for saying that 'the whole Bible was, long before Wycliff's days, 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.' . . . Again, on another occasion he says: '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 (bad), as Wycliffe's was. For as for old ones that were before Wicliffe's days, they remain lawful, and be in some folk's hands'" (*Turning Points of English Church History*, pp. 200, 201).

Another Protestant writer, the late Dr. HOOK of Leeds, says: "It was not from hostility to a translated Bible, considered abstractedly, that the *conduct of Wicliff*, in translating it, was con-