

tered the columns of two issues of the Napier 'Daily Telegraph.' One of the issues emphasises the danger of hasty and general conclusions and of neglect of verification of references. The other furnishes a warning example of the perils of anonymous writing. 'Anonymity,' said Dr. Parker some years ago, 'is not modesty, though it may easily be either impudence or cowardice.' Few men can resist the temptation of saying things with a mask upon their faces that they would not dare to say with their features open to the glare of day. In the case under consideration, the masked man displays the noisiness, the blumptious assertiveness, the disregard for the religious sentiments of others, and the ignorance of his subject, which characterise so many of the communications of the worst class of the anonymous and uneducated know-all in the open columns of the secular press. He reminds us of an apt saying of an author whose name at the moment eludes our memory: 'It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles—the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out.'

Rousseau, though an infidel, was at least a man of brains. And he had little patience with those shallow pseudo-philosophers who were 'proud, positive, and dogmatising, even in their pretended scepticism, knowing everything, proving nothing.' Here is how, in part, he 'sizes them up':—

'Under pretence of being themselves the only people enlightened, they imperiously subject us to their magisterial decisions, and would fain palm upon us for the true causes of things the unintelligible systems they have erected in their own heads, whilst they overturn, destroy, and trample under foot all that man's mind reveres, snatch from the afflicted the only comfort left them in their misery, from the rich and the great the only curb that can restrain their passions; tear from the heart all remorse of vice, all hope of virtue; they still boast themselves benefactors of man ind. "Truth," they say, "is never hurtful to man." I believe that as well as they. And the same, in my opinion, is proof that what they teach is not the truth.'

One can respect the intellectual limitations that are modest. But one of the chief subliminary abominations is the ignorant man who, when he puts a mask upon his face, fancies

'He could deep mysteries unriddle
As easily as thread a needle,'

and who thinks himself licensed to play the Ingersollian buffoon on the deepest and most solemn questions in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath.

Church and Bible

Party legends live long and die hard. There are, perhaps, still some simple-minded people who believe the legend that the Bible was a sealed book until Luther accidentally 'found' it at Erfurt one fine day about the year of grace 1507! Yet the Venerable Bede tells us in his 'Ecclesiastical History' (I, v., c. 19) that 'according to the general custom' of his time (A.D. 673-735) the four Gospels were learned by heart. And a century later (in 825) the eighth Council of Toledo made the following ordinance: That 'each bishop should, at stated periods, make a regular inquiry throughout his diocese for the purpose of ascertaining' (among other things) 'whether every priest could rightly interpret the Epistles and Gospels, and whether he knew the whole of the Psalms by heart.'

In the preface to his recently published work, 'The Tradition of Scripture,' the Rev. Dr. Barry says:—

'The Middle Ages had their Bible on stone, on illuminated parchment, in stained glass. It was delivered from the lips of popular preachers, reflected in the poetry of the "Heliand," of Dante, of Fra Jacopo, expounded on the walls, gates, and pavements of innumerable churches. It was recited in monasteries day and night, quoted in Parliaments, rhymed and sung by minstrels, so that never perhaps was it more universally known.'

'The oldest version in a Western vernacular, though not complete, was the Maeso-Gothic of Ulfilas (311-381). No other goes back beyond the eighth century. The earliest appear to be Old English—St. Aldhelm and King Alfred translated the Psalter; Venerable Bede the Gospel of St. John; Aelfric the Pentateuch and various books of the Old Testament. The Gospels were frequently rendered into English. It is certain that many portions of Scripture were read in the different French dialects long before the complete translations under St. Louis IX. (about 1200) and Charles V. (died 1380). Guyars des Moulins gave a famous rendering of the Vulgate historical books between 1291-1297. Germany, like France and England, had its rhyming paraphrases; but its version of the Gospels was, it would appear, ancient, perhaps of ninth century; while Notker (died 1022) and Abbot William (died 1085) were responsible for the Psalms. Between 1200-1500 many partial German versions saw the light. Danes, Swedes, Norwegians had their own texts more or less complete. SS. Cyril and Methodius founded the Slavic Bible in the ninth century. To Alfonso V. in 1270 the Spanish version is attributed by Mariana 'the first printed Spanish Bible (1478) follows a rendering of Bonifaz Ferrer (died 1417), brother of St. Vincent. The earliest Italian translation, according to Sixtus of Siena, came from the hand of Jacobus de Voragine, author of the "Golden Legend," and Archbishop of Genoa (died 1298); the printed copy, edited by Malermi at Venice, 1471, went through nine impressions before 1500. The Hungarians received Psalms, Sunday Gospels and Epistles soon after their conversion; the whole Bible was done into Magyar by L. Bathyani (died 1456). St. Hedwiga, Queen of Poland, set on foot a Polish translation towards the end of the thirteenth century, parts of which still remain. In the fifteenth century Bohemian copies of the Scripture were plentiful. After printing was invented, the first German Bible came out in 1462; twenty editions of the whole followed down to 1520 in Upper Germany, four in Lower. Ninety Plenaria (Sunday Gospels and Epistles), fourteen Psalters, two Apocalypses must be added.'

Multitudes of these treasures of piety were burned or desecrated in the wholesale destruction of libraries that accompanied the Reformation both in England and on the Continent. Some were consigned to the flames as they stood, others helped to fire bakers' ovens, to scour candlesticks, to clean boots, to wrap grocers' butchers', and soap-sellers' parcels. Fuller, the noted Protestant wit, historian, and divine, says in his 'Church History' (l. vi, p. 335): 'The Holy Scriptures themselves, much as the Gospellers pretended to regard them, underwent the fate of the rest. If a book had a cross on it, it was condemned for Popery, and those with lines and figures were interpreted the black art, and destroyed for conjuring.'

During the recent controversy in Wellington, we placed our Church-Council critics with their backs against the wall as regards the foundation of 'their belief in the Scripture as their 'only rule of faith and conduct.' In his 'Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption,' Mr. Mallock, the well-known non-Catholic writer, insists also (p. 76) that until our Reformed friends 'can tell us definitely, coherently, and fully on what foundation their belief and their interpretations of the Bible rest, all the emphasis they expend in asserting their rival doctrines is as meaningless as the crowing of cocks in a farmyard.' Of the Catholic position, the same writer (p. 79) says: 'Slowly, and yet inevitably, the centuries have wrought their changes. That old foundation, the Bible, has ceased, in itself, to be a foundation any longer. . . It will support no structure, unless something outside itself shall be found which will support it. That something the Roman Church supplied; and now Reformed Christendom is beginning at last to find that, for that something which it rejected and still rejects, it is necessary to find a substitute.'

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