

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the N.Z. TABLET by GHIMEL.)

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.—II.

To continue our record of some of the facts which prove beyond all question that, in the period we are considering (the period just before the dazzling light of the Reformation broke in on the world), the Popes did not take very stringent measures to see that the Bible remained a closed book to the people.

Let me begin by quoting from the Anglican Dean Maitland, who in his day was recognised as a first-class historian:—"Before Luther was born, the Bible had been printed in Rome; and the printers had had the assurance to memorialise his Holiness, praying that he would help them off with some copies. It had been printed, too, at Naples, Florence, and Piacenza; and Venice alone had furnished eleven editions. No doubt we shall be within the truth if we were to say that beside the multitude of manuscript copies, not yet fallen into disuse, the press had issued fifty different editions of the whole Latin Bible, to say nothing of Psalters, New Testaments, or other parts, and yet more than twenty years after, we find a young man who had received "a very liberal education," who "had made great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach and Erfurt," and who, nevertheless, did not know what a Bible was, simply because "the Bible was unknown in those days." (*Dark Ages*, p. 506.)

Let us amplify this statement a little:

(1) *Italy*. Before Luther unearthed the Bible, Venice had printed thirty-one editions of the Scriptures in Latin, and of course an Italian who could read at all was familiar with Latin. We may remark, too, that publishers were not likely to print so many editions unless they were needed.

An Italian Bible was printed at Rome and at Venice in 1471, reprinted at Venice in 1477, was edited thirteen times before Luther issued his German translation, and forty times before a Protestant version in Italian was printed. What were the Popes doing?

The first five books of the Bible were printed in Hebrew in 1482, and this was the first time the Scriptures were ever printed in Hebrew. The whole of the Old Testament was printed in Hebrew at Soncino in 1488, and again this was the first edition.

(2) *France*. The Latin Bible was edited, according to Coppinger, the Protestant historian, no less than ninety-two times at Paris and Lyons alone before Luther published his Bible.

A translation in French of the New Testament was published in 1477 at Lyons; a second translation followed, and went through several editions before 1534, and still a third translation came from Paris (1523) and Antwerp (1530).

(3) *Spain*. In the home of the Inquisition, where, we are so often assured, a layman dare not become learned, the whole Bible was translated into Spanish as early as 1405, printed at Valencia in 1478, and reprinted in 1515. A translation in Spanish of the Gospels and Epistles came out about 1513. A Cardinal, the illustrious Ximenes, had the Scriptures printed in parallel columns in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Chaldee (1514-1517). Again this was the first occasion on which the Bible was edited in this form. The second occasion, strangely enough, was due to Spaniards (Antwerp, 1569-1572). About a century later (1637) the first English edition of this description came out.

(4) *Other Countries*. A translation in Flemish was printed at Cologne in 1475, and rapidly passed through seven editions. Another translation in the same language of the New Testament appeared at Delft in 1524, and it, too, ran through several editions in a short time. Cracow saw an edition in Slavonic in 1478-1479, and two translations in Polish-Russian appeared in 1517 and 1525 respectively.

So far we have spoken only of the printed editions of the Bible in Latin, the ordinary language of communication, and in the vernacular. But let us not forget that for centuries monks and nuns had made it their serious business in life to multiply by transcription the whole or parts of the Scriptures. Archbishop Carr, from whom I have quoted most of these facts, thinks that there must have been some 300,000 copies of the Bible in Latin and other languages, when Luther stumbled across that forlorn copy of the Bible at Erfurt.

To conclude, Karl Pearson, a bitter opponent of the Church, writes: "The Catholic Church has quite enough to answer for . . . but in the fifteenth century it certainly did not hold back the Bible from the folk; and it gave them in the vernacular 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" (*Academy*, Aug. 7, 1886).

RHEUMO CURES RHEUMATISM!

'Uric acid poisoning' is another term for Gout, Lumbago, Sciatica, and Rheumatism. Therefore the only way to effect a permanent cure is to take an internal remedy which will eliminate the excess poisonous acid and will do it quickly. External treatment cannot do this, and it is not necessary to resort to salts with foreign names. RHEUMO has cured thousands of your fellow-countrymen of the tortures of Rheumatism. Mrs. E. Mowat, of Gore, writes:—"Having suffered for over twenty years with Rheumatism and Sciatica, I tried many cures but did not derive much benefit from them. I was advised to try RHEUMO and can recommend it to anyone as it is the only thing that has done me good. A single dose will give relief. RHEUMO eradicates the excess uric acid, and hence it cures, because it removes the cause of the disease. It reaches the innermost recesses of the swollen muscles and joints, reduces the pain and inflammation and thus effects a cure. 2/6 and 4/6—chemist or store."

Timaru Readers!

We beg to advise residents of Timaru that we have opened a branch in that town.

We are stocking a large range of Travelling Requisites and Fancy Leather Goods in our usual high quality.

In Saddlery, Harness, and Horse Covers, we can offer you an excellent selection at low prices.

Triggs & Denton

89 Manchester Street : Christchurch
And at - Stafford Street, Timaru

JUGS AND BASINS

Are about the most useful articles in a kitchen. We have many hundreds of these to select from, either in sets or singles, and at low prices, too.

SMITH & LAING'S, INVERCARGILL.
—'The Store that Serves You Best.'—

Place your next order for Pictures, Picture Frames, and Artists' Materials with

McCORMICK & PUGH, 681 Colombo Street, CHRISTCHURCH