

have riddled again and again. Let us briefly consider the Knox Church minister's statement in detail. With regard to the alleged prevalence of immorality prior to the Reformation, we remark—(1) That Protestants only injure their cause by *exaggerating*, as Mr. Davies does, the evils that had previously existed, seeing that, as we shall in a moment show, the Reformers are unanimous in their testimony as to the *subsequent* deterioration in the morals of the people—Luther often remarking 'that the last state of things was very much worse than the first.' So that the more darkly controversialists paint the pre-Reformation period the blacker the post-Reformation picture becomes. And (2) Unless Mr. Davies can show that the Church sanctioned immorality, and that the people, in their immorality, were acting in accordance with the doctrine and teaching they received, he proves nothing as against the Church. If, when he asserts that 'the Christian Church had divorced morality from religion,' Mr. Davies means that the Church actually and formally *approved* immorality, the statement simply is not true. If Mr. Davies only means that the people were immoral in spite of, and in opposition to, the teaching of the Church, then his quoted statement is a further example of his careless inaccuracy in expression, and—it is pointless.

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In regard to the statement that 'the Reformation restored the Bible to the people,' we have only to say that never was there a fable more utterly groundless nor more easily exposed. Before Luther's pretended discovery of the Bible, the Catholic Church had printed *over 100 editions* of the Latin Bible, which means many thousands of copies; and it is to be remembered that in those days all who could read, read Latin, and even preferred to read a Latin Bible rather than one in their own language. In *German* there were 27 editions before Luther's Bible appeared. In *Italian* there were over 40 editions of the Bible before the first Protestant edition appeared. There were *two in Spain* by 1515. In *French* there were 18 editions by 1547; the first Protestant version appearing in 1535. As to *England*, Sir Thomas More, referring to a supposed law forbidding any English version of the Bible, says that it is unnecessary to defend the law, 'for there is none such, indeed. . . For you shall understand that . . . the whole Bible was long before Wycliffe's days by virtuous and well learned men translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people and with devotion and soberness well and reverently read.' (More's *Dialogue*; ap. Gasquet, *Evolution of the Reformation*, p. 209).

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Out of a mass of authorities available we quote the following—all non-Catholics—who literally pole-axe the musty legend that the Reformation 'restored' the Bible to the people:—1. The Protestant *Church Times*, July 26, 1878, says: 'This catalogue (of Bibles in the Caxton Exhibition at South Kensington, 1877) will be very useful for one thing at any rate, as *disproving the popular lie about Luther finding the Bible* for the first time at Erfurt, about 1507. Not only are there very many editions of the Latin Vulgate (*i.e.*, the Bible in Latin, the very thing Luther is pretended to have discovered), but there are actually *nine German editions of the Bible* in the Caxton Exhibition earlier than 1483, the year of Luther's birth, and at least three more before the end of the century.' 2. The *Quarterly Review* (October, 1879) says: 'The notion that people in the middle ages did not read their Bibles is probably exploded, except among the more ignorant of controversialists. . . The notion is not simply a mistake, it is one of the most ludicrous and grotesque blunders.' 3. Dr. Maitland, another Protestant, says: 'The writings of the Dark Ages (*i.e.*, the middle ages) are, if I may use the expression, made of the Scriptures. I do not merely mean that the writers constantly quoted the Scriptures, and appealed to them as authorities on all occasions—though they did this, and it is a strong proof of their familiarity with them—but I mean that they thought and spoke and wrote the words, the thoughts, and phrases of the Bible, and that they did this constantly and habitually as the natural mode of expressing themselves. They did it, too, not exclusively in theological or ecclesiastical matters, but in histories, biographies, familiar letters, legal instruments, and documents of every description' (*Dark Ages*, No. XXVII.). 4. Dean Hook, an unimpeachable Anglican witness, declares: 'It was not from hostility to a translated Bible, considered abstractedly, that the conduct of Wycliffe, in translating it, was condemned. Long before his time there had been translators of Holy Writ' (*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, Vol. III., p. 83). 5. And Mr. Karl Pearson, whom no one has charged with having Catholic leanings, bears this emphatic testimony: '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*, August 7, 1886). Thus—out of the mouths of non-Catholic authorities—is effectually disposed of this pious figment that the Catholic Church throughout whole centuries had kept the Bible away from the people, and that the blessed Reformation had 'restored' it.

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Equally baseless, and equally discredited, is the venerable myth that the Reformation by 'restoring' the Word of God 'purified the land.' Here again our only embarrassment is the multiplicity of witnesses who might be called in support of our contention, and we will have to be content with making a selection. To begin with, the testimony of the Reformers themselves, over and over again repeated, is in flat contradiction to the Knox Church minister's statement. 'Everything is reversed,' laments Luther; 'the world grows every day the worse for this teaching; and the misery of it is, that men are *nowadays more covetous, more hard-hearted, more corrupt, more licentious, and more wicked, than of old under the papacy*' (quoted in Döllinger's *Die Reformation*, Vol. I., p. 297). 'Our evangelicals,' he declares, 'are now sevenfold more wicked than they were before. In proportion as we hear the Gospel, we steal, lie, cheat, gorge, and commit every crime. If one devil has been driven out of us, seven worse ones have taken their place' (*Ibid* p. 285). 'Sometimes,' he adds, 'this makes me so impatient that I often wish these hogs were still under the tyranny of the Pope. For it is impossible that these Gomorrah people should be ruled in the peace of the Gospel. All vices have become so common that they are no longer reputed such.' But it may be said that this is but the rhetorical exaggeration to which Luther's vehement temperament led him. Well, 'the mild Melancthon,' as his admirers call him, was not given to the use of strong words. Yet this is his statement: 'The morals of the people, all that they do and all that they neglect to do, are becoming every day worse. Gluttony, debauchery, licentiousness, wantonness are gaining the upper hand more and more among the people, and in one word every one does just as he pleases' (quoted in Döllinger's *Die Reformation*, Vol. I., p. 385.) 'The Elbe,' he declares, 'with all its waters, could not furnish tears enough to weep over the miseries of the distracted Reformation' (*Epist.*, lib. II., Ep. 202). Calvin very unwillingly makes a similar acknowledgment. Writing to Melancthon, he says: 'It is of great importance that the divisions which subsist among us should not be known in future ages; for nothing can be more ridiculous than that we who have been compelled to make a separation from the whole world should have agreed so ill amongst ourselves from the beginning of the Reformation' (*Calvin to Melancthon*, Epist. 141). So far from the religious dissensions of the Reformed diminishing as time went on, the very reverse was the case, as is testified not only by contemporary writers, but also by such unexceptionable Protestant historians as Ranke, Hallam, etc. The latter writes: 'Thus, in the second period of the Reformation, those ominous symptoms which had appeared in its earlier stage, *disunion, virulence, bigotry, intolerance*, far from yielding to any benignant influence, grew more *inveterate and incurable*' (*History of Literature of Europe*, Part II., ch. II., s. 29). And as a last and later testimony we quote the *Edinburgh Review* of October, 1880: 'The land which was the cradle of the Reformation has become the grave of the Reformed faith. . . . All comparatively recent works on Germany as well as all personal observation tell the same tale. Denial of every tenet of the Protestant faith among the thinking classes, and indifference in the masses, are the positive and negative agencies beneath which the Church of Luther and Melancthon has succumbed. . . . In contiguous parishes of Catholic and Protestant populations, one invariable distinction has long been patent to all ages and conclusions. *The path to the Catholic Church is trodden bare, that to the Protestant Church is rank with grasses and weeds to the very door*' (pp. 530, 539). So far from having 'purified the land,' the Reformation, by introducing the principle of private judgment, laid the foundation for ever-increasing disunion and disintegration; and its ultimate fruits, in a natural and logical descending scale, are now seen to be: divisions, sects, 'higher criticism,' rationalism, agnosticism, infidelity.

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Our material has again over-run our available space, and we must conclude. We desire, so far as Mr. Davies's actions will permit us, to refer to him with respect and

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