



**PLAIN TRUTH**  
**VINDICATED AND ASSERTED;**

THE FALLACY OF MAN-MADE RULES OF FAITH DETECTED,  
AND THE FAITH OF CHRIST ALONE  
MAINTAINED AND EXALTED.

In divers reflections on a Book entitled "The End of Religious Controversy," (alleged to be published by "The Rev. J. M.—D. D —F. S. A.") given forth in order to manifest the craftiness thereof, for the sake of the simple-hearted, if haply they might come to a thorough conviction, that pure Religion can only stand in sincerity and truth, and not in sophistry nor the craftiness of man's wisdom.

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LIKewise,

**A DEFENCE OF THE ALBIGENSES,**  
WITH A REMARK UPON  
**GRIER'S REPLY,**

And an Appeal to Protestants and Dissenters, to remind them to examine whether they are reformed indeed, so as to shine as lights in the world; or whether they have been as stumbling-blocks, and an offence in the way of the weak.

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WRITTEN BY THOMAS GOOUCH,

An unworthy Advocate of the Reformation, though an hearty well-wisher of his fellow-countrymen.

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."—Exod. xxiii.—2.

The Ancient and Honourable, he is the Head, and the Prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail; for the leaders of this people cause them to err: and they that are led of them are destroyed.—Isaiah ix.—15. 16. And there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err.—xxx.—28.

"But after the way which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things written in the Law and the Prophets."—Acts xxiv.—14.

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## PREFACE.

**T**HE following work affords a striking instance, to prove, that we may often have to adventure upon those things to which we have the greatest aversion, and even the least apparent qualification; seeing that I cannot fully set forth the reluctance I feel to controversy, or any thing like contending about religious tenets, or even to interfere with the ceremonies of any people whatsoever, and that for divers reasons; but especially, because it looks somewhat like trifling with precious time, which should rather be employed with reference to everlasting concerns, even to be exercised in vital experimental religion or godliness, which deeply concerns all people (of what profession soever) to be exercised to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men; which should bring the mind into stayedness and stability, as in Isaiah 26, which saith, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee, &c."

But alas! how different is that mind which only dotes after the signs and ceremonies, of a forced artificial profession, and may be influenced therein by exterior objects or motives; nay, even by the threats or promises of self-seeking men, with their curious metaphysical subtilities; such a state is deplorable indeed, and it matters little what their profession may be, while they are only exercised in external observations, or bodily exercise, which profiteth little—see 1 Tim. 4—8.

Some who may cast even a passing glance on the following pages, would be likely to query, first, why should such a poor, silly Rustic as me, attempt to publish a sentiment on the works of Doctor Milner, who is so highly exalted and extolled; seeing the generality of people are disposed to run with the multitude, or fall prostrate to whatsoever is most highly esteemed of men; nay even to elude or deride any inquiry that calls them to look beyond the appearance to the reality of things?

And, secondly, they may query, seeing I have noticed the work at all, why did I not do it sooner?—To which I would answer, that I had not even heard of the book for a considerable time after it had been published, since which, I have often observed it to be referred to by his admirers, even as an unerring standard to determine



points of controversy; and when I went to look for the work, I got the 2d edition, (which the reader may take notice is that to which I refer throughout;) yet I may acknowledge, that I did defer this publication somewhat longer than I need, looking for a more likely time for solid reflection than that wherein it had been written, lest any should think I was influenced by motives of policy, seeing the public mind appeared then in considerable fermentation; yet I did not withhold it quarter of the time J. M. mentions having deferred his, which he saith was 15 years after it had been written.

And as to the other question, why should I meddle with it in any wise? I need only answer, is there not a cause? Yea, seeing that great man, who hath many admirers, lifting up himself against the glory, efficacy, and purity of the gospel day; even to subvert the souls of the simple-hearted, (as I may prove in its place,) is it any marvel then, if even the meanest part of the creation of God should cry out against such arrogance and deceit, (seeing many wise and prudent ones of this world so much of a piece therewith) howbeit I know not but he may think himself a true man, but wherein would that make the case the less desperate? that I may say, when I read the work, my spirit was stirred within me; not so much for an answer (seeing the very glaring contradictions and barefaced fallacy contained therein, should be a sufficient refutation of the whole, unless men wilfully close their eyes) nay, but for the subtilty wherein it is lapped up, calculated to beguile and spoil the simple, wherein he labours to cause them to stumble and fall, to rise no more.

Wherefore thought I, what a gloomy omen would it cast into the signs of the times, if none should be found to answer such a work (even though it might be but in one honest page) lest it should hang as a judgment over the nation, seeing the currency his consequence attaches thereto and being on sale in the principal towns of Great Britain and Ireland; yet I know not but it may have been fully answered, although I have only met with that written by Richard Grier, who is esteemed as a Protestant divine (as noticed by J. M. in this edition); which answer, when I read it, seemed enough to make the heart sick; to observe such a mighty able disputant, that might be called a man of renown in the field of controversy; yet shamefully turning aside, or passing over the weightiest part of the matter, and leaving that which seemed the sum and substance thereof unanswered (as I may further notice in its place) even while he shewed forth great art and skill, in reasoning and disputation on questions of

their own general disagreement; on which he could meet J. M. on his own ground, which so far might do in its place. Yet while J. M. holds forth a challenge, to prove his own priesthood and their adherents, to be exclusively, the only true church in the whole world, and forges out marks of his own devising, which he sets forth as a conclusive demonstration to prove his assertion; on which marks, though most foreign from scripture proofs, Grier seems to travel with him, as if both would agree together to entangle their readers in the mazes of their metaphysical subtilities, with the endless jarrings and contradictions of what they call the fathers, &c.; without ever coming home to the marks by which our Saviour and his Apostles chargeth us to know true men by, even that they should be new creatures, walking in the spirit and bringing forth the fruits thereof, according to John 3d, Rom. 8. Gal. 5. and Gal. 6—15—16, &c. and shewing also, that the false ones should be inwardly ravenous with pride and covetousness, coming in sheep's clothing, who love the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in public places, and to be called of men Rabbi, or master, and so love to have the preeminence, as we may read in Mat. 7—15. and Chap. 23—6. Mark 12—38—39—40. Luke 11—43. 3 John 9th.

All which marks of the false ones, Grier seems to pass over, like J. Milner, while they argue upon the marks of their own devising, even of their own favourite superstitions, as if they should agree together to cloak up that part which their souls lusteth after, even their gain and love of preeminence, while they display a great appearance of zeal in contending for rules, orders, and institutions (which God never appointed for the heirs of the gospel) as if they desired to befool and beguile the simple, even to keep the world wondering after their own order.

And seeing that such is the rage of the present day, that all must down before the approved rabbies of the times, inasmuch that they would not allow, that such plain working unlearned men as the ancient Prophets and Apostles, should have any testimony to bear to the power and efficacy of the Gospel God our Saviour, according to their own living experience, unless they had been brought up at the feet of their great learned Doctors, and acknowledge them as the very breath of their nostrils; I say, seeing that it is even so, that now, in that sense, all the world wonders after the beast, as sure as in Rev. 13th, even saying in effect, who is like unto the beast, or able to make war with him? to whom is ascribed the

key of knowledge, even the knowledge of the great power of God, to whom all give heed from the least to the greatest, though his name and number is that of a man, who taketh away the key of knowledge, whose life is abroad in outside things, and neither entereth in himself, nor suffereth them that would to enter in. Is not that the creature that exalteth itself above the creator, even to the opening of the mouth in blasphemy against God and his tabernacle, and against them that sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus? who saith of his people, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" 2 Cor. 6—16. but now the effect of such great and precious promises have been set at naught, by all of every profession whatsoever, that set up man's succession, dominion, seat or authority, as God, to rule in his temple, by what name or authority soever, whither by usurping a pretended line of succession from the Apostles, or by setting up university or other orders and degrees of man-made faith and ministry, of the man of sin; but Christ is the author and finisher of the true faith, which stands in the power of God, and gives the victory over to sin, self, and the works of the Devil; but that faith which stands in the traditions doctrines and commandments of men, gives no victory over sin or corruption, but rather "corrupteth from the simplicity which is in Christ" according to Col. 2—8 and 2 Cor. 11—3. so the faith which men prescribe, is so far from giving victory over the corruptions which are in the world through lust, that it rather corrupteth from the simplicity which is in Christ; yet is not this what all the world wonders after? and have not all Nations drank of the cup of the deceit thereof? even as J. M. doth assert, that no better fate should await the heirs of the gospel, than to be brought into bondage to such rabbies as himself, nay, nor even allow the Lord to speak to his creatures through any medium beside themselves, even to the world's end.

I say then; that such reasons as the above, causeth me to cry out of violence; yea even of violence done to the power and simplicity of the ever blessed truth; and seeing that such violence is held forth publicly, and eagerly promulgated, and the people love to have it so, why then should I altogether withhold my mite of bemoaning, because of these things, but even to assert (as I believe) that the Lord hath ordained plentiful means of salvation and redemption, even for us, who are called laicks and rustics, though we should not know a Pope, Prelate, or Doctor on earth; and seeing that such have made a mighty



bluster in the world, in order to scare all under their dominion from thinking for themselves, and trusting the Lord alone; who should hinder me therefore, to call on my fellow rustics, to assert our privileges, freely offered to us in the gospel, and therein so to mind our calling, as to beware of slighting or despising the mercies of God, by ascribing unto man (or his learning, rudiments, or traditions) any part of that redemption which comes by Jesus Christ alone; yet in what I here set forth, I am no man's copy, nor have I taken any man's line made ready to my hand, but commend it to the conscience of the simple-hearted, though not to excite curious speculation in any wise.

And although I have nothing to boast of, but one self-evident sense of my meanness, nothingness, and manifold infirmities, (perhaps the meanest that ever undertook so formidable a task,) which makes me conscious that I shall not do justice to the undertaking; howbeit I may acknowledge, that if I had kept my place and habitation in the power and simplicity of the truth, I might say even in my small measure, that God is still choosing the weak and foolish things of this world, to confound the wise, and to bring to naught things that are mighty, even for the magnifying of His own power, and that no flesh should glory; but I feel that the following lines fall sadly short in that behalf; yea, even for want of that thorough purity, which alone is sufficient for such things; and moreover, I regret, that it cannot comport with the weight and solemnity which should clothe a religious subject, for this reason also, even because of the gross carnality of that spirit with which I have to contend, which cries up carnal ceremonies, and therefore, must sometimes be reasoned with in that circle wherein they are comprehended, yea, and must often be met in language very revolting to human nature to have to express, in order to do justice to the subject, that so they may be left without excuse.

And thus, for divers reasons which I shall not now enumerate, this undertaking appears to me so formidable, that I enter on it with feelings of dismay; yet not in any wise because I seem as ignorant of the rules and method of controversy, as I am of languages, or even the rudiments of grammar; nay, but that is rather the very reason why I should make this attempt; even because, (while I am far from undervaluing learning in its place,) I know right well, that if I was what I should be to God word, He would enable me to write as I ought to do, even as a testimony against such as despise the unspeakable gift of

His good spirit, and revile all that make profession thereof, in order to exalt themselves.

Yet, I am thereby utterly proscribed by J. M. and all his priesthood, as may be seen throughout his volume; and I have likewise been witness to their discussions, wherein the priests did protest against joining in any discussion in which a layman (as they call them) was allowed to meddle, or even express a sentiment; which anti-christian conclusion was agreed to by men of other professions also, even while they had the assurance to contend for liberty of conscience in the face of the world, as if they concluded that a layman should have no conscience, and of course, should have no such liberty or privilege; and therefore, the following pages are mainly designed to assert and contend for that gospel privilege, against which priestcraft hath waged war these many ages; I say even to assert, that true religion is a matter of conscience, between God and the soul rather than of learning, sophistry, signs, or ceremonies, or the commandments of men; this I assert under manifold discouragements, being only sustained by a consciousness of unfeigned good will to men.

And moreover, it behoves me to endeavour to stand clear of their blood, even though many should be sorely offended, and it cannot be otherwise with those in whom the cause of offences is not removed, and ~~we~~ will be to that mind; howbeit, I disclaim contending for religious tenets in any wise, nay, I have no narrowness, neither would I interfere with the ceremonies of any people, but rather avoid remarks thereon, while yet I deplore and expose the subtilty whereby they are defended; and therefore, if I contend with J. M. about forms and ceremonies, I only do it in order to shew the emptiness and unprofitableness thereof, against the challenge he holds forth to prove them gospel ordinances; even while I have endeavoured as much as may be, to keep within the compass of his own controversy, respecting those things whereof he glories, without making such remarks upon his people as I might have done, had I followed his example; yet to deal honestly even so far as I go, I must write things that will seem sorely offensive, even to Protestants, as well as to some of my fellow-countrymen, who desire to be in bondage to such teachers as J. M., yet I should be grieved to hurt their feelings unprofitably, and should be guilty if I were otherwise minded, for I have spent much of my lifetime amongst them, to whom also I am indebted for many a kind turn, and their poor are often brought very near to my heart; nay, I respect

and esteem many of them, and I can give them no stronger proof of my good will and hearty desire to serve them, than thus to appear as a fool or laughing-stock for their sake; it has been no small cause of heaviness and trouble, to have observed how much frothy declamation has been substituted for sober reasoning, by that foaming frothy spirit, which rules in such as are more zealous for a party than for piety, even in divers professions.

But all party or politic motives I utterly disclaim; and although his book appears such a compound of religious and political controversy, as no believer in the solemn realities of eternity should mix up together; yet the reader may take notice that I have nothing to do with politics or state affairs; nay nor have I a temptation that way, and may add, that were I influenced by the most distant politic motive, I dare not then put pen to paper on matters of such weight.

And moreover I know not even one individual that would approve of my writing in this way, and of course none beside myself are accountable for even one line of it, nay but such as would fully concur in the sentiments I express, might be most of all opposed to it, even to say, answer him not a word; others again would say, that all that can be said has been said already, even of old, and such as will not take heed thereto are deservedly left to themselves; still I should answer such, that I abhor sullen silence, and believe there are yet many, worthy to be reasoned with, even though the far greater number would deride it altogether; inso-much that I must not seek to please anybody nor even myself neither.

And they that know my manner of life, can bear me witness that I have been no busy body in other mens' matters; nay but what if I should say, that were I to slink away from making this feeble attempt, death might then appear as a king of terrors, seeing we could not speak our mind in the grave; I only desire to be found faithful, and in truth and simplicity to be manifest to the conscience of such as are sincere to what they know, who should rather be reasoned with than passed by in sullen silence, even while I fully believe, that none would be bettered by being persuaded through dint of argument (or the clearest of reasoning) unless accompanied by a corresponding heartfelt conviction, seeing that my sole aim herein, is to endeavour to prove, that the rule of a true believer must be according to heartfelt conviction,



and not according to any prescribed system or compact, that ever was devised or upheld by carnal men, or their synods or councils; seeing that no name nor profession, nor knowledge, nor belief, nor practice, nor all these together, nor any other thing, can constitute a true member of the church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without a change of heart; and that such change can only be wrought by Him alone that made the world, by whom, and of whom, and for whom are all things; to whom be honour and power everlasting, so let it be; and that thou reader, with my own poor soul, may be found such members at the great day which hastens apace, is the earnest and fervent desire of

THE AUTHOR.

## Explanatory Advertisement.

**T**O any that might take offence at the boldness of the following pages, I would say, that it is only the earnest interest I feel for the cause, that gives me that degree of innocent boldness, which may appear contemptible to such as care for none of these things; while yet I take nothing from the worldly consequence of any people, or their profession; nay I only assert, that the antiquity, greatness, or splendor thereof, is so far from being a proof of safety and infallibility, that such as were highly esteemed and admired by the world, have been full as subject to error and delusion as any people whatsoever, and leave the reader to judge whether I make good that assertion; and while the forepart of the work is mainly designed to exalt and distinguish the blessings of the gospel state, from the glaring absurdity of *J. Milner's* claim to exclusive infallibility and dominion over the church of Christ; I mean also hereby to refute that common cavil of the infidel, who is ever and anon exclaiming, that the Christian religion is only a mere fabrication of priestcraft, which yet might well be asserted of that which *J. M.* holds forth as such.

Yet let us remember by the way, that the high road to error and delusion is, to be forward to magnify our neighbours' faults above our own; and if we see this to be the rock whereon others have split, let us then take warning and admonition thereby, and not be satisfied with merely gazing on their harms; and therefore, let no one suppose, that I mean in any wise to make light of the faults or failings of such as profess the reformation, or that I endeavour to keep their sins in the back ground, far be such a design from my heart; nay I rather mean hereby to bring our faults and failings before our face, if haply we may yet see them and amend our ways, seeing that even our very supineness, and luke-warmness, in regard to the concerns of our everlasting condition, may prove as dangerous as any state we could fall into.

But whereas *J. M.* holds forth a challenge, to prove that all true christians the world over, hath been, and ever shall be subject to the dominion of his priesthood (and cannot be otherwise according to the will of God); and that their seat and authority was established by the Popes and their councils (who were under the dominion

of the Roman Empire) even referring to that of Peter being put to death at Rome, &c. and so he asserts that their order and such as they approve, hath been the only and alone true church that existed since the Apostles' days; and that all that ever separated from them are cut off as withered branches, heretics, &c. see his Apostolical tree, or rather the whole volume; therefore, the first part of this work is opposed to that barefaced calumny against the Redeemer's Kingdom, wherein J. M. holds it forth by consequence, to be so far of this world, as to be subject to the very nod of the whimsies and caprice of kings, priests, princes, states, nations, or empires of the sons of earth; I say then, I mean herein to oppose the like assertion, seeing the Lord never left himself without witnesses in any age; nay but even from the very days of Constantine, there hath been raised up, such as always bore a clear and steadfast testimony against the pomp and abuses of state religions, and especially against that in the imperial hierarchy of the court of Rome; though such witnesses were variously denominated throughout many ages; even among those called Novatians (Puritans) Paulitians, Albigenses, Waldenses, &c.

And therefore, if the term catholic or heretic, &c. be found herein, I may inform the reader that I use no such terms, except by way of quotation. I call no man either catholic, or heretic, or antichrist, nor angel, nor devil, as I judge no man; and if it be objected that I have not given the title of saint to the Apostles, &c. I may answer, that I deem it more consistent to call them by the names they are called in scripture; seeing that to say Peter, James, John, Stephen, &c. should be deemed rather more dignified than even that of saint itself, when applied to the Apostles:—Neither would I apply the title of antichrist, or Babylon, &c. to any church exclusively, seeing that rather implies a spirit of falsehood, error, and confusion, which is only applicable to any people as they shew forth the fruits thereof.—And although I have used the term Babylon very frequently, yet not in any wise because I prefer that term; nay but merely took it as it occurred, deeming it as clear and simple as any other, to shew forth the way, working, dominion, fruits, and end of man's fallen wisdom and carnal mind, even as set forth throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelations, to demonstrate the same both in the mystery and history thereof.

Yet far be it from me to undervalue one system in order to draw people over to others; nay I equally disclaim all that is of man's device in religion, as mere man, of what



profession soever he may be, inasmuch as I believe that there can be but one true religion in all the world, namely, the work of the spirit of God in the soul of man, which alone can enable him to believe in God, and love Him above all, and his neighbour as himself, and bring forth fruits conformable thereunto, which comprehends all the religion I desire to see promoted; go too then, O man, wouldst thou be preserved from strong delusion? Beware then of gazing upon the failings of others, for any other end but to help them, or to admonish thyself of the danger of thy own standing, seeing there are many bye-ways, and but one straight and narrow way, even the way of the Cross; look then to your foundation, O ye Protestants and Dissenters, and beware of taking up a false rest in your own favourite modes or systems, lest a pretended reformed or Protestant state religion, should prove as great a snare to the daughters as ever it was to the mother.

To place dependence upon any profession or any man whatever, may prove the high road to error and delusion, seeing that even the highest profession will be of no avail to the workers of iniquity in the great day, as we may read in the 13th chap. of *Luke*: neither can a mere profession redeem the soul nor cleanse the conscience; nay but the profession of him that takes on to do that work for another, which none but God alone can do, may tend to defile the conscience, and accumulate iniquity; and therefore, shall I say, that the many sects whereof J. M. so loudly complains, is rather pleasing to me than a matter of lamentation, inasmuch as divers modes of religion (while each aims at the same end) may rather tend to purge the whole; and if as pure an aggregate, surely that is a much more desirable state of things, than one monstrous compact, whose over weening *filthiness* might *accumulate perpetually* without a check or rival; nay but in the present state of things, I could prove to a demonstration, that even many sects have had their use, but shall leave that for an abler hand, and proceed to a more solemn theme, even to prove, that it is not an empty profession, but righteousness (which must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees) that will avail in the great day, which will inevitably overtake us all.



## SECTION I.

### OR INTRODUCTION,

*Shewing J. Milner's Rules of Faith to be mere  
subtle fictions.*

**I**T is no marvel that I should be backward to determine what manner of answer would be fitting for *J. Milner's* book, entitled "The End of Religious Controversy;" shall I say, well would it be for the human race, if all such subtle windings, and specious deceptions, were come to an end, by means of the truth piercing the heart of mankind, to the rending of that veil which the serpent (through the instrumentality of self-seeking men) is labouring to spread over the Nations.

That book he states to be a course of letters, which passed between himself and some Protestants and Dissenters of New Cottage near Bristol, but not published until above 15 years after some of them are said to be written; but whether his letters are real, or fictitious, I shall not contend about, seeing he has set his name to the book; neither need I have noticed their authenticity, but that I would not be understood to take them (all as they are) to be genuine, especially, as he acknowledges that they were altered, see address, *page* 1, but how letters could be altered, and yet be the same still, is out of the reach of my comprehension; if he means that he simply declined to publish some of the letters, that is not altering but abridging, which he knew full well how to express; and if any man, through design, would either add, or take away, even five words of my letter; and then set my name to it, and publish it as genuine, I should account it base usage indeed, even so vile, that whoever could be guilty of such an act, might commit any crime in the same mind; but to play the like trick on a religious subject, should aggravate the crime beyond measure; how a man could face the world, with his own and other mens' names affixed to letters, and yet say they were altered, and not to blush for very shame, is what I cannot account for, unless to say, it is quite of a piece with him who asserts, that their Bishops are the same now as the Apostles were, though we know they are sadly altered; I feel pity from my very heart



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for such a man, but more pity that a brave people should be leavened with such old filthy leaven.

I say again, how should I frame any answer suited to the purpose? nature itself recoils at language that would do it justice, so as to deal with just weights and righteous measure, to meet such an unaccountable heap of assertion and contradiction.—Behold a great learned divine of high account in the world, setting out in the language of extolling religious investigation and search after truth, nay he even affects to bewail that “the multitude in this age of infidelity and dissipation, nautéate—religious inquiry and investigation; and when they must hear them; like the Jews of old; they say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophecy not to us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophecy deceits—*Isaiah* xxx.—10. the critics and reviewers are, for the most part, as smooth in this respect, as the prophets; if they lead the public opinion in matters of less consequence, they follow it in those of greater.” See his address, *page* 28, and in *letter* ii. he speaks in the like strain, quoting “as Peter inculcates, each christian ought to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him.”

And yet, with many such like high-sounding professions of freedom and liberality, he proceeds to write or publish a book of 550 pages, in order to prove that people should not dare attempt religious investigation; and that such plain honest herdsmen, laymen, fishers, and mechanics, as the ancient Prophets, and Peter and his fellow disciples were, should have no qualification or right, to investigate by religious inquiry and search after truth; nay, he even takes on to deny them the very means of attaining the knowledge of the truth, or way of salvation (only as men of his own order should dispense it) wherein he denies them the inspiration of the Almighty, and the Scriptures: Alas, how shall we account for such contradictory assertions being set forth before the face of the people, unless the author did really believe, that such rabbies and doctors as himself, had made a monopoly of all the common sense in the world, even as he says they should do of the Scriptures and the spirit of truth, seeing that to all others he will only allow a supposed inspiration at best (which he calls fallacious) and no Scripture but as they should dispense or interpret, quoting, that they

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are their own goods or property, &c.? See *letter x.*, page 90, and *letter xii.*, page 118.

Hence it appears he would not allow, that people should even dare to use their reason, or yield to conviction (if he so much as admits they have any such gift or faculty) but that whatsoever such doctors may say, should never be once called in question, whether right or wrong, true or false; nay, though it be never so wild or contradictory, even as the very Moloch of the times.—And moreover, while they exclude all such men, at this day, as the ancient Prophets and Apostles, they compliment them with the title of saint and holy father, saying, they themselves are their successors.

*J. Milner* has avowed himself as a spokesman of such leaders of the people, as have received a peculiar patent or charter from Heaven, to conduct all nations thither, while they utterly reject and condemn all that hold it possible to be saved without them; and sorts out all that are not led and guided by themselves, under the titles of Infidels, Jews, Schismatics, or Heretics, &c.; and so holds forth their own particular institution of creeds, traditions, and commandments of men, to be the high way to Heaven, instead of the plain way of holiness; and is not that the curse gone forth throughout multitudes, nations, and languages? Insomuch that I might have taken less notice of it, if none besides his own people were concerned in this matter; but where is the gathered society of professed christians at this day, that have not put some favourite piece of priestcraft into their buildings? Nay, even while they appear loud against it, are they not still setting up some favourite rite, ceremony, or human invention, to bewitch the poor soul (after having begun in the spirit) to take up a false rest in carnal ease and self-security even in the works of the flesh? Like the *Galatians*, see *chap. iii.*—3. and what state could be more deplorable?

But Christ remains to be the true and living way, as saith the Scripture, *John xiv.*—6. and He alone is the way of holiness, in whom the fool shall not err, *Isaiah xxxv.*—8. while a bare profession, likeness, or imitation, is none of the way of holiness, nay, but rather a source of delusion for the poor soul, to take up a rest in any imitation of man's devising; oh then, how important is that solemn memento, "None is good, save one, that is,

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God!" and let us further take notice, that it was spoken to one who was asking the way to eternal life, even to a high orthodox professor, willing to justify himself in the works of the law, yet he was warned not to follow the example of even the priest or levite; nay, but rather to do like him they called Heretic or Samaritan, wherein his deeds were more excellent; compare *Luke* x.—25. to the end with *chap.* xviii.—18., &c.

*J. Milner* (after arranging his rules of faith, or methods of finding out the true religion) sorts out all the Christian professors of these times and nations, dividing them into three different classes, which he says, have adopted three different methods, or rules for the discovery and practice of their religion; two of which rules he calls fallacious, and the other, a true unerring rule; which of course is his own, which he says, "Is the word of God, at large, whether written in the Bible, or handed down from the Apostles in continued succession by the Catholic Church; to speak more accurately, besides their rule of faith, which is scripture and tradition, Catholics acknowledge an unerring judge of controversy, or sure guide in all matters relating to salvation, namely, the Church."—*Letter* vi., *page* 29.

Of the other two rules he says, "The first consists of a supposed private inspiration, or an immediate light or motion of God's Spirit communicated to the individual;" this he says, "Is quite fallacious, and was the rule of faith and conduct formerly professed by the Manteuists, the Anabaptists, the Family of Love; and is now professed by the Quakers, the Moravians, and different classes of Methodists."—The other fallacious rule, he says, is, "The written word of God, or the Bible, according as it is understood by each partiicular reader or hearer of it, this is the professed rule of the more regular sects of Protestants, such as the Lutherans, Calvinists, the Socinians, the Church of England men."—*Page* 29

Now after all his plausible professions on candour, and affected desire to "Investigate truth with impartiality, to acknowledge it, when discovered, with candour, &c."—See his ii. iv. and v. *letters*; and yet after all such extraordinary professions, what if it should be found that he has given false statements of the whole (even in the very *outset*) or glossed them over in such colours, that neither of the three rules can be said to stand as he labours to set them forth?



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Nay, even respecting his own, which he calls the unerring rule, he says, it is understood and explained by the Church, even the Catholic Church; now, could any thing be more falsely glossed over? seeing, that even according to his own statement, not one of the millions which profess to be of that Church, should proceed to determine any matter of faith, only as their priests should decide for them; neither would he allow that any of them beside such priests, should dare attempt to examine or explain the rule, which he calls, “The written and the unwritten word,” as may be seen in divers parts of his book: Nay, he expressly asserts, that the multitude should not determine any point of faith, but, the pastors should not fail to pronounce an authoritative sentence upon them.—See *letter xi.*, page 114.

Was ever the like heard, that the clergy alone should constitute the Universal Church? as he says the term (Catholic) means universal, how then can the multitude which are not allowed a casting voice, (nay, nor even to think for themselves) be included in the universal Church, by which he saith, “The rule is understood and explained?” I say, how can the multitude which are excluded, be included in such a Church, if none besides Cardinals, Bishops, or Priests alone, must determine, and be called the universal Church, while yet they are so small a portion of it? Alas is not that confusion even like Babel itself? And yet might I not behold even a still darker shade in his statement of what he calls his unerring rule? Nay, were we only to reflect, how the Scriptures can possibly be called the rule of faith; which is understood and explained by the multitude, that are not allowed even a free reading of them, without what may be compared to a gag in the mouth? but this is not the place to enlarge, further than merely to notice how very ambiguously he has lapped up the very subject which he pretended to explain.

And if he has exaggerated and embellished the description of his own rule, so as to give it an air or feigned appearance of consistency, certainty, and universality, which it would in no wise bear, even though proved by the tenor of his own book? see on the other hand, how he labours to defame or distort those he calls fallacious rules, so as not to make them applicable, to those to whom he applies them; he saith, “the fallacious rule professed by the more regular sects of Protestants, is

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“the Bible, according as it is understood by each particular reader or hearer of it,” now I shall say little to this, but leave it to whom it may concern; yet even his own book shews, that such as he calls the more regular sects of Protestants, &c. hold an especial reference to the judgment of others, especially that of their teachers; howbeit, while he meant to cast upon them, the foul blot of presumption and selfwill, I could heartily desire that they did better deserve the reproach he designed to cast upon them.

But that which he calls the fallacious rule of the Dissenters, he aims at distorting still more, saying, their rule or method, consists in a supposed private inspiration, or an immediate light and motion of God’s spirit communicated to the individual; *letter vi., page 29.*—There we may see, that, in defining the rules they profess, he does not even mention that they have any reference to Scripture as a rule, which I wonder that very shame would not have made him admit, or how could he get over it, seeing that he is well aware, that the whole of them profess a most special and unequivocal reference to Scripture authority; and holds, that all doctrine contrary thereto should be rejected; nay, *J. M.* knowing full well that they profess them, endeavours in many parts of his book, to apply them by way of ridicule, as the source of their delusion, though here he affects to set them forth as not looking to Scripture as a rule; which at the same time, he calls the rule of his own people, whom he would not allow, even a free unfettered perusal of them; and how far all this can be a fair and candid statement of the case, I leave the reader to determine?

But that which is beyond all the most revolting, is, his saying, that “They profess a supposed private inspiration, or immediate light and motion of God’s Spirit,” which he calls quite fallacious; behold there, the subtlety of his subterfuge, seeing he dare not (in plain simple language) deny the gift of inspiration, as he knew that would go to deny the whole testimony of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelations; yet, doth he not hold forth what amounts to a flat denial thereof (in a way calculated to beguile the unwary reader) wherein he saith of them, that believe in the gift of the Holy Spirit, that they profess “a supposed private inspiration!” even while he knew, that the people he speaks of, professed no supposed or private thing: Nay, but they profess

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the Spirit, a manifestation whereof is given to every man to profit withal, according to *Cor. xii.—7.* so that is a most sure, and not a supposed gift, and though he might think to get off with it, as subtly as he slipt it in, even by saying the men in question are deceived, (which still is but his say so); yet, even suppose they were deceived, how could that mend the matter? Seeing men may deceive themselves in any thing, yea, even in faith or repentance, &c. which is no less the gift of God than inspiration; yet, who could call faith or repentance supposed, or private, or fallacious?

Alas what can he mean by calling inspiration or the light a supposed private and fallacious thing, seeing he calls the Bible his rule? And yet the Bible throughout, testifies of the true light and inspiration of the Almighty; yea, even before the law, and under the law; and moreover, the Prophets foretold of the gospel, that it should be a ministration of the Spirit; and the Apostles bore testimony to the fullness thereof; insomuch, that whosoever believeth not in the certainty and universality of the light and inspiration of God, believes not in Christ nor the gospel; nay, but such would make the gospel times, worse than ever times were since the fall of Adam, and so, make the glad tidings thereof woful tidings indeed, if so be that it cut off all intercourse between the creature and the Creator? what could be more deplorable? Nay, even before the flood, the very signal of destroying the world by the deluge, was, when the Spirit of the Lord ceased to strive with man—see *Genesis iii.*, whereby it is evident, that even up to that state of total corruption, the Lord had strove with, and followed the disobedient by the reproofs of the Spirit of Christ, yea, even while the Ark was preparing—see *1 Peter—iii. chap.*

And Moses saith, “Would to God that all the Lord’s people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.”—*Numbs. xi.—29.* And in the days of Job, the Scripture saith, “There is a Spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding;” and that inspiration was esteemed above the wisdom of great men, and before the understanding or the judgment of the ancients; and he that was inspired in Job’s days, could say, “I am full of matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me;” and he that was constrained by the Spirit, did all in reference to the Lord alone, saying, “Let me



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“not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give  
 “flattering titles to men; for I know not to give flattering titles,  
 “in so doing my Maker would soon take me away,”—read *Job*  
*xxiii.*—7. to the end of the chapter; there we may see, that even  
 such as *J. M.* would be likely to call infidels, did not blasphemously  
 call inspiration a supposed private and fallacious rule; nay, but a most  
 sure and certain gift, beyond which we do not find them making any  
 appeal to great councils for the confirmation thereof, nor yet accepting  
 the persons of their rabbies, with flattering titles of holiness, grace,  
 lordship, or reverend, as we hear now a days.

And what should I say of the Jews or people of Israel, even while  
 under the dispensation of the Law, and the ordinances thereof? yet  
 who would say, that (even then) they were any ways acceptable to  
 the Lord further than while they acted conformable to the dictates  
 of his good spirit which he gave to instruct them? nay, but being  
 disobedient thereunto was the cause of all their calamities, see  
*Nehem. ix.*—20.—30. and even that dispensation of types, shadows,  
 and figures, was glorious in its season, because it pointed to that  
 unspeakable gift of the fullness of the spirit, even of the grace and  
 truth which comes by Jesus Christ, whereof Moses in the Law and  
 the Prophets did write, yea, and of the fullness thereof the Apostles  
 gave abundant testimony, even of pouring forth of the spirit in the  
 last days, upon old and young, servants and handmaids, as in  
*Joel ii.*—28.—29. *Acts ii.*—17. so would our Heavenly Father  
 give the holy spirit to them that ask him.—*Luke xiii.*—11. whereof  
 I may speak more largely in its place, but thus much have I hinted  
 by the way, in order to notice how he that aimed at slandering  
 societies, by calling inspiration or the light a supposed fallacious  
 rule, hath not merely spoken evil of men, but of the unspeakable  
 gift of God.

I say, then, hath he not spoken evil of all mankind, even by  
 asserting a doubt of the very existence of the main gift which  
 doth distinguish them from the beasts of the field? and so to place  
 the human race upon a level with the brute creation; and yet even  
 all that might have been passed over by me, if it only respected  
 poor man; but seeing how fearfully it tends to blaspheme the  
 promises of Christ and the holy spirit, who could altogether hold  
 his peace?

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And thus having made a few passing remarks, upon the plausible subtlety whereby *J. M.* sets forth his different rules and societies, in order, (as he saith,) to prove men by their fruits, and pass sentence upon them, I mean therefore, in the following pages, to notice a few of his marks or proofs, (by which he takes on to prove the fallacy thereof, and so to prove men heretics, and to justify his own priesthood;) that we may see whether they be true Scripture marks, or a feigned contrivance of man's own presumptuous devising, even while he passeth over, or sets at naught, the true Scripture marks, which are given forth by our Saviour and his Apostles.

## SECTION II.

*Proving the Righteousness which J. M. extols, to be rather more wicked than the iniquity he condemns, demonstrated by a comparison of the Crusades, with those he calls German and British Fanatics.*

AND thus he commences his proof of error, heresy, or blasphemy, &c. against all out of the pale of his own society, saying, "I shall now proceed to shew that the first mentioned rule, namely, a supposed private inspiration, is quite fallacious, inasmuch as it is liable to conduct, and has conducted many into acknowledged errors and impiety;" *letter vi.—page 29.—30.* and so he proceeds to instance divers sects (as a proof of his own assertion) which he saith run into errors and heresies by adopting that rule and points out some, who in the middle of the second age of christianity, "by adopting this enthusiastic rule, rushed into the excess of folly and blasphemy;" yet he says, that "the strictness of their precepts, and the apparent sanctity of their lives deceived many, till at last two of them hanged themselves: several other heretics became dupes of the same principles in the primitive and middle ages; but it was reserved for the time of religious licentiousness improperly called the reformation, to display the full extent of its absurdity and impiety"—*page 30.* Now let us remember as we pass on, that (even at this day) it is easier to call men heretics than to prove them such; how then should we pass sentence on them who lived a thousand years ago, upon a few loose and disjointed quotations of their avowed adversaries, insomuch that it is rather probable, that many of those so foully slandered, never held the doctrines imputed to them, in the sense their adversaries set them forth? And it is still more certain, that such as did hold strange notions, were not influenced by the light or inspiration; nay, but rather by rebelling against the conviction of the Light, or Spirit of Truth, and being disobedient thereunto, yea, and though such might even profess inspiration, still their lie is no slander upon the truth:



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Howbeit, many of those he paints out, even as hideous monsters, may have been enabled to say, by the way which he calls heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers, believing all things written in the law and the Prophets, and have hope toward God through the spirit and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But he proceeds, that “in less than five years after Luther had sounded the trumpet of evangelical liberty, the sect of Anabaptists arose in Germany and the Low Countries. They professed to hold immediate communion with God, and to be ordered by him to despoil and kill all the wicked, and to establish a kingdom of the just, who, to become such, were all to be re-baptized.”—*Ibid.*—and so he mentions many horrible acts committed by such furies, who “sung and danced on the scaffold, exulting in the imaginary light of their spirit;” pointing out “John Bockhold, David George, and his disciple Nicholas, founder of the Society called Familists, or the Family of Love, who were numerous at the end of the 16th century, about which time he saith, Hacket a Calvinist, gave way to the same spirit of delusion; and so he mentions Arthington, and Coppinger, and Venner, and his fifth monarchy men, who, guided by the same private spirit of inspiration, rushed from their meeting-house, proclaiming that they would acknowledge no sovereign but King Jesus.”—page 31, 32.

It would swell these remarks far beyond my design, to quote him particularly, neither would it prove to edification; and as he saith, that he “does not notice these impieties and other crimes for their singularity, or their atrociousness, but because they were committed upon the principle, and under the full conviction of an individual and uncontrollable inspiration, on the part of their dupes and perpetrators;” yet we may see, (with all his affected moderation) how careful he has been, to scrape up all the foulest of dirt, that he might heap it upon such as believe in the inspiration of the Almighty; but let me tell him in return, that I should not have followed him to quote “these singularities or atrocities,” only in order to remind him, that they bear his own image, insomuch that had he even a grain of sincerity or impartiality, he might soon perceive how very similar such ways and doings appear, to the deeds of some of his own re-

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nowned popes, saints, and councils ; yet I shall not in this case make comparisons with the blackest of their acts, wherein, as *J. M.* states, exterminating canons of councils and inquisitions have been in full work ; Nay, but let it suffice, merely to compare them to their crusading schemes, seeing that he esteems the crusades worthy to be connected with the miracles of his saint Bernard, &c.—*letter xxiii. page 80.—Note letter xxiv. page 94, 95.*

And whereas he attributes all the madness of the Anabaptists, to their professing “to hold immediate communication with God ;” might he not rather have said, that their madness proceeded from an excessive attachment to outward ceremonies, and carnal ordinances, like some of his own ways ? witness how deeply they stuck therein, when according to his own account, they “re-baptized all who should compose the kingdom of the just ?” was not that quite of a piece with the crusaders, who thought that a visit to Palestine could do such wonders for the souls of men ?

And could any thing be more of a piece with the language of Pope Urban the II., in the Council of Clermont, or that of Peter the Hermit at the head of the crusaders ? for, if John Bockold said, “that God had made him a present of Amsterdam, and other cities, and sent parties of his disciples to take possession of them ;” did not the Pope say to the powers of Europe (stirring them up to desolate nations and dethrone lawful Princes by the crusades ?) Did he not say to them, “go prosperously, go with confidence to attack the enemies of God ; let such as are going to fight for Christianity put the form of the Cross upon their garments, &c., rid God’s sanctuary of the wicked, bring in the pious ?”—*Clarke’s History, vol. II. page 326.* And did not such as went forth in that war, obtain Papal indulgences and remission of sins ; as if by murder and rapine they should secure a place in Heaven ? And so, if they did believe that the Holy Land belonged to them by a divine grant ; and that it was “impiously base and cowardly to allow it to be polluted by Mahomedans ;” might not the Anabaptists and fifth monarchy-men imagine by the same whimsies, that they had a divine right to Amsterdam or London ? I say then, wherein lay the difference ? Was it not even in this, that they differed in the magnitude and extent of numbers and iniquity beyond any shade of comparison ?

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For the actions of Bockhold, and Venner, and their followers, were soon suppressed and put down by their own folly; insomuch, that if he could look at the event with an honest face, when he went to slander inspiration with their deeds, even suppose that was the cause, which cannot be admitted, yet suppose he did think so, still he might rather have said, we see how little credit or support such delusion or frantic deeds can obtain from those who profess the light or inspiration of God, seeing that such furies could not obtain the sanction of as many hundreds, as the crusades did millions; nor their duration as many days, as the other stood years; and moreover, when we reflect, that the crusading project was not the flash of a moment, set on and promoted, merely by one Pope or one Council; Nay, but was followed up for ages, with a determined pace, and promoted by their Popes, and such as they call saints, with legates or bishops a head of their armies.

And did not many enlist in their armies, for the promise of absolution from old sins; while others again, might seek opportunity to commit new ones with greediness, even to sin with all their might; to commit more horrible crimes than was common to mankind, even newly invented crimes; rarely devised except by such as popes, prelates or tyrants? for not to mention their massacre and plunder of the unoffending Jews (and the like) as they passed along; only look at their entry into Jerusalem; that, after their horrible butchery, not only of men, but of women and infant inhabitants, even while wading through their blood, did they not proceed forthwith, to the solemnities of their pretended devotion, at the sepulchre of Christ? Did they not approach it with bare feet, uncovered heads, and lifting up of murderous hands; as if to mock Him, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them? Alas, how could they offer him a greater indignity, than while they destroy his creatures, to fall down at the same time in pretended adoration! insomuch that if the image of the Cross which they carried, had any meaning, it went to signify their crucifying him afresh, and putting him to open shame even to a witness.

Now it may appear marvellous, that a season of cool reflection, should not have produced a deep sense of repentance in these pretended saints and vicars, who promoted such hideous crimes? but alas! they do not appear to have been of a repen-



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ting stamp, but rather like such as would say, we thank God that we are not like other men; which language seems verified by their measures, wherein the enormity of the crusade did in no wise induce the promoters thereof to retract from their purpose; nay, but if they pursued it as wickedly as they could, so they held on as long as they were able; even until the land of Palestine seemed to spew them out, after they had made the Christian name appear odious to the Turks and Mahomedans, insomuch that even herein was verified the predictions of the Apostles, who foretel the degenerate state of the Church, wherein even the mystery of iniquity should be made manifest, which had began to work, even in their days. Nay, doth not Peter, Paul, John, and Jude, clearly describe the sad state they should be brought to by means of false teachers, which should arise even of their own selves, by whose pernicious ways the way of truth should be evil spoken of? and surely their crusading projects were not the last of the many scandals, which false teachers through covetousness (or love of pre-eminence) hath brought into the churches, just as the apostles foretold should come to pass, even within; not by such as should leave the Church, nay but mark, all within, saying, "they shall enter in" "bring in" "crept in, &c."—read *Acts* xx.—29. *2 Thes.* ii. *2 Peter* ii.—1.—2.—3. *Jude* iv. and see if they have not been literally verified even in this thing.

Alas what worse could enter in among them, than those rabbies, which sent the people on to Jerusalem for to fight and worship, even while they pretend to explain our Lord's words, which saith, "my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not from hence?"—see *John* xviii.—36. And He saith, "ye shall neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the Father, but in spirit and in truth;" yet have not the false teachers (through covetousness or thirst of power) made a sad havoc of the poor flocks, of whom they made legions of iniquity, by reason of whom the way of truth was evil spoken of?—How could they give greater cause for the christian name to be evil spoken of, than was done in this thing wherein they raged and foamed out their own shame (as saith the Scripture) even as in that wherein the crusades behaved so arrogantly? Alas was there ever more infamous heresy, than to profess Christ in

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words, while thus by their works they deny the Lord that bought them?—see ii. *Peter* 2.—1.

I have dwelt upon this comparison far beyond my bounds of brevity, because it seemed of necessity that I should glance at that which might fill a volume; seeing how frequently the wild actions of Bockhold and Venner, and the like, have been over and over again repeated, both in large assemblies, and in print, and now by *J. Milner*; all with design to slander such as profess to believe in the inspiration of the Almighty, or to slander all that believe in the sufficiency of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ; and seeing that has been a work of priestcraft; I think right to remind such to look at their own ways, rather than to learn to blaspheme, seeing how near a kin to blasphemy, is that of labouring to slander those that believe in the light, by charging upon them the very crimes which they always disowned and abhorred, while yet the Priests might behold a world of crimes, still more atrocious, which they themselves approve, yea, and call the promoters thereof, saints and holy fathers, but that is a wonderful belief, to think that the multitude of sins, and the antiquity, pomp, and greatness of such as promoted them, should consecrate and sanctify the blackest of crimes.

I can no otherwise account for his setting forth the pitiful madness of Bockhold and Venner, &c., and their few crazy companions, as an example and test to prove the fallacy of inspiration, even while they were disowned by such as professed to believe therein, while yet at the same time, his own Church, which he saith is infallible and could never err, holds forth greater enormities, even in the crusades and other such like deeds, and that not barely in one or two cities or kingdoms, for a few days or weeks only, nay, but as far as they could reach throughout Christendom, even for centuries, while they could hold it up; far beyond any shade of comparison with those he calls German and British fanatics; nay, but how far did they outstrip them, even in the most arrogant and abominable part of their iniquity, wherein they took on to grant their crusaders indulgences or what *J. M.* calls passports to Heaven, even to them who should fight most wickedly? yet we do not find that poor Bockhold or Venner ever promised the like indulgences to their crazy adherents; and as I said, if such be the deeds of

those which *J. M.* saith cannot err, while he mentions the crusades in a high tone of approbation; why then should he labour to heap up the like as a slander against such as believe in the light and inspiration of the Almighty, even while they utterly disclaim and abhor such deeds?

Thus have I over-passed due bounds on this sickly subject, in order to provoke some men to a consideration of these things, that they may learn not to blaspheme, lest they even hang as a judgment over the nations, believing as I do, that there is no blasphemy more dangerous, than to aim at slandering the light and inspiration of God, for the exaltation of their Priesthood, yet is not the hypocrite who can wink at these things, for the sake of a deceivable confederacy, still more guilty than even the Priests which utter them, while they know not what they do? but I can only say, oh! that they could lay these things to heart before their day be over.

*J. Milner* continues; “I pass over the unexampled follies, and the horrors of the grand rebellion, having detailed many of them elsewhere; it is enough to remark, that while many of these were committed from the licentiousness of private interpretation of Scripture, many others originated in the enthusiastic opinion which I am now combating, that of an immediate individual inspiration, equal, if not superior, to that of the Scriptures themselves”—page 33.

To all which I may only say, that if he had known the Scriptures or the spirit of God, he should not have set forth the follies and horrors he alludes to, as the effect of either; seeing that follies and horrors are rather the consequence of man's rebelling against the reproofs of inspiration, and Scripture admonition; insomuch that if he had any fear of God before his face, he might have reflected on very different causes for the horrors of rebellion, than the profession of Scripture and revelation, nay, might he not rather say, that the iniquities of both priests and people had been so filled up, that divine justice brought on them a day of visitation; howbeit, even suppose wicked men did profess Scripture and the influence of the spirit (and had even felt the efficacy thereof) while yet they did despite thereto, and acted quite opposed to their profession; pray should their crimes be charged upon the very thing they rebelled against, and did despite unto?



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Is not that as much as to say, that religion is a dangerous thing to profess, seeing how many of the professors thereof have done wickedly? and would not a man be very wicked indeed, who should slander religion with the deeds of such as do despite thereto, and charge their actions upon men that abhor and disown them? surely that would be base usage indeed; but is not his own image stamped upon all such slanders? are they not the discordant notes peculiar to his own cage, who are so hardened as to say infallible, and that we can never err; even while they might read the multiplication of errors, could they but count the number or the name thereof, nay, even causing the people to err? hath he not charged men with errors which they deny and abhor, while himself and his fellow Bishops and Doctors retain the like errors themselves, if not far worse, (as I shall prove in its place) and so they plead for, and approve of all the woful crimes that ever their forefathers committed, saying, that they can never change, but ever was and is the same still; even as if their song, that the Church is infallible and can never err, should transubstantiate or consecrate all crimes? is that proving men by their fruits (as our Saviour commands his followers) while they enjoin the people to believe whatever they believe and teach? see *letter xvi.*—page 21.

But lest I should be misunderstood, let me say, that I had not the most distant view of giving any opinion upon what he calls the grand rebellion; believing, that such overturnings, were according to the permission of an overruling power, which may suffer the potsherds of the earth to dash against each other, even for the accomplishment of his own purpose; but it is remarkable that *J. M.* should appear as hostile to moral, as he is to religious reformation\*, which yet is no wonder, seeing that either might

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\* Far as I should be from advocating the measures of what *J. M.* calls the grand rebellion; yet nevertheless, on the other hand, I might challenge him to point out a king, pope, nation, or government, that ever fully understood a poor man's right (standing in the presence of great men of the earth) from the age of Constantine until the days of Cromwell; I say, even throughout the administrations of all his renowned popes, councils, emperors, or kings, with all their boast of justice and impartiality, let him shew, if he be able, that ever they sustained a system that secured the poor man's just right, or even understood the meaning or extent thereof (on gospel principles, consistent with the tenor of the New Testament) compared with those laws which were

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shake the seat of old mother, which had long sat as a queen, saying, that her mountain could never be moved; howbeit, we must acknowledge, that it is not the business of righteous men to render recompense to any measure of iniquity that may be filled up; seeing that recompense belongeth unto him, who may permit the vessel of wrath, fitted (by their iniquities) for destruction, to dash each other, even to the bringing about of his own great purpose, who rules in the kingdoms of men, and overturneth corrupt governments, and corrupt Churches, and disposeth of them as he will, whatsoever the sceptic priest may assert to the contrary; so I leave the reader to see, whether all his labour to prove the fallacy of inspiration, hath proved any thing more than the fallacy of himself and his slanders.

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made in the days of Cromwell, even though they were times of sore judgments and fury poured forth.

Nay, but what if I should go still further, and say, that the pulling down of old unrighteous laws, and the setting up of the laws which were brought in in them days, have proved as a blessing even to surrounding nations, being then settled upon so firm a basis, that even the rulers that deride them, have not been able to set them aside; nay, but they have rather made head against despotism, even to this day.—And therefore, seeing those laws tend so far to check the despotism of kings and priests, it is no marvel then, that they should be deemed a great abomination in the eyes of *J. M.* and his priesthood, who desire to uphold the despotic sway of such orders to the world's end.

## SECTION III.

*Charges against George Fox and his friends, repelled  
and refuted.*

**J.** MILNER continues, “it was in the midst of those religious and civil commotions, that the most extraordinary people, of all those who have adopted the fallacious rule of private inspiration started up at the call of George Fox, a shoemaker of Leicestershire.—His fundamental propositions, as laid down by the most able of his followers are, that the Scriptures are not the adequate primary rule of faith and manners,—but a secondary rule, subordinate to the spirit, from which they have their excellency and certainty: that the testimony of the spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God, hath been, is, and can be revealed \*; that all true and acceptable worship of God is offered in the immediate moving and drawing of his own spirit, which is neither limited to places, times, nor persons; such are the avowed principles of the people called Quakers; let us now see some

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\* Pray, wherein lieth the fallacy of believing, that the certainty and excellence of Scripture, can only be known by the Spirit? will he allow the Scriptures to be things of God? if so, they can only be known by His Spirit, according to 1 Cor. ii.—11. Alas! how lightly do they esteem the Scriptures, who would not allow that they need a corresponding principle to make them effectual? and what principle can that be, but a measure of the same Spirit by which they were given forth?

I may ask (for example) could even the concerns of life be understood without the rational faculty? nay, would it not be debasing the very learning of the learned, for to say, that it should only be known by birds or beasts, &c.? so the Scripture saith, “as the things of a man, are only known by man,” (that is by a corresponding faculty) “even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”—1 Cor. ii.—11. and he that believeth not in the excellence and certainty of the Spirit, believes not the Scriptures, nor the promises of the gospel; neither can such be a christian, but is an infidel at heart let him profess what he may; as may be proved by the following parts of Scripture, and many others of like import—*Luke xi.—13. John iv. 23.—24. and xiv.—16.—17.—26. and xvi.—13. Acts ii.—17. Roms. viii. Heb. viii.—10 —11. and x.—16. 2 Peter i.—19.—20.—21. 1 John ii.—27. and iii.—24., &c.*



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“ of the fruits of those principles, as recorded by themselves in  
 “ their founder and first Apostles.”

And so he proceeds to quote, as a proof of the fallacy of inspiration, that “ George Fox tells of himself, that at the beginning of his mission, he was moved to go to several courts and steeple houses, &c. to warn them to leave off oppression and oaths, and to turn from deceit, and to turn to the Lord ; on these occasions the language and behaviour of his spirit, was very far from the meekness and respect for constituted authorities of the gospel spirit, as appears from different passages in his journal. He tells of one of his disciples W. S. who was moved of the Lord, to go at several times, for three years, naked and barefoot before them, as a sign unto them, in markets, courts, towns, cities, to the priests’ houses, and to great mens’ houses, telling them ; so should they all be stripped naked. Another friend R. H. was moved to go into Carlisle steeple house with a white sheet about him. We are told of a female friend who went stark naked, in the midst of public worship, into Whitehall chapel, when Cromwell was there ; and another woman who came into the Parliament house with a trencher in her hands, which she broke in pieces, saying, thus shall he be broken in pieces. One came to the door of the Parliament house with a drawn sword, and wounded several, saying, he was inspired by the holy spirit to kill every man that sat in that house.”

Such are the instances which *J. M.* cites, as the fruits of those he calls the dupes of a supposed private inspiration ; most of which are fair quotations, others false or distorted, as applied to the people called Quakers ; but why should we wonder at any thing he might advance, seeing that he is not ashamed to hold forth the outgoings of James Naylor, as a proof of the fallacy of inspiration, even while he knew full well, that *J. Naylor* himself had condemned that part of his conduct alluded to by *J. M.* and his friends never owned it.

Now it remains to be seen, whether by such quotations he can any ways prove the fallacy of inspiration ; and seeing that he first mentions *G. Fox* ; let us look then, how far his design is promoted by the accusations which he brings against him ? he accuses him of being moved to warn people in divers places, “ to leave off oppression, oaths, and deceit, and to turn to the

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“ Lord.” Now what great crime in all that ? although *Milner* may think it very vile to cry against oppression, oaths, and deceit, and to call people to turn to the Lord ? It seems that oppression, oaths, and deceit, are no crimes in his creed ; for he says, it is hard to reconcile the Scripture which saith, “ swear not at all.” But then he charges *George Fox* with language and behaviour (on such occasions) far from the respect due to constituted authorities, and quotes (as a specimen) part of a letter he wrote to *King Charles*, adding, that the citation thereof should satisfy him ; as if he did really think, that even one specimen (with such a doctor’s condemnation at the tail of it) should be quite sufficient to set forth the vileness of the spirit which influenced *G. Fox* ; poor man, is it the hypocrite’s mote in his eye, which causeth him to behold *G. F.* and his friends as such hideous monsters ? and yet it is hard to tell, what part of that letter he deems such a wicked production, except it be, that he deems it very vile to call him “ *King Charles*,” or to say, that, “ if he suffered such abominations and vanities to be encouraged, “ as drunkenness, oaths, plays, and may-games, &c. the nation “ would soon turn as bad as the old world, that grieved the Lord “ till he overthrew them, and so he will you if these things be “ not suppressed, &c.”

Such is the substance of his extract ; and although he omitted the choicest part of that letter ; still I cannot see how even his own citation of it, goes to establish guilt against the writer ; nay but doth it not go far to establish this truth, even this ? that when men who are strangers to the moving of the spirit of the Lord (to warn rulers or people) take on to pass sentence upon such as are so moved, they speak evil of things they know not, but as natural brute beasts ? “ the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”—*1 Cors.*—ii—14. and if the mysteries of *Christ’s kingdom* were hid (most of all) from the wise scribes and doctors of old, how much more then should they be hid from the wise presumptuous doctors and rabbies of these days, who deride and scorn the only means whereby the things of God can be discerned ? seeing they revile and scoff at inspiration ; or what is rather worse, if worse could be, they say in effect, that now there is no true light nor inspiration in all the earth, nor under heaven, but

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what they have gotten amongst themselves, to dispense as they please; nay, have they not even made merchandize of that profession? is it any marvel then, if God Almighty should so bind them up in a chain of darkness, that they should put evil for good, and good for evil, darkness for light, and light for darkness? and even prove to be the scorers, "that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate," as we read in *Isaiuh* xxix.—20.—21. and so they cry out against the word of honest reproof or exhortation, even while they besaint their own rabbies, for their furious zeal in promoting such laws in their great councils, as caused people to be burned alive for religion, even as *J. M.* himself admits—see *letter* xlix., page 167—169—even while they spoke high swelling words of love and meekness, and hold men's persons in admiration because of advantage, which the Scripture sets forth as a mark of desperate depravity.—*Jude* x.—11.—16.

Such may account George Fox and his friends to be guilty of unpardonable crimes, because they faithfully forewarned people of the wrath for which their iniquities were fitting them, though they may read how Paul warned the high priest, when he said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" and though he shewed how far he would be from speaking evil of such rulers; yet we do not find that he retracted even a tittle of the word which had gone forth through the spirit, neither did he retract that reasoning which made Felix the governor to tremble.

I may further ask this man-pleasing doctor, was it a crime in John the Baptist to reprove Herod, though he was imprisoned and beheaded for his honesty; or for Peter and John to have spoken so boldly to the rulers and people of Israel, that their language cut them to the heart?—*Acts* ii.—37.—but I need not instance examples; seeing how both the Old and New Testament abounds with ensamples of the honest, plain, and powerful warnings, which the servants of the Lord held forth, who spoke in the authority of his spirit; and if the doctor and the sophist cannot believe such a report, let them look at the treatment they endured, who were stoned and sawn asunder, and wandered about, being destitute, tormented, and afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy, such were of good report in the sight of God.—See *Heb.* xi.

Now who would say, that all they suffered came upon them



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for dealing out deceitful or palatable doctrine to the constituted authorities? Nay surely, for if it be the truth of Christ, delivered in the simplicity and authority of His Spirit, the world will hate it; as He saith, "me it hateth", and again, "ye shall be hated of all men for my name sake, but the world will love his own;" now I might ask this great doctor (who is devising new sins, and new-found inventions to prove the fallacy of inspiration,) whether all that the ancient prophets suffered, goes to prove the fallacy of their spirit, seeing they were accounted heretics, and never esteemed orthodox; for had they run with the current opinion of the times, they should not have been persecuted; nay verily, but the covetous priests, who covet the pre-eminence, and love greetings in public places, and to be called of men Rabbi; they can please the world, and the world wonders after them, while they go after the world, and despise the appearance of the like sincerity as was in the ancient prophets and saints, whom yet they extol, and make a trade of their words, saying, that they themselves are their successors; is not that like the scribes and priests whom our Saviour upbraided with praising the dead prophets while they stoned the living ones? and such like doctors now a days, wonder at, and despise any true mark of honesty or plainness, setting it down as a notorious proof of the fallacy of inspiration; but may it not be said unto such, behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, except ye repent?

But *J. M.* points at such as he calls disciples of George Fox; I suppose he calls them so by way of scorn, seeing he cannot prove that ever *G. F.* sought for a disciple, or that ever any one owned him as a master; so that he may keep all that to himself, who breaks the Lord's commandments, who saith, "call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father, which is in Heaven: Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ"—*Mat.* xxiii.—9.—10. Yet his book is as full of such heathenish fopperies, as if it had been written by a stage player; hardly a leaf without such stuff as, lordship, or reverence, &c. as if he gloried in breaking our Lord's commands, even while he writes a great volume, to prove that all people should observe and do all that such rabbies as himself command: Nay, that they should break the Lord's commands, if they so order, which his very language attests; for where can

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he find precept or example in the New Testament, to deny inspiration, and to set up all those flattering titles, and honours, which they give and receive to please proud flesh, that love to be called of men *rabbi*, which our Lord saith “woe unto?”

So that he had no cause to glory, or sport out his empty slur against G. Fox, calling people his disciples, seeing that G. F. only sought to bring people to be disciples of Christ, he sought not their honour, nor their money, but that they might turn to the Lord, and give Him all the glory, to whom it belonged, and not unto man whose breath is in his nostrils; and as *J. M.* read G. Fox's Journal, he should know, that his leading principle was, that God would teach his people Himself, as saith the Scripture—*John vi.—45.* and that his main testimony run against that of men turning people to be their own disciples, in order to make merchandize of them, to cheat them of their souls and of their money, instead of turning them to the Lord, who alone can make them his own disciples indeed; which they never can be while they bow down unto man.

But what shall I say of the two instances he recites, as being of George Fox's party, one a female, who (as he saith) “went stark naked, in the midst of public worship, into Whitehall Chapel,” and a man, that “came to the door of the parliament house with a drawn sword, and wounded several, saying, “he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, to kill every man that sat in that house;” I know not from whence he scraped up such stuff, neither does it matter whether it be a correct account, or a false quotation, seeing that even whether the thing did, or did not occur, it is equally a false slander as applied to any gathered society of people whatever; but how much more horrible, when dealt out with a design to prove the fallacy of inspiration, and withal to be so ravenous after evidence for such a purpose, as to bring forward a couple of desperate lunatics? but how well would it be for him and many of his brother doctors, if they had no greater crime than that of madness to answer for; and seeing that he was aware that his readers must know right well, that no friend of George Fox's, would take a sword to kill all in the parliament house, I say, seeing that it is so, even charity itself might suggest a hope, that such raving might be in part owing to a disorder of the brain; but, alas! such a hope vanisheth, when we reflect that it is quite of a piece with the

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whole tenor of his book, wherein he labours to prove that all people should receive whatever comes from those of his own order, say what they please, nay even to believe that the very errors of such rabbies is real infallibility, and must be so for ever.

And as he makes no distinction, but strangely takes on to make proof all alike which is out of his own cage; let us see then, whether a very different class of evidence which he brings forth from the same quarter, will answer his design any better than his two mad ones? as he equally condemns the friends of G. F., who appeared as signs to warn people of the evil of their ways, and gives samples of such as in the days of Cromwell, &c. did the like, in cities, courts, at great mens' houses, and places of worship; and instances a woman that "went unto the parliament house with a trencher in her hand, which she broke in pieces, saying, thus shall he be broken in pieces;" and now while he turns this into ridicule, he knew full well, that the power of Cromwell, and his parliament, was, shortly after, broken in pieces; and so the thing signified came to pass, as did also other signs and warnings to which he alludes, and which were fulfilled in a remarkable manner; but was ever the like fiction devised, as to set forth such accounts for proofs of the fallacy of inspiration? Alas! is it because they warned the people, that they are so vile in his sight? or is it because that their predictions came to pass, and were fulfilled, that makes them appear to him so false?

But seeing he appears so hostile to prophetic warnings, why should he have set forth the fulfillment of a nun's prophecy, as a miracle, to prove the exclusive infallibility of his own church? I might further ask him, whence had this nun her prophecy, if she (like himself) denied inspiration? but peradventure he condemns those signs and warnings, because they were not done in form, only to prove the exclusive infallibility of a sect, as though such things should answer no other end? but those he condemns, had no such private or selfish end in view; nay, but were variously manifested, even in the face of large assemblies; and moreover divers of those warnings were published and recorded, while many living beholders might bear witness, both to the sign or warning, and to the fulfilling of the thing signified; and yet we do not find, that even their adversaries denied the truth of such statements, though they had many enemies that



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could not endure reproof; but such accounts were not then published, merely as a new thing, peculiar to any society exclusively, by no means, nay but as a fruit of the manifestation of the spirit which is given to every man to profit withal, even to shew forth the goodness and forbearance of God, in warning the rebellious, not only by words and writings, but even by significant signs, which were remarkably fulfilled.

As George Fox (as well as others) noticed some of these occurrences in his journal, *J. M.* refers thereto, as if that should be sufficient to prove the folly and vileness of all people or things connected therewith; and so he may, for that journal is foolishness indeed, to all who are strangers to the influence of the spirit wherein it is set forth, inasmuch as it exhibits a specimen of genuine frankness, simplicity, and honesty, calculated to offend and stumble all that is of that maddish self-seeking mind, which must be offended, stumbled, snared, and broken, if ever the captive soul be made free indeed; for that is the mind that draws down to the chambers of the great whore, and that holds captive, deceives, stumbles, and ensnares all the children of old Adam, since the day wherein the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, saying, ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil; which mind would feed upon knowledge instead of life, even to this day, and therein many are saying one to another, take and eat thereof; yea, come and sit down at table under my ordinances, even my beautiful structure of divinity, and fear not to swallow down implicitly the whole fruit of all my glittering knowledge, and creeds, &c., so shall ye be absolved from sin, (without passing through the bitter ministration of condemnation, and repentance unto life, which God brings home to the conscience;) and thus cometh death, and they that are in such death, are strangers to, and ashamed of the simplicity of the gospel of life, and not living in that mind which can love God above all, and his neighbour as himself, he cannot see how that should fulfil the law or the gospel, but sees nakedness, and not being clothed upon with that life which is hid with Christ in God, is ashamed of such as seek no other covering; mind reader, this is a hint by the way.

Great indeed is the mystery of iniquity, and various the ways whereby the father of lies works to beguile poor souls, and betray the cause of truth, and if *J. Milner* had only said, that

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many who professed the same principles as G. Fox and his friends, had notoriously fallen into the earth, even to this day, I should not dare to contradict him, nay, he might have said, that many of them have fallen by means of the same enchantment that blinded and bewitched his own old mother, (though somewhat different) even by the greatness, love, and friendship of the world; but if they have been allured by the world, to err from the spirit whereof they made profession, their apostacy (or worldly mindedness) is therefore, no fruit of inspiration, nay, but the very fruit of slighting the dictates thereof: and though such may have gained more of the friendship of the world, than they could have done by fervently adhering to the light or inspiration of God, (against which he makes such an outcry,) yet their case may be full as dangerous as his, so far as respects themselves, though they may not have the same power to bewitch and entangle others, as he has arrived at, by accumulated occasions of iniquity, grown crafty through age, and revered for the iniquity thereof; howbeit even the modern apostate, who covers himself with a profession of the spirit, (while he walks after the world and the flesh,) may, by his example, cause many likewise to stumble, and woe to him who causeth such offence.

And moreover, while we may see what great enemies such as *J. M.* have proved to true gospel freedom and simplicity, we should remember by the way, that some of us have still more dangerous enemies than the openly avowed ones (even those of our own household) seeing that the hidden ones may prove worst of all, whereby to deceive ourselves and others, if so be, that while they concur (even by profession) with every tittle of the truth itself; yet if their spirit be not clothed therewith, they see it not, but while they think they see, they only see nakedness, and so are ashamed of the simplicity of the truth, even while they think they are truly concerned for the honour and welfare thereof, and desire to hide it from shame, with a skirt of their goodly Babylonish garment; nay, often saying of those that bore a notable testimony to the power and simplicity of the gospel, that the plainness or coarseness of their manner, was all owing to the temper of the times wherein they lived, and thus, while they fully concur in sentiment, they desire also to prove their love to the cause, by throwing a skirt of the modish man-

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ners of the times, over the nakedness of those that bore righteous testimony to the power and simplicity of the gospel; and thus they would excuse their deformity (as they blindly imagine) by attributing it all to the temper of the times: Alas! poor souls, how little do they see that they call their brother fool, and there was the very door at which the apostacy entered, and is still entering in amongst all that hate the light (which yet they think they love) while not redeemed from the snare of the harlot, by the blood (even the life) of the Lamb, the Redeemer, who giveth the white robe, and clothes with his own innocency, wherein none are ashamed of that innocent boldness, which loveth not its life unto the death: If any hath an ear to hear, let them hear what the Spirit saith, and beware of the voice of the stranger and of the serpent; seeing that a specious lifeless profession, is a vain dependence, even more delusive than a fig-leaf covering, "woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin"—*Isaiah xxx.—1.*



## SECTION IV.

*Sundry observations upon J. Milner's accusations of James Naylor, &c. also respecting Swedinborg, the Moravian, and Johannah Southcoate.*

*For a true and impartial account of James Naylor, I may refer the reader to Sewel's History, Gough's History, and to Joseph Gurney Benin's Life of J. Naylor.*

I HAVE heretofore noticed, that we need not wonder at any thing *J. M.* should write, after his producing the case of James Naylor as a proof of the fallacy of inspiration, though even *J. Naylor* himself had fully condemned his conduct, in the case alluded to by *J. M.*, wherein he had suffered some wild people to idolize his person; (which is the only and singular crime that I can find proved against him,) and no gathered society ever approved thereof; but the malice of *Milner's* design is still more barefaced, wherein he brings a charge against *J. Naylor* which he always disowned, and which even his adversaries could never prove against him, and yet he calls it a fact, saying, "the fact is, that *J. Naylor*, like so many other dupes of a supposed private inspiration, fancied himself to be the Messiah, &c." and though he so asserts, yet he might have read, that *Robert Rich*, a merchant of London, offered to prove from Scripture before the House of Commons, that nothing *Naylor* had said or done was blasphemy; and when he was not so heard, that he persisted (even to the period of *Naylor's* suffering,) to stand at the door of the house, accosting the members as they entered, with texts of Scripture, and likewise crying, "the laud mousus because of oppression;" which he could not have attempted to do, if *Naylor* had fancied, as *J. M.* saith was the fact; which shews how much easier it is to slander a man with a false accusation, an hundred years after his death, than to prove it against him while living.

But this is only one of the many instances, wherein we find *J. Milner* feasting his imagination, by heaping slander upon suffering, no doubt, with a design to haud a delicious morsel to the

stomach of readers of his own taste ; and I mean to remind him of many other such like tricks, even of sporting himself with a detail of pitiable sufferings, inflicted upon injured innocence, against whom he would devise some hideous crime, in order that they should not fail to appear horrible ; and seeing that poor Naylor is on his list, I shall make some remarks thereupon, which are due to those among whom his slanders were industriously circulated ; and whereas *J. M.* sets him forth as a conclusive mark of the fallacy of inspiration ; I shall, on the other hand, insist, that his case goes very far to demonstrate the efficacy and stability thereof ; insomuch, that were I called upon to shew forth an instance, to prove inspiration as a sure and tried word, to be relied upon in all weathers ; I should refer to the case of *J. Naylor*, before any that occurs to my remembrance of latter times ; and all for these every reasons, even that we may behold therein clearly exemplified, the weakness, frailty, and instability of man, and also the power, mercy, and goodness of God.

Behold there a man, eminently gifted ; and look at him again, fallen from that happy state (through unwatchfulness,) even fallen into grievous darkness and temptation ; and suffering at the same time all manner of reproach and revilings, with bodily sufferings, too hard for human nature to endure ; even by stripes, imprisonments, and privations, &c., while forsaken by his friends, (who were grieved for his temptation;) and yet through all, his integrity seems not to have been shaken for a moment ; nay not even so far as to utter a murmur, or to seek relief by withholding reproof from some men of high account, who could have spoken for the severity or mitigation of his sufferings, only look at him thus kept above all flattery, even in the hour of the greatest extremity, when his life was at stake, insomuch, that even his adversaries owned him to be a man of unshaken fortitude, and inflexible integrity.

And after having suffered both in body and spirit, beyond what the course of humanity would seem able to endure, we may behold him again restored, established, strengthened, and settled upon the immutable rock of ages, even upon the revelation of that inspiration, which first shewed him his sins, and drew him unto his Saviour, which sustained him in afflictions, even in the dungeon ; and finally, gave him a glorious victory

over the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, and over sin, hell, and the grave ; that he might say, this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ; and now let *J. M.* and his enemies, wonder and be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, even while a review of his case, might prove a lesson of peculiar instruction, to him that standeth (not to rely upon gifts, or knowledge, but) to take heed lest he fall ; and for him that is tempted and tried, to trust in the Lord for ever, whose grace is all sufficient.

And seeing that *J. M.* affixes it as a fact upon James Naylor, that “ he fancied himself to be the Messiah ;” and again he saith, “ *G. Fox* was not more strongly moved to believe that he “ was the messenger of Christ, than *J. Naylor* was, to believe “ that he himself was Christ”—*letter vii.—page 45.*—I say then, seeing that he thus asserts such a false and wicked slander, I shall therefore proceed a little farther, to state the case as I find it really to stand, even that *J. Naylor* never believed nor fancied any such thing, although he suffered some wild people to bestow upon him divers extravagant expressions and gestures of flattery, which he foolishly allowed them to offer him, as in honour to that gift or measure of the spirit, which he had witnessed to be given to him according to Scripture, which bears abundant testimony of the spirit which should be poured forth upon believers in the gospel times—*Luke xi.—13.—John vii. 39.—Roms. viii.—1 Cors. iii.—16.—and vi.—19.—2 Cors. vi.—16.—17.—Hebs. viii.—10.—11.—Gals. iv. 6.—John iii. 24.—Revs. xxi. 3. &c.*

And though *J. Naylor* had witnessed the truth and verity of such great and precious promises, even to an extraordinary effusion thereof ; yet he was permitted ; (perhaps for our admonition, or his chastisement, to fall into such a state of gross darkness, confusion, and error, as to allow some wild people, who admired his gifts, to do a sort of homage to him, for a few days ; and when he was questioned why he did not reprove them, he only answered, “ what am I that I should judge it, if they did “ it in honour of the Lord ?” but said he, “ if it be attributed to “ the creature, then it is reprovably ; I do abhor that any of “ that honour which is due to God, should be given to me, as I “ am a creature, but it pleased the Lord to set me up as a sign, &c.” thus spoke *Naylor*, in those moments which he calls “ the



“night of his temptation, when the powers of darkness were “above;” all of which rather bespeak a state of silly mopish confusion.

But to say that he ever believed himself to be Messiah, or Christ, is such a foul slander, that even his greatest enemies could never prove he said any thing like it, (though he had many enemies, whom he had sharply rebuked) neither could they prove, that he ever attempted a single practice, that should correspond with such a wicked calumny, nor yet with the marks which our Saviour gives of false Christs, &c. saying, they should shew forth signs and wonders, &c. see *Mark* xiii.—22. but in that also his enemies are proved liars, seeing he had none of the marks with which our Saviour saith false Christs should come, nay but therein he was the very reverse, being remarkable only for purity of life, and for the simplicity and energy of his doctrine—but it seems to have been a letter which one of those wild people wrote him (together with their crazy behaviour) that gave colour to such a false slander, which makes the crime still blacker in those that would resort to such like shifts, to belie the dead, seeing he utterly disclaimed it, and condemned the part wherein he was in fault; which he had abundant cause to do, inasmuch as he had thought, that to honour the Lord’s servant was giving honour to the Lord, whereas the servant should be the more humble, in consideration of his gifts; so that to receive any part of that honour was a great abomination indeed, of which he deeply repented.

And if *J. M.* had even a spark of shame, he should rather have blushed, to see how very like that was to some of his own doings; but peradventure he thought it a great crime in a poor plowman, to dare to appear so very like himself and his brethren; even though it was but a few days, that Naylor had practised, or permitted, something like what he and his forefathers had been playing off for ages; and although that which Naylor suffered to be done toward him, was a great abomination, yet the crime appears of a still fouler and deeper dye, in that wherein it so nearly resembles *J. Milner’s* ways, seeing they have been so horribly stained by the blood which hath been shed, and persecution practised to uphold them; but mercy was extended so poor Naylor, in that he was not hardened like *J. M.* and his brother Rabbies, for he soon repented, but they practise

## MIS ACCUSATIONS OF J. NAYLOR EXAMINED.

the like or worse, and call it their sanctification and justification, insomuch that it would fill pages, to recite all that I have heard and seen of such like ways, (though my knowledge of them is very limited) yet I might ask, what meaneth all this bowing, flattering, cringing, and cap in hand, which I see played off with them in public places? and do not *J. M.* and his brother bishops take to themselves, and give to each other, those titles which should not be given to any creature, even such as his holiness, reverence, or reverend, which should only be applied to the Almighty, whose name is called holy and reverend.—*Psalm* iii.—19.

And I have heard, but do not say it is fact, as he falsely accuses Naylor, with so many others in a lump (which he basely insinuates, fancied themselves to be the Messiah;) I say, I have heard, that the Pope has allowed people even to kiss his toe or his feet, as Naylor suffered some to kiss his feet, or his wounds, which slur *J. M.* tauntingly quotes, as if he had forgot that it was papal honour; but although I have often heard and read of the Pope's dispensations and indulgences, which are highly extolled by *J. M.*—see *letter* 43—yet it doth not appear that Naylor ever attempted to practise the like in any wise.

But that which above all, appears the great abomination charged against him, is far outdone by *J. M.* and his brother priests; even that, whereas Naylor allowed people to adore him, on account of the measure of the spirit of Christ, which he believed had been given him according to the gospel promise; yet *J. M.* so far outstrips him in arrogant pretensions, as to assert, that the bread which himself and his brethren doth bless, is transubstantiated and changed into Christ, even as he saith that they make true God as well as man present in it—(see *letter* xxxvi.—*page* 40) which also in some countries is carried about even through the streets in great state and parade, where people fall down before it, even though it should be in the mire of the streets; nay I have heard, there was a time, when (in Spain, Italy, &c.) if the procession thereof was to pass, and meet with a man that could not bow to it, he might be hewn down by some of the crowd, or sent to the inquisition; and they even deem it rank heresy, to utter a doubt of their being able to change their bread into the Living God and Saviour, nay, have they not even tortured and killed many for daring to call it

in question. And now let us suppose that Naylor fancied himself to be the Messiah, as *J. M.* asserts, which I utterly deny, yet, let us for a moment suppose he did so; whether is it worse to fancy a man to be Christ, or to say he can make Christ? or again, which is worse to say Christ is made of a man, or of a piece of bread? Alas, alas! if it be so presumptuous as I feel it to be, even to utter language to state the subject, how much more to practise the like throughout ages?

And seeing that when Satan was permitted to get an advantage over poor Naylor's unwatchfulness, he betrayed him at unawares into divers pomps and vanities, somewhat like *J. M.* and his brother bishops had wallowed in for ages, and of course polluted by a lust after the praise of men; was it any marvel then, that he should have to repent bitterly, when his compassionate Saviour cast an eye of pity upon him, to shew him where he was, and who he had got for company? even as we read of Peter, when he warmed himself in the palace of the high priest, with which warmth it appears, the hour and power of darkness came so far over him, that he knew not what he said, but even cursed and swore, as if to shew those about him, that he was no fanatic or enthusiast; for being then at the beck of Satan (who desired to sift him as wheat in a sieve,) he could soon shew him a short way, to appear as orthodox, and as good a fellow as any in company; but seeing he did it ignorantly, under that hour of darkness, his gracious Lord gave him a look of mercy and compassion, and that was enough; the powers of darkness fled before his eye, which is as a flame of fire, that Peter saw as in the twinkling of an eye, how vain it was to rely on his own strength; and saw where the high priests and all their multitude wherein they trusted were; and finally, saw his Lord's power over all, who, though he appeared alone, forsaken, and rejected of all, yet was stronger than all; and by his power, Peter was enabled to repent and weep bitterly, and to get quit of the palace of the high priest; now I might ask all such mockers as *J. M.* whether it is a dishonour to Peter's Lord and Master, that one of his favoured disciples should behave as Peter did; and that they all forsook him at that hour, and fled? but alas! they know it not? nor ever can, so long as they make a trade thereof, though they claim the whole as their own right.

As to the case of *J. Naylor*, I have no doubt of his being



## HIS ACCUSATIONS OF J. NAYLOR EXAMINED.

made a partaker of that unspeakable gift, even the gift of unfeigned repentance; but seeing *J. M.* and divers others of his order, &c., hold him forth as a “laughing stock” for the very design of slandering inspiration; I shall therefore subjoin a small specimen, out of the many testimonies which he published after the weight of his sufferings had abated; as I do not find much that he wrote while under extreme suffering, nay, not even to vindicate himself, or acknowledge his offence; as he did not then seem to think he had been in error, because many things were charged against him, of which he knew his own innocence, did probably make him the more backward in discerning his fault; and moreover he appears (even in his darkest moments) to be more afraid of betraying the truth, than even of death or suffering; yet far be it from me to advocate Naylor’s cause, as respects the man (“in the night of temptation”;) but seeing him so pointed at as an instance of the fallacy of inspiration, I would only insist, that his error came (even as himself saith) by not keeping watchful to the dictates of the spirit of truth; therefore his fall was so far from being a fault of inspiration, that it was because of the want or absence thereof, that the enemy got the advantage; yet so far as he was under the influence of the spirit of Christ, he was such a man, both before and after, as is rare to be found; and so far as he was any thing, must be wholly attributed to inspiration; and so far as he was nothing, or worse than nothing, came by the want or withdrawing thereof; and after all, what if he should be found in the great day, to be amongst those of whom the world was not worthy; and as it would be the basest of usage, to condemn a man without allowing him to speak for himself, I shall therefore give a few of his own expressions as follow.

*J. Naylor* saith “concerning Jesus Christ, who is the eternal  
 “word of God, by whom all things were made and upholden,  
 “who was before all time, but manifest in time for the recovery  
 “of lost man, which word became flesh, and dwelt among the  
 “saints, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;  
 “who did and doth dwell in the saints; who suffered and rose  
 “again, and ascended into Heaven, and is set at the right hand of  
 “God; to whom all power is given in heaven, and in earth;  
 “who filleth all places; he is the light of the world, but known

## HIS ACCUSATIONS OF J. NAYLOR EXAMINED.

“ to none but those who receive and follow Him ; and those he  
 “ leads up to God, out of all the ways, works, and worships of  
 “ the world ; by his pure light in them, whereby he reveals the  
 “ man of sin, and by his power casts him out, and so prepares  
 “ the bodies of the saints a fit temple for the pure God to dwell  
 “ in, with whom dwells no unclean thing, and thus he recon-  
 “ ciles God and man ; and the image of God which is purity  
 “ and holiness, is renewed ; and the image of Satan, which is  
 “ all sin and uncleanness is defaced. And none can witness re-  
 “ demption, further than Christ is thus revealed in them, to set  
 “ them free from sin ; which Christ I witness to be revealed in  
 “ me in measure.”—*Gal. i.—16.—2 Cor. xiii.—5.—Col. i.—27.*

“ Christ Jesus, the Emanuel, of whose sufferings the Scrip-  
 “ tures declare ; him alone I confess before men, for whose sake I  
 “ have denied whatever was dear to me in this world, that I  
 “ might win him and be found in him, and not in myself ; whose  
 “ life and virtue I find daily manifest in my mortal body (which  
 “ is my eternal joy and hope of glory,) whom alone I  
 “ seek to serve in spirit, soul, and body, night and day, ac-  
 “ cording to the measure of grace working in me, that in me he  
 “ may be glorified, whether by life or death, and for his sake  
 “ I suffer all things, that he alone may have the glory of my  
 “ change, whose work alone is in me ; even to that eternal spi-  
 “ rit be glory, and to the Lamb for ever.”

“ But to ascribe this name, power, or virtue, to James Naylor,  
 “ or that which had a beginning, and must return to dust ; or  
 “ for that to be exalted or worshipped ; to me is a great idolatry,  
 “ and with the spirit of Jesus in me is condemned, let his name  
 “ be exalted for ever, and let all flesh fear before him, whose  
 “ breath is life to his own, but a consuming fire to the adversary.  
 “ And to the Lord Jesus Christ be everlasting dominion upon  
 “ earth ; and his kingdom above all the powers of darkness ;  
 “ even that Christ of whom the Scriptures declare ; which was,  
 “ and is, and is to come, the light of the world to all genera-  
 “ tions ; who hath been the rock of my salvation ; and his spirit  
 “ hath given patience and quietness to my soul in deep affliction ;  
 “ even for his name sake, praises for ever.”

“ But condemned for ever be all those false worships, with  
 “ which any have idolized my person in the night of my tempta-  
 “ tion, when the power of darkness was above ; all their casting

## HIS ACCUSATIONS OF J. NAYLOR EXAMINED.

“ their clothes in the way, their bowings and singings, and all  
 “ the rest of those wild actions, which did any ways dishonour  
 “ the Lord, or draw the miuds of any from the measure of  
 “ Christ Jesus in themselves, to look at flesh, which is as  
 “ grass, or ascribe that to the visible, which belongs to Christ  
 “ Jesus ; all that I condemn, by which the pure name of the  
 “ Lord hath been any ways blasphemed through me, in the time  
 “ of temptation ; or the spirits of any people grieved, that truly  
 “ loved the Lord Jesus throughout the whole world, of what  
 “ sort soever.”

“ This offence I confess, which hath been sorrow of heart,  
 “ that the enemy of man’s peace in Christ, should get this ad-  
 “ vantage in the night of my trial, to stir up wrath and offences  
 “ in the creation of God ; a thing the simplicity of my heart  
 “ did not intend, the Lord knows, who, in his endless love,  
 “ hath given me power over it, to condemu it. So this I deny  
 “ also, that the name of Jesus was received instead of James  
 “ Naylor, for that name is to the seed to all generations, and  
 “ he that hath the Son hath the name, which is life and power,  
 “ the salvation and unction, into which name all the children  
 “ of the light are baptized.”

“ And all those ranting wild spirits, which gathered about me  
 “ in that time of darkness ; and all their wild actions and  
 “ wicked words against the honour of God, and his pure spirit  
 “ and people ; I deny that bad spirit, and the power and the  
 “ work thereof ; and as far as I gave advantage, through want  
 “ of judgment, for that evil spirit in any to arise, I take shame  
 “ to myself justly ; having formerly had power over that spirit  
 “ in judgment and discerning, wherever it was ; which darkness  
 “ came over me through want of watchfulness and obedience to  
 “ the pure eye of God, and diligently minding the reproof of  
 “ life, which condemns the adulterous spirit, and it is in my  
 “ heart to confess to God, and before man, my folly and offence  
 “ in that day, yet there were many things formed against me in  
 “ that day to take away my life, and bring scandal upon the  
 “ truth, of which I am not guilty at all.”

And so with an exhortation to the reader, to remind us how  
 to behave under temptation, and a warning against relying on  
 gifts, wisdom, or knowledge ; he concludes thus ; “ This I  
 “ have learned in the deeps, and in secret, when I was alone ;



“and now openly declare in the day of thy mercy, oh, Lord !  
 “glory to the highest for ever more, who hath thus far set me  
 “free to praise His righteousness and his mercy, and to the  
 “eternal, invisible, pure God, over all, be fear, obedience, and  
 “glory, evermore.” And now as the reader may desire to  
 know how J. Naylor ended his days, I shall add a few words  
 which he uttered about two hours before his death ; which ap-  
 pears to have been among strangers, who could not be suspected  
 of adding thereto.

Hear his last words, “There is a spirit which I feel that  
 “delights to do no evil, nor to avenge any wrong, but delights  
 “to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end ; its  
 “hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out  
 “all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary  
 “to itself ; it sees to the end of all temptations—as it bears no  
 “evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other ; if  
 “it be betrayed, it bears it ; for its ground and spring is the  
 “mercies and forgiveness of God ; its crown is meekness ; its  
 “life is everlasting love unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with  
 “entreaty, and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness  
 “of mind ; in God alone it can rejoice, though none else re-  
 “gard it, or can own its life ; it is conceived in sorrow, and  
 “brought forth without any to pity it ; nor doth it murmur at  
 “grief and oppression ; it never rejoiceth but through suffer-  
 “ings ; for with the world’s joy it is murdered. I found it  
 “alone being forsaken, I have fellowship therein with them who  
 “lived in dens and desolate places of the earth ; who through  
 “death, obtained this resurrection, and eternal holy life.”

It may appear singular that I should have dwelt so long upon  
 the case of J. Naylor ; but the necessity will appear obvious :  
 only to consider how he has been singled out by *J. Milner* as a  
 leading index, who (as he saith,) “like so many other dupes of  
 “a supposed private spirit, fancied himself to be the Mes-  
 “siah”—*letter vi.—page 35*—thus treacherously insinuating, that  
 so many as did profess to be guided by the spirit, fancied them-  
 selves to be the Messiah, and gives Naylor as a specimen of  
 them all in a lump ;\* therefore it seemed needful somewhat to

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\* *Milner* is still the more inexcusable in this vile perversion, because  
 it is a base violation of a preliminary which he himself proposed, stipulated,

describe the case of J. Naylor, in order to shew that his “so many other dupes”, were so far from fancying such a thing, that the accusation is false, even against Naylor himself, whom he gives as a sample; and I have also shewn, that the very thing that drew Naylor into the mire, was even wherein he fell into so gross a temptation, as to allow some of *Milner's* honors to be offered to him, though with less revolting presumption; seeing that whereas Naylor's crime consisted in suffering some wild people to idolize him (on account of his gifts;) yet *Milner's* infallible brethren have so far outshined the crime, as even to have devised tortures and death, to force people to fall down to the Gods which they make every day (even as *Milner* himself asserts—see *letter xxxvi.*) yea, and as if they should believe that the multitude and enormity of such crimes, should consecrate the whole cheat, so they repented not of such deeds; and I have likewise shewn, that none of those (he calls) “so many other dupes of a supposed private spirit,” ever joined Naylor in that thing, so far as respects any gathered society whatever, nay, but condemned it altogether, as did Naylor himself likewise; and should not the enormity of any offence vanish in the eye of an accuser; when true repentance takes place? therefore, doth not all those causes which he hath produced (with design to prove the fallacy of inspiration or the light) fall to the ground? or rather, are they not turned to his own condemnation, or confusion, except he repent?

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and insisted upon, as may be seen argued in many parts of his book, even as specified in *letter xxxii.*—page 4—5.—wherein he claims a right to “distinguish between their articles of faith, in which they must all agree, and the unauthorised devotions and practises of particular persons: I insist upon this preliminary,” &c. and although he thus stipulates, and insists as above, on behalf of his own cause, yet see how he violates it as respects others; not only charging a whole society with the unauthorised practice of a particular person, but even slandering that person, with that which never could be proved against him; and what crime is worse than to belie the dead, who cannot answer for themselves.

It seemed indispensably needful to explain these things, even for the sake of many of *J. Milner's* own profession, who have been so far imposed upon by such false assertions, that I have heard those slanders dealt out in large auditorys, who were referred to “the incomparable works of the learned and pious Dr. *Milner*,” as may also be seen printed in divers papers and pamphlets.

## HIS ACCUSATIONS OF J. NAYLOR EXPLAINED.

But was ever greater subtlety or fouler dealing, than to assert that those people profess a private or supposed inspiration or light? while he knew that the people he mentions, profess no private or supposed thing, but they openly profess the universal light and inspiration of the Almighty, according to Scripture; even that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world—*John* i.—9.—and the spirit, a manifestation of which is given to every man to profit withal—*1 Cor.* xii.—7.—and as Christ saith that our Heavenly Father would give the holy spirit to them that ask Him—*Luke* xi.—13.—and he is no respecter of persons—*Acts* x.—34.—*1 Peter* i.—17.

Thus they profess, as the Scriptures abundantly declare and promise, and many are living experimental witnesses of the certainty and efficacy thereof, who can set to their seal that God is true, and is not slack concerning his promise, but has been more to them than they could think or ask, and such are deeply sensible of the devices of the enemy, and his manifold temptations; and though some who profess the spirit, yet err therefrom, or even vex, or quench, or do despite thereunto, and so fall into such strange delusion as that the light in them should become darkness, I might ask *J. M.* how doth that prove inspiration or the light to be fallacious? or does it prove that men did not profess the certainty and universality of the light and spirit of Christ, because some men do not live as they profess? should their unbelief make void the promises of God?

I know of none that profess a private inspiration but his own priesthood; for according to his book, they have got the spirit all among themselves, and none else can receive it, only as it is marked upon the rotten branches of his Apostolic tree—see *letter* xx.—xxviii.—xxix.—surely there he asserts his own to be private indeed to a witness, if it be only conferred upon a few rabbies of one particular sect, for to deal it out as they please, or to make merchandize thereof, and of the people too, that so they might be esteemed (exclusively) as Gods, and called of men lord, holy, gracious, and reverend? yet is not this the order that *J. M.* would have called Catholic or universal, while he saith that others only profess a supposed private spirit? which is as gross a slander, as if he had said, that they profess a private or supposed Christ or God, or a private or supposed Scripture; thus he not only claims all as his own right, but also a liberty to



say what he chose of all others, even pushing his horns against them like Ahab's false prophet, who saith, "which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?"—2 *Chron.* xviii.—23. but is it against men or sects that he hath spoken? hath he not rather lifted up his horn against the glory of God, who will not be mocked, nor give his glory to another, whose promises are yea and amen forevermore; even that he that boweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting?—*Gal.* vi.—8.

And that spirit is the little spark which Robert Barclay alludes to, "that should grow to the consuming of whatsoever shall stand up to oppose it;" whereupon *J. M.* would note him as a false Prophet, because of the small appearance of increase to his society; but Barclay could mean no such increase exclusively, seeing that would be to contemplate a new system of Popery, by referring to one sect exclusively, nay, but mark, he doth not say a sect, or profession, but that little spark, which had arisen in a comparative small remnant, though acknowledged by some of divers denominations, as Barclay himself hath largely demonstrated; yea, and what he asserts that the Lord hath spoken (of the power and increase of that little spark) is no more than what the Scriptures abundantly declare should come to pass in the last days, nay, doth not even *J. M.* himself complain that it is now professed by various gathered societies.

But with respect to what he saith of the Moravian and Swedenborg; I must pass that slightly over, as I have not read their history, and desire not to swell these remarks; yet let me remind him by the way, that he might have spared some of his railing against the Count, whom he styles the Moravian Apostle; charging him with "disgusting obscene blasphemy;" I say he might have been more sparing of such language to others, if he could but seriously reflect upon the lordly arrogance and presumption of himself and his mitred brethren; nay, even to reflect how they have passed all bounds, in claiming to themselves an exclusive right to give laws to Heaven and Earth, to God and the world, even assuming a right to lead and guide the holy Spirit, as may be seen by the tenor of his book, while they teach for hire, and divine for money, though they see it condemned by Scripture, and what is there in the Mora-

vian so “disgustingly” opposed to the precepts and examples of the New Testament?

And seeing he compares Swedenburg to Mahomet; he might likewise be asked, where is the Mahometan that would assume such arrogant claims as he asserts for his Pope and brother bishops? but he saith, that “his God is a mere man, and his angels male and female; and his New Jerusalem little different from this sublunary world; yet I know of none that pictures out angels and the Almighty like unto a mere man except his own people; nay, I question if a Mahometan would be so profane as to do the like? and whereas he saith, that Swedenborg’s New Jerusalem is little different from this sublunary world, I could desire with all my heart, that he and his brethren had an eye to see the state of their own old Mother, which is in bondage, even to this day; alas! hath not Satan and his agents done much to settle the people down in so carnal a state, that much of their rites and ceremonies are even of this sublunary world itself? nay, are they not as really so, as ever a Heathen God was composed of gold, silver, brass, wood, or potters’ clay? oh! that they could lay these things to heart, seeing that however God may have winked at the times of ignorance, these are not such times with some of them; therefore, that men may (every where) repent, lest the great and terrible day come upon them, which cometh as a thief in the night.

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And whereas *J. M.* notes the extreme singular conduct of Johannah Southcote, and her seals or passports to Heaven (as he calls them:) one of which passports, he saith, was in his own possession; and therefore seeing that he has it in keeping, how well would it be for him to make a good use thereof? even by comparing it with some of his own indulgences or absolutions (which he so highly extols, as in *letter xli.*) that he may look wherein lieth the difference, yet there he may see a great difference indeed; even in the magnitude and enormity of the crime, when deeply stained with selfish motives. But what could he mean by saying she issues them at a very moderate price? does he mean that she has undersold him and his priests, like a spoil-trade? or does he mean to affix upon her the mark of such abominations as that of selling indulgences at any price, though never so moderate?

Yet let me say that I cannot believe she ever took money for them, because that is such a presumptuous species of iniquity, as hath rarely been devised since the days of Simon the sorcerer, (who got such a lesson from Peter, as should have done out that sort of traffic for ever) except with men of his cast, who claim a right to do as they please with Scripture, and with Peter too; and so through covetousness make merchandize of the people, even as Peter foretold that false teachers with feigned words should do, yea, such as he saith sport themselves with their own divinings; and it looks quite likely, that it is by way of sport, that he saith, Johanna “issues her passports at a very moderate price,” which he could not say in truth, if she took one penny for them, the paper not being worth a farthing; could a thing be called very moderate, at double value, even to say nothing of what such tricks may cost the poor soul? but it is likely that he would account it infamous presumption in a poor idle girl, to take on to imitate his great princely poutiffs, in writing or issuing indulgences, or (as he calls them) “passports to Heaven;” but is not the magnitude and enormity of such a crime, rather aggravated, in proportion as the honor, dignity, or wisdom of man is concerned therein? and as the Lord will not give his glory to great men of the earth, what shall we say to such as provoke Him to jealousy by the bruit of their arrogance?

But feeling as I do, my utter incapacity to set forth the glaring abomination of highly esteemed rabbies; claiming to themselves, a supremacy over the gifts and callings of the Most High, I may only refer to a text, even as may be read in the xl. xli. xlii. and xlvi. chapters of Isaiah, which speaketh on this wise; “Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? with whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding? behold, the nations before him are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; all nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity, to whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? it is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,



“ and the inhabitants thereof are as grass-hoppers ; that stretch-  
 “ eth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a  
 “ tent to dwell in ; that bringeth the princes to nothing ; he  
 “ maketh the judges of the earth as vanity ; yea, they shall not  
 “ be planted ; yea, they shall not be sown ; yea, their stock  
 “ shall not take root in the earth ; and he shall also blow upon  
 “ them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take  
 “ them away as stubble : to whom then will ye liken me, or  
 “ shall I be equal ? saith the Holy One.”

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Although I have followed *J. M.* at some length, even far beyond my design or inclination, I might have made short work of it, and have given the subject quite a different turn, so as to answer all his slanders in one page ; but seeing him so wise in his own eyes, and prudent in his own sight ; (even as a debt due to his own people, and for the sake of the simple-hearted,) I thought right to set forth a specimen of the subtlety of his reasoning, by thus reminding him that the very worst crime he has produced against others (as fruits of the fallacy of inspiration) hath been outsinned by his own popes, saints, and bishops, even beyond comparison ; for if those he calls fanatics, did imitate them in some of their wild and more harmless sallies of folly, yet they did not participate in the more foul and deep-stained thirst for gain and pre-eminence, which was acquired and upheld by that cruelty and oppression, against which the Scriptures denounce fearful vengeance, yet what I have said, is so far from glancing at the whole of such like fruits as might fill volumes, that I only mean hereby to remind them to look whether these things are so, even to a hundred fold.

And yet as I said, I might have made short work, and have given it quite another turn, seeing that if even all those he mentioned, and ten thousand beside, should profess the spirit, while they lived contrary thereunto, that would be no proof that inspiration or the light was fallacious, no more than it was, when the Lord's spirit strove with the old world, though they rebelled against it, until he brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly ; would it not be blasphemy, to charge the Lord with their unrighteous deeds, while they rebelled and grieved his spirit ? as in *Genesis* vi.

And after he brought Israel out of Egypt with an outstretched arm ; seeing that by their gainsaying and disobedience their car-

## OF THE MORAVIAN, SWEDENBORG, AND JOHANNAH SOUTHCOTE.

cases fell in the wilderness ; yet who would dare to say, that the fault lay with the Lord, or with the leader he provided for them ? did not Caleb and Joshua prove, that nothing could harm them that followed the Lord fully ?—And again, after their children were settled in their inheritance in the promised land, (and were fed to the full) they forsook the Lord's statutes and judgments, and rejected the warnings and admonitions of his spirit, even through his prophets (whom they used despitefully) until he gave them over to spoil, devastation and captivity ; now although that dispensation of types and figures, was weak in comparison of the gospel substance, yet even then, who would dare to say, that the cause of their sins, and consequent calamity, was owing to the fallacy of the law, the statutes, and judgments, which the Lord had given, yea, and which they professed, even while they did violence thereunto, and thus I might have refuted all his vaunting slurs against inspiration and the light, by only referring to the Apostles' assertion, who saith, “ what if some did not believe ; shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ? God forbid ; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”—See *Roms.* iii.—3.—4.

But is not this very *J. M.* a more determined son of confusion, than even the men of old Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar ? for according to his creed, they should have condemned the profession of Daniel and his fellows, because they were so few in number, and because their God had suffered them to fall into the sins that brought them into that sore captivity ; and because Daniel could not bow down to their universally acknowledged God ; yet we find, that although those Chaldean nations, professed one universal tone of unity with the sound of Nebuchadnezzars' golden image ; nevertheless, they appear to have attributed all Daniel's excellence to the inspiration of the Almighty ; even to the excellent spirit which was in him : yea, and (bad as they were) we do not find them to be such superstitious unbelieving sorcerers, as to attribute any part of his gifts, to the efficacy of traditions, creeds, rites, or ceremonies, but unto the Lord alone, nay, and I doubt not, but they shall rise in the judgment against our modern sons of Babel, and condemn them ; for if their eye was not blinded by the God of this world, they might perceive many, even in these latter ages, which have borne a powerful testimony to the glorious light of the gospel day, yea, and have borne the genuine marks of an excellent spirit,

though such as receive the mark of the beast can never discern it.

And now to sum up the whole conclusion of the matter, I may remind *J. M.* and his brother mockers (who have so foully exulted over the slippings of *J. Naylor* and others,) that had they even a grain of sincerity, or the fear of the Lord, they might have turned such like failings to a very different account, even for their own instruction, instead of blaspheming the light or spirit of truth, by attributing their errors to the profession thereof; I say, they might have turned it all to a very good account for their own warning; even by reflecting, that if one so gifted and favoured might fall, what need then they had to fear, especially if they could but look at home, and behold in themselves, crimes, of a tenfold deeper dye, red as crimson, even stained with selfish objects and devices; all of which must needs be hid from their eyes, while they sport with the single temptation of a man, and forget that no man could recount their own errors, or causing the people to err, and if their leading error be of such magnitude, as to assert, that their Church can never err nor fall; is not that as great a masterstroke of error as ever the devil brought into the world, whereby the poor unwary soul is emboldened to slight or set at naught the most solemn forewarnings which our Saviour hath left for our preservation? which is even set forth in divers lively parables and admonitions, to watch, &c., lest our house should be broken up, nay, but hath he not even forewarned us of the danger that should await so pure a state as that compared to a house cleansed and garnished? yet even there, the old unclean spirit might enter in again, with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, insomuch that the last state should be worse than before—see *Mat. xii.—44.—Luke xi.—25.—Mat. xxiv.—43.—Luke xii.—39.*—Who is he then that would dare assert, that his house or church state could never fall or be broken up? nay, doth not these warnings as nearly concern churches as individuals? surely yes, seeing that which concerns one soul, no less concerns one hundred, or one million; wherefore, seeing that *J. M.* fearlessly, or rather fearfully asserts that his church could not err or fall, I mean therefore in the following pages, to endeavour somewhat to point out the fallacy and danger of such presumptuous self-security, as being plain contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture testimony throughout, even from *Genesis* to *Revelations*.



## SECTION V.

*Some reflections on J. Milner's assertions of the Pope's incontrovertible title to a true line of Apostolical succession, derived from Peter, &c., proving, that any such claim to a carnal human succession of flesh and blood, is clean contrary to the order, nature, and spirituality of the gospel dispensation.*

**H**AVING in the foregoing pages, followed *J. Milner* at some length, combating the reflections and slanders which he holds forth, in order (as he says) to prove inspiration fallacious; but mark, I have not followed him in calling it private or supposed, because that could have no meaning, except to belie men who do not so profess it, or to make void the promise of God, but alas, alas! are not all his proofs and devices so futile as to prove nothing, except fully to demonstrate that he is a stranger to the light and inspiration of God, and knows not what it is?

And inasmuch as I have gone thus far, in my poor feeble endeavours, to advocate the cause of such as believe in the inspiration of the Almighty, and of course the cause of Scripture, which testifies thereof; (though that needs no man's testimony, being manifest to every conscience that loves the light;) and seeing that he takes on to prove, that it was ordained of the Lord, that a gospel priesthood should be transmitted by men, from one to another, who still should retain power to transmit the same down to others, even in a regular unbroken chain or order of succession, like as men transmit and obtain a title to an earthly inheritance, which title (as he asserts) hath been transmitted down to his own priesthood, and vested in them to the exclusion of all others, even as he sets forth in *letter x. &c.*, a short extract whereof is as follows, viz—“that heretics are not to be  
 “allowed to appeal to Scripture, since they have no claim to it;  
 “hence it is proper to address them as follows:—who are you?  
 “whence do you come? what business have you strangers with  
 “my property? by what right are you Marcian, felling my  
 “trees? by what authority are you Valentine, turning the course

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“of my streams? under what pretence are you, Appelles, removing my land-marks? the estate is mine; I have the ancient, the prior possession of it; I have the title deeds delivered to me by the original proprietors; I am the heir of the Apostles; they have made their will in my favour, while they disinherited, and cut you off as strangers and enemies.”

Such are the sentiments which *J. M.* quotes, in order to set forth the exclusive right and authority which his Church claims, by a line of succession transmitted to her from the Apostles; quoting likewise, that “whoever therefore refuses to follow the practice of the Church, resists Christ himself, who by his testimony, recommends this Church;”—but seeing that such like quotations should swell these remarks far beyond my limits; I may only refer the reader to his book throughout, especially to *letter x.—xi.—xii.—xiv.—xxvi.—xxvii.—xxviii.—xl.—xli. &c.* And seeing that he claims all for his own order, to the exclusion of all others, it seems time to examine the veracity or validity of his “title deeds,” if happily he could perceive in time, that the very position alone, whereby he essays to prove his exclusive title to the gospel of the kingdom of Heaven, should prove him a usurper, without further demonstration.

Wherefore, in order to contrast the tenor of the gospel covenant with his subtil fictions, I would (in the first place) draw the attention of the reader to that which the Scriptures doth testify of the gospel state, even of the heavenly order thereof, and then proceed to bring his title more fully to the test.—And this appears the more suitable, as being the sum and substance of the cause which I am advocating, even to assert, that the gospel or new covenant, came not of man, nor after the law of any carnal commandment, succession, or tradition; neither doth it consist of carnal ordinances or a worldly sanctuary, seeing that the very rituals of the old law, which was ordained by divine command under the dispensation thereof; are in the new testament, called carnal ordinances, to distinguish the order thereof from that of the new, or gospel covenant, which is powerfully held forth as being purely a ministration of the spirit see *Jer. xxxi.* and *Heb. vii.—viii.—ix.—x.* chapters, there we may read the order of the new covenant, which the Lord would make with his people through Christ, the adorable mediator thereof, which is also shadowed forth, and pointed out, even in the types and figures of the

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law, and foretold by the prophets, and all fulfilled by Christ, even as abundantly declared by his Apostles and faithful witnesses, who were made partakers of the power, life, and substance thereof; insomuch, that I fear that any quotation I may instance, might rather tend to contract the view which we should take of the spirituality of the gospel covenant; seeing that the whole points thereunto, even from the promise of the seed that should bruise the Serpent's head, to the day that Abraham was called out from his country, and from his father's house, to the departure of Israel out of Egypt; with all the offerings, purifications, and punctualities of the law; the promised land, the judges, kings, and temple, and especially the prophets; all pointing to the one promised seed, that now calls people out of spiritual Egypt, even out of the spirit, life, and ways of this evil world, unto a heavenly spiritual nature and country; wherein by the one offering, he would enable them to be co-workers together with his grace; whereby they are sanctified and saved; even by Christ, the anointed, the heavenly leader, who should lead them out, and so become their priest to sanctify them, and their judge, law-giver, and king, to rule them in righteousness, even in the heavenly spiritual land flowing with milk and honey, wherein is the temple made without hands; even the house from heaven to dwell and worship in, yea, even in the spirit and in the truth; and such the Father is seeking to worship him in spirit; even such as have no confidence in the flesh; being gathered from all mountains of profession in the world; (whereon people stray, wander, and famish) into his own name, even to Christ the heavenly spiritual man, the good shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep, whom he gathers in his heavenly spiritual sheep-fold, where he oversees them, and feeds them with his spiritual bread from Heaven, even his own spirit and life.

And thus, in the volume of the book it is written of him, of whom Moses in the law, David in the psalms, and the prophets did write; that his children should be all taught of God in the new covenant;—see *John vi.*—even as we read, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt? because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded



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“ them not, saith the Lord : for this is the covenant that I will  
 “ make with them after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put  
 “ my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and  
 “ will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people : and  
 “ they shall not teach every man his neighbour and brother,  
 “ saying, know the Lord : for all shall know me from the least  
 “ to the greatest\* for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,  
 “ and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more—in  
 “ that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old.  
 “ Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish  
 “ away.”—See *Jer.* xxxi.—and *Hebrews* viii. and x. chapters.

“ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will  
 “ pour out of my spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your  
 “ daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions,  
 “ and your old men shall dream dreams ; and on my servants  
 “ and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my  
 “ spirit, and they shall prophecy.”—See *Joel* ii.—*Acts* ii.—thus  
 the Old and New Testament concur, in proclaiming the glad  
 tidings of the gospel ; even as Jesus saith, “ And it is written in  
 “ the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God.”—*John* vi.  
 45. *Isaiah* liv.—13.

But as I said before, that any quotation I should make, might  
 rather tend to contract than expand the view thereof, seeing the  
 whole Bible points to the fulness of that grace and truth which  
 comes by Jesus Christ, who came to redeem lost man, and to  
 teach his people by his spirit ; who himself announced the ap-  
 proach of that heavenly day, as never man spoke, saying, “ the  
 Kingdom of Heaven is at hand ;” whose Disciples also pro-  
 claimed the same.—And blessed are the people who know that  
 joyful sound, even the sound of that Heavenly Spiritual Kingdom,  
 which all that is of God tendeth unto ; and Jesus saith, my King-  
 dom is not of this world, so mark then, the gospel refers to ano-  
 ther life, another nature and influence, as all the heirs thereof  
 must be born from above, or they cannot even see the Kingdom

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\* Now mark, is not the promise of that day, wherein one should not teach  
 another saying know the Lord (but all should know Him from the least to  
 the greatest) a clear annulling of all legal priesthoods that ever was appointed  
 at any time, when the office thereof should revert unto Him who is without  
 beginning of time or end of days.

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of God.—*John* iii.—3.—and who would dare to say, that any mortal man could effect such a change as could only be wrought by the Lord alone, the Creator of all things? and what has that to do with a mere human succession, or change of notion or sentiment, or a conformity to the doctrines or tradition of men, though esteemed never so correct; seeing that the most zealous votaries thereof, might still be carnal and walk as men?

But doth not *J. M.* say, that Scripture is nothing to us, nor yet to all the world, besides his own priesthood, nay, even saying, they are their goods and property? as if the Lord had given both the Scriptures, and all souls in the universe into their hand, by an unalterable grant, renewable for ever, or to the end of time, to be transmitted to whom they will; as if the Lord Almighty had abdicated his own right and prerogative, and made all over to them, in his last will and testament; alas, alas! it seems horrible, even like blasphemy, to set forth a few of the inferences inseparable from such doctrine, when we behold many parts of his book, speaking as if they had gotten the title-deeds of this world and that above; even to make saints in heaven, and heretics on earth, of whom they will; asserting that none can discern the true meaning of Scripture beside themselves, to whom the precious repository was bequeathed? as if the Almighty could not speak to be understood without them, or that none should understand his speech beside themselves—see *letter* x.—*page* 90.—*letter* xii.—*page* 118.—*letter* xxxii.—*page* 4.

Was ever the like heard, to say that a will was made in their favour, and a legacy bequeathed to them from the Apostles, even while none should ever understand that will but the legatees themselves; and to say that they have such a grant transmitted to them from Peter, prince of the Apostles, even while they cannot prove, that Peter himself ever understood that he should be prince of all the Apostles; neither did the other Apostles ever understand such a thing, nor can the like be discovered in all their writings or demeanour; nay, but they were taught that none should exercise lordship dominion or authority among them—see *Matt.* xx.—25.—26.—*Mark* ix.—35.—36.—37.—*Luke* ix.—46.—47.—48—which is a clear and decided refutation, and overthrows all their claim to a succession from Peter, insomuch that no more need be said to prove the fallacy of such

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pretensions ; for if the Apostles could not exercise such dominion or pre-eminence, neither claimed nor asserted the like, how then can men claim such a thing as deriving under their authority ? nay, but suppose even for a moment, that they had such authority in consequence of their peculiar gifts ; yet it would not thence follow, that the Pope is Peter's successor ; and therefore I deem this so full and decided an answer to all such pretensions, that I need not add one word more on the subject ; for if the Apostles themselves never knew or owned such a thing, but quite the contrary, why then should we believe that the priests knew what the Apostles neither knew nor admitted ; but always disclaimed ? for I challenge any man to prove that ever the Apostles owned, admitted, or acknowledged Peter to be high priest, or chief priest, or prince of all the Apostles, or universal Apostle, or universal Bishop, or any Dignitary that could any ways tally with that of Pope ; or let them prove if they be able, that Peter himself ever believed that he held such a station, or acted in such a capacity ; which position (as I said,) so clearly overthrows all their claims to a succession from Peter, that nothing further need be said to refute it ; yet nevertheless, for the sake of the simple-hearted, and that the crafty may be left without excuse, I shall offer some plain simple observations on that subject.

And I may say first of all, that, that which makes their claim to such singular favour and exclusive infallibility the more revolting, is, that wherein our Saviour laid the axe to the root of all such carnal human claims to succession, in his reasoning with the Jews, whose speech was stout against him, because they laid claim to succession, as being the children of Abraham, in whose seed all nations should be blessed ; and they boasted of sitting in Moses chair, saying “ we know that God speak unto “ Moses ;” and Jesus told them he knew they were Abraham's seed, and yet they were of their father the devil, because they did his works ; “ Jesus saith, verily, verily, whosoever “ committeth sin is the servant of sin ; and the servant abideth “ not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth for ever.”—*John* viii.—34.—35.—there we see, that “ whosoever committeth sin is “ the servant of sin ; and the servant abideth not in the house “ for ever ;” and if they could not abide in the house, how much less could they preside for ever, over the household of



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God, even suppose they did once exercise that function? yet we see that sin should set aside both them and their authority, or church state, while yet “the Son abideth ever;” who alone rules in his own house or kingdom, and giveth to whomsoever he will, and as he will; so then, it is clear as the sun, that if the Popes commit sin, they cannot preside over the house of God, if ever they did at any time, preside over it.

And thus having touched very slightly upon this ever memorable passage, which deeply concerns us all, while it is pointed at succession, so I leave the remainder for *J. M.* to expound, seeing he claims the exclusive right and qualification, which (if he should be enabled to give it one honest glance,) he may see, will clearly overturn all his (or any man’s) presumptuous claim to a human succession under the gospel; and let him also remember this first of all, that no Scripture is of any private interpretation.

And now I may remind him by the way, that even the very few detached pieces of texts upon which he grounds such a claim, would be sufficient to disprove, or overthrow it altogether, even suppose no more had been written to the point; and first, he quotes our Saviour’s address to Peter; when he asked his disciples, “whom say ye that I am? Peter answered thou art “Christ, the Son of the Living God; Jesus saith unto him, “blessed art thou Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not “revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven; “and I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I “build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail “against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of “Heaven; and whatsoever thou bind on Earth shall be bound in “Heaven; and what thou loose on Earth shall be loosed in “Heaven.”

Of all this he saith, that his Pope is the sole heir and successor, even by a regular uninterrupted line of succession from Peter himself, even though Peter saith, “that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,” yet behold to what a private contracted purpose they would wrest a text, to promote their selfish schemes of pre-eminence, seeing that this their interpretation is private in a two-fold sense, as first, if it be only subservient to the object of their supremacy, it can then apply in no other case besides that of the Pope’s individual priority;

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and secondly, how private is that thing as respects the interpreters themselves, which (as they say,) is hid from all the world, except as their own priests may explain ?

Alas! doth not all this prove the gross carnality, unbelief, and darkness of their mind, who saith, that God, who is no respecter of persons, should so far be a respecter of Peter, and the Popes? nay, even Peter himself was not respected merely as a man, but as a believer, even on account of that faith in which the nations are blessed; and so he received the blessing, in common with all that obtain like precious faith—see *2 Peter* i.—i.—and though he appears to be the first of the disciples on whom the blessing is pronounced, because he was first to answer who Christ was, which proved him to be strong in faith, therefore his Lord and Master pronounced the blessing upon his state, which yet sets forth or illustrates the unspeakable blessings of the gospel day, then dawning upon the world of believers, rather than any thing exclusive to Peter as a man; for what is there promised to Peter, more than is applied to all true Christians according to their measure of faith, though few there be that believe it even to this day? Paul saith, a crown of righteousness is laid up for all them that love his appearing—*2 Tim.* iv. viii.—and *Revelations* saith, to him that overcometh I will give the morning star, and the same shall be clothed in white, &c., and I will confess his name before my Father, &c., and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down from Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name, &c.—read *Revs.* iii. chapter.

Mark then, the New Jerusalem cometh down from God out of Heaven, unto such as overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, through faith, not through a carnal succession of high-priests; nay, what more was promised to Peter than to the faithful in the afore-named churches? Jesus saith to him, thou art Peter, which signifies a rock or stone, so there, Peter having partaken of the divine nature through faith in the revelation of God, is saluted with a reference to the name of that whereof he had partaken, for God is called a rock, even the stone which the wise master builders rejected.—*Matt.* xxi. 42.—*Acts* iv. 11.—and so Peter calls him the living and the chief corner-stone laid in Sion; very far indeed from calling himself a chief stone above

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that of his brethren, whom he calls new born babes, and lively stones, who come to Christ the foundation stone—see 1 *Peter* 2.—ii.—iv.—v.—vi. &c.—and *Revelations* 22.—iv.—saith, “his servants shall serve him, and his name shall be in their foreheads,” mark, (his name in their forehead) oh! ye that are so dark and carnal as to set all this down to the account of a mere compliment paid to Peter, in honour of the Popes? alas, alas! can ye make nothing more than this of it?

Did ever man conceive a more carnal or degrading notion of the heavenly language addressed to Peter? or could any thing be more opposed to the import thereof? (or more flatly contradict all the promises made unto the gospel state,) than to apply the whole to a carnal line of great lordly successors, of men after the flesh, even of flesh and blood? and thereby make the gospel covenant, more carnal, earthly, and legal, than that of the law itself? while yet they would rob it of all the certainty peculiar to the levitical priesthood.

Well hath Our Lord and Saviour said, “the thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy; I am come that they might have life,—&c.” I am the door of the sheep, and he that climbeth up any other way is a thief and a robber” which stands a solemn caution to every state the world over; but have they not robbed people of their souls, their money, their sense, and their certainty, who bring them into bondage to themselves, who are but flesh and blood? for all that climb up by man, climbeth up some other way than by Christ, even while they steal his words, who saith, flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but my Father which is in heaven.—Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and thus he shewed Peter, and shews all that come unto him, that it is upon the immovable rock of the revelation of the Father, he would build his church, and unto the offspring of that revelation, he would give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, yea, and the binding and loosing, which his own children alone can feel, through the power of the Father revealed in them; which draws them to the son, who saith, “no man knoweth the son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.” *Mat.* xi.—27.

There we have a heavenly description of the way to the Kingdom of Heaven, which is Christ, even Christ within the hope—



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of glory; for he is the way and the door, even as the revelation of the Father is the key which opens that heavenly door, brings into Christ, who is the door; and they that thus come unto him (by the drawings of the Father) he will in no wise cast out; even such as from a deep sense of the sinfulness of sin, and need of a Redeemer; are drawn to the Saviour; Oh blessed state, wherein the heart is so drawn unto Him, who saith, "no man can come unto me except the Father draw him, thus saith He that is the door, who saith, I am the good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep, but he that is an hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling."

Yet doth not the hireling say, that the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are given unto him, (who is but flesh and blood?) and doth he not say, that no man can come to Christ but by his means? nay doth he not say, pay me my hire, and conform to my tradition, and I will bring you to Christ, though Christ saith, no man can come to me except the Father draw him? now which should we believe the hireling, or our Mediator and Redeemer, who saith, no man can come to me except the Father draw him? yet doth not the hireling say; only conform and I shall bring you unto Him? (and what is the hireling's hire, but a name and fame amongst men, with the gain thereby arising from their quarter?) now must he not be a sad robber indeed, to take the hire, and promise to do what no man can do, seeing no man can come to Christ, or to His Kingdom, except the Father draw him? and how much less can he admit or exclude others? yet doth not the hireling say, I have gotten the keys, and can admit or exclude whomsoever I will, and thus would turn even the Lord himself out of his own prerogative?

But could any language strike more pointedly at their rotten claim to a divine succession, than that which our Lord spoke to Peter, who saith, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but my Father?" is not flesh and blood equivalent to man? and if no man could reveal it then, how should he reveal it now? so there he excludes flesh and blood for ever, and builds all upon the sure foundation of revelation, whereby his sheep know him, even as he knows them; and by a reciprocity of nature, calls them by name; and so the Lord hath not abdicated his own right in favour of any order of men, (who are but flesh and blood) as some arrogantly contend; nay, but are they not on

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the side of the gates of hell, who pleaded for a man-made, self-created, carnal succession, after flesh and blood, seeing that we find the world, the flesh, and the devil, all classed together? and yet we may see to our comfort and admiration, that all these have not been able to prevail against that which is built upon the rock of revelation unto this day; even though the world, together with the high priests of these times, say all manner of evil against it, because they know it not.

And that is the glory of this heavenly spiritual dispensation, even that it is hid from the wise and prudent of this world, (though revealed to babes,) yea, even from the wise scribes, and renowned rabbies of these days, as sure as ever it was when he walked amongst men; for all the wisdom of their wise ones, with all their renowned councils or synods, could never shew a man even so much as the nature of one sin, nor enable him availingly to say, God be merciful to me a sinner; how then should they reveal the Saviour, which redeems lost man out of sin, and from the consequent guilt thereof? nay it is above them, even as heaven is higher than the earth, so are his ways above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts.\*

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\* While posing over the folly and arrogance of carnal men pretending to have gotten the very keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, I am tempted to relate a little story, which is too trifling to mix with the present subject, howbeit (as respects the man) I might draw a comparison therefrom, more innocent than their pretensions, though it be no more than this—That some years ago, I being in company with a poor man, who spoke of the globe, as if he designed to expand my ideas as a brother simpleton; so he told me that the world was always going round, and made motions to shew that it turned upon an axletree, like a cart wheel; I only asked him, if he thought the axletree was made of iron or brass, &c. which so stopped him, that he took the hint, and laughed at his own folly, to meddle with a thing so far above human comprehension; now I have just thought of these rare beings, who say, that they exclusively, have gotten the keys of Heaven; if they were asked, whether their keys be made of iron, or brass, or of silver, or gold? or whether they might be composed of crowns, thrones, or dignities, like that of princes? or of learning, wisdom, or knowledge, like philosophers? or of mitres and robes, like those of cardinals? or of many ceremonies, traditions, and long prayers, like the Pharisees or Gentiles, whom our Lord upbraids with thinking to be heard for their much speaking? I say, if they were asked, whether these, or any part of them, should be their keys or a component part thereof? I fear they would not prove so ingenuous as poor

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Could any language be more descriptive of the nature and fulness of the gospel state, than Christ's address to Peter? even as he had announced, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and seeing that he himself is the Heavenly King, all his subjects should know him by his own nature, even as Peter saith, of being partakers of the divine nature begotten of the Heavenly Father: so we see the blessing pronounced to that state to which the Father is revealed, which is born not of flesh and blood, but of the immortal seed of the kingdom, which through faithfulness inherit the blessings and unspeakable gifts of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Christ saith is at hand, yea, he saith, the Kingdom of Heaven is within you; and that is according to the promise of the new covenant, wherein all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and in righteousness established, and so are established in the kingdom, even as he saith, behold I make a new covenant; not according to the covenant that I made with them when I brought them out of Egypt, &c., but this is the covenant that I will make with them saith the Lord; I will put my law in their mind, and write it in their hearts; and they shall not (or need not) say one to another, know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them; and so they should know their sins and their iniquities forgiven; as in *Jer.* xxxi.—and *Hebs.* viii. and x. chapters, &c. there we read “in that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old; and that which waxeth old was ready to vanish away?” and if Jesus first saluted Peter with the blessing of that covenant, whereby an entrance should be abundantly ministered into his Heavenly Kingdom; was it not in consequence of that faith which was accounted for righteousness? even faith in the revelation of that spiritual covenant, which the Father had promised from the beginning; as Peter himself bears witness.—*2 Peter* i. 3. 4.

And seeing that Peter was so blessed through faith; is not that a loud call to us, to beware lest by unbelief any fail of the free grace of God? who as Peter saith, is no respecter of persons,

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Byrne, to acknowledge candidly that it was above their comprehension (as carnal men or popes, &c.) seeing that God had not only the keeping of the keys, but the disposing of them for whom they are prepared, through the manifestation or revelation of his own eternal spirit, that no flesh may glory.



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and who himself saith, according to thy faith be it unto thee ; and yet if we believe not in his new covenant of light and grace, but still say, there is yet nothing to be had but according to the old covenant after a carnal human succession, is not our destruction of ourselves, even while such help is offered from the Lord ?

Now mark, the new covenant aforesaid, could not be according to the old ; which was according to a succession of priests under the law, of types, figures, and ceremonies ; which priests offered daily for the sins of the people, &c., but now the Lord saith, the gospel covenant should not be according thereto, but new and spiritual, even home to every heart and conscience, piercing the very thoughts, intent, and nature thereof ; to the setting up of judgment and righteousness there, that so he might shew mercy ; and that is the sum and substance of all that was pointed to in the lively figures of the Old Testament ; even to Christ, who was a priest for ever, after the order of him who is without beginning of days or end of life—not after the order of priests that die and have infirmities, no such thing ; he is not come as a shadow of the shadows of the old law, merely to transfix Gentile priests into the place of the sons of Levi—nay, verily, but he (the living substance of all the figures of the law) saith, “ I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly ;” so he came to bring in a new and living way, yea, even by his coming to open a direct communication with mankind ; not through the medium of carnal priests ; seeing that would be no better than the old covenant ; and to say that such covenant should be better, would seem blasphemously, even to charge the Almighty with weakness or shortness in the covenant he gave through Moses, while yet there could be no shortness on his part, nay, but all the shortness was of man, and should so remain, until that order of priesthood which could never take away sins was at an end, which was fulfilled and ended in Christ ; who came in the fulness of time, even in the end of the world, once for all, by the sacrifice of himself, to make an end of sin, and of that worldly sanctuary and priesthood that could not take away sins ; mark then, his coming is emphatically called the end of the world ;—read *Heb.* vii. viii. and ix. chapters—and that will apply in divers ways, even as it doth to the

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end of all the priesthoods in the world, as well as to put an end to sin, and redeem the believer out of the evils of the world, (which those priests never could do,) and in the room thereof to set up his Heavenly Kingdom, whereof himself should be the king, priest, and lawgiver, even to redeem his people unto himself, and make them kings and priests unto God; not only giving them dominion over the world, the flesh, and the devil; but presenting their pure offerings, as the one blessed mediator, who alone is worthy for evermore, read *Rev. v.*, &c.

Yet doth not the hireling say, nay, but we are ordained as mediators? and that salvation and redemption must be through us exclusively, like unto the old covenant, even through a succession of high priests, &c? and that the people should not know the Lord for themselves, neither would he so forgive their iniquities according to his promises, unless they themselves who come in succession like the old covenant, should undertake for them? nay further, have they not even said, that it is needful to pay them money for the remission of sins, both for the living and the dead? or if not, they are grossly belied, even by their own people, whom *J. M.* saith are all of one mind? now whether is it safer to believe and obey Christ and his Apostles, who testify of the spirit which is the heavenly key, or to follow them, and come into bondage to their carnal ordinances and traditions, who say they possess the keys by a regular line of succession like that of the old covenant, which yet differs widely, in that it is no ways so certain as the old, only that it is certain not to be of the law nor of the gospel?

But the new covenant or gospel dispensation, is confirmed to the believer, by two most certain evidences, both of which agree in one, even as they are witnessed by the children of the light, and of the day, yea, of Christ's day, which Abraham rejoiced to see; the certainty of which day is confirmed by the concurring testimony of patriarchs, prophets, Christ and his apostles, as recorded in Scripture; and also by the sure and most certain evidence of the revelation of that spirit whereof they testify, even the manifestation of that spirit which revealed Christ unto Peter, whereby they can adopt that Scripture which saith, who is a rock save our God—*Psalms* xviii. xxxi.—and Christ is called the rock that followed Israel in the wilderness, and he is called a rock throughout Scripture.—See *Deut.* xxxiv. 4. 15. 18. 30.

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& xxxiii. 3.—*Psalm* xix. 14. & xxviii. 1. & xxxi. 2. 3. & xlii. 9. & lxii. 2. 6. 7. & lxxviii. 37. & lxxxix. 26. & xc. 1.—*Isaiah* viii. 14. & xvii. 10. & xxvi. 4. & xliv. 8.—*Matt.* xvi. 18.—*Roms.* ix. 33.—1 *Cor.* x. 4.—1 *Peter* ii. 8. &c.

There we may see without controversy, that Christ is proclaimed to be the rock, and that is the rock and foundation upon which alone the Church of the New Testament is built; and other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ—1 *Cor.* iii. 11.—there, he alone is the foundation, and not Peter; and all that come to him through the revelation of the Father, know him to be one and his name one; and he writes his name upon them giving them the white stone with the new name, even the name of the City of God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down from Heaven, &c.—compare *Rev.* ii. 12. and ii. 17. xxi. 3.

So we may see that our Saviour's address to Peter, is admirably illustrative of his blessed day which had then dawned upon the world, (even that day which Abraham rejoiced to see,) wherein God should be eminently manifest, as the rock, refuge, and foundation of his people, whom he should make as lively stones in his heavenly spiritual house—see 1 *Peter* ii. 5.—To a true believer therein he might say, thou art Peter, (a lively stone) to be laid upon that rock of the revelation of the Father, whereon I build my Church, &c. Mark he saith, I build my Church, so he is the rock, the foundation, and the builder of his own house, and not Peter; though he be a precious stone, laid upon Christ the eternal rock and foundation, which he found by digging deep, beyond all that is of flesh and blood, man or priest; even to the revelation of the Father in himself.

And such only are the wise builders, who come to the rock by digging deep, even feeling and knowing the foundation for themselves, and do as Christ saith; but such as only hear what flesh and blood saith, and only take other men's word, are the foolish builders, who build upon the sand; their building is without a foundation, who build upon that of man; whether of themselves or others; if it be of man it is no foundation; compare *Mat.* vii. with *Luke* vi. which agrees with 1 *Cor.* iii. 11, saying "other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is "Jesus Christ;" (so he is the foundation and not Peter,) therefore, whoever builds upon succession or tradition, or science,



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or thrones, or dignitaries, &c., they build upon man, or upon flesh and blood, and so build without a foundation; for no man can lay another foundation than Jesus Christ; he alone is the Prince and Saviour, that not only bringeth home conviction to the sinner, but granteth repentance and remission of sins, who saith, I am the good shepherd, and I am the way and the door into the sheepfold; and by me if any man enter he shall be saved; and he saith, many shall come in my name and shall deceive many; and pray what are they that take up his name by a vote of the great ones of the earth, even of men great of flesh, and set up as vicars of Christ, and say it would be blasphemy or heresy to call in question or doubt their authority or infallibility?

Behold, there in *Mat.* vii and *Luke* vi. where the foundation is described, we are warned to beware of false prophets which come in sheep's clothing, while they may be inwardly ravenous wolves; but we are commanded to know them by their fruits, not by any prescribed line of ordination or succession—hence we are warned not to rely upon any profession or succession however high or orthodox, even though of the very sheep's clothing itself—nay, but we are warned not to rest satisfied even with the best of teaching or hearing, but to come home to the sensible doing part, to do the work for ourselves, which God should work in us, and for us, (which no man can do for his brother,) and that is the wise builder indeed, who digs so deep as to have the truth revealed in himself, as it was revealed to Peter, such build upon the rock—see *Mat.* vii. 24.

But those who take the word of any man, without proving for themselves, build upon the sand, and such have no foundation, because they have not faith in the revelation of the Father, whereby they should “prove all things and hold fast that which “is good.”—1 *Thes.* v. 21.—but how can they prove all things, who saith, nay, we will prove nothing, but do as our Church saith, and so build upon the Pope? but how can that be a christian or heavenly Church, which is built upon the Pope, who was first set up and upheld by the powers of the earth, in order to bolster up, or consolidate the old Roman Empire, even in the days of Gregory and Phocas, as I shall shew in its place, and prove to a demonstration, that the Church of Christ has no more to do with a Pope than with Mahomed, even according to the assertion of him they call Saint Gregory the Great.

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How could Peter be Prince of the Apostles, seeing that neither Peter himself nor the other Apostles never knew it? nay, I challenge *J. M.* to shew if he be able, when, or where did they ever act or speak as if he should be their Pope? but did not the Kings and Emperors set up the Pope some hundreds of years after?

And if our Saviour ordained a line of human succession from Peter, to judge, pronounce, and decide all matters of doubt; how then should he warn us to beware of men, and to know them by their fruits? should he not in that case refer us to the successors of Peter, and command all men to hear them, and bow to their decision? but no such thing, nay, let him shew if he be able, where did ever Christ order any Church to abide by Peter's decision in all matters of doubt? and if not, how should we now rely upon his pretended successors? nay, did not even Peter himself greatly err, and was to be blamed for subverting the Church into Judæism, until he was withstood by Paul, who had never walked with the Apostles all the time of Christ's personal appearance upon earth?—read *Gals.* i. and ii. chap. &c.

And if such a man as Peter did err, through an excessive attachment to the religion of his youth and education, how then should we rely upon his pretended successors, who, by their deeds, are proved to be strangers to the love, zeal, simplicity, and sincerity of Peter? nay, but are we not warranted to go still further, and assert, that the gospel refers to a more sure and living standard, than that of a rigid imitation of the very practice of the Church itself, even in the Apostles' times? seeing that the Church at Jerusalem, with the Apostles, &c. had so far slidden into Judæism, as to hold up circumcision with the sacrifices and customs of the law of Moses—see *Acts* xxi. chapter, there we read, that they were zealous of the ceremonies of the old law above twenty years after Christ had fulfilled and blotted them out, even nailing them to his cross—see *Col.* ii. 14. which is a clear demonstration, that the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, stands not in the mere outside conformity to the prescribed orders or ceremonies, even of the best of men or churches, but in spirit and in truth, and in the heavenly fellowship thereof; seeing those blessed men were permitted to cling to the old law, even while they earnestly pressed toward the heavenly substance, which with them was all in all, wherein the Lord re-

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garded them, and had respect to their sincerity; and these things are written for our learning, even to admonish us to look to the Lord alone, and trust him to the end, who is the builder of his own house, and warns us to look unto him for the foundation of our hope, rather than to other men's line made ready to our hand.

I know I may be told that the Apostles had lived under the dispensation of the law, when it was in full force, and walking blameless therein, they should of course retain a peculiar sense of the solemnity thereof; yet I say, that no ways binds us to imitate their practice, of that which had run its course, though on their part, it fully accounts for their partiality thereto, even rather to their credit, while yet it holds forth this caution to us, even "that we should learn in them, not to think of man above that which is written."—See 1 *Cor.* iv. 6.

Objection.—Some may object, that all this tends to slight the Lord's messengers, who were marvellously gifted and sent forth as a signal blessing to the world.

Answer.—Far be it from me to diminish ought from the dignity of the Apostles or their labours, nay, but I rather mean to exalt them, wherein I assert, that all their blessed work tended to Godward, even to turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and to the word of his grace, which as they asserted, is able to build them up, and to give an inheritance among the sanctified; and thus they turned (or gathered) souls unto God, rather than to themselves, which was a blessed work indeed—but who are they that speak lightly of the Apostles and their labours? are they not such as assert that their labours tended only to manward, even to exalt Popes and Prelates and their councils, and to sanction all the fickle, foul, and filthy trumpery that ever was the bone of their contention? doth not that cast a slander on the Apostles and their labours, even worse than ever was devised by the infidel? and if such profess themselves to be the only true sheepfold of Christ, would not that aggravate their crime beyond measure?

Our Saviour warns us to "beware of false prophets who come in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits," he doth not say, ye shall know them by the line of succession which I ordain; no such thing, nay, but is it not of such as profess the like that we are warned



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to beware, even of them that profess the true order? yea, of the very sheep's cloathing itself? and is it not remarkable in that place, the Lord gives only one mark whereby deceivers should be known, even that they are inwardly ravenous? as if he had said; ye cannot be mine if ye take up with men who are ravenous after gain, lordship, or pre-eminence to the subverting of the soul? for how could men deal more treacherously, in seducing and subverting of souls, than thus to apply our Lord's sayings to themselves exclusively, as if none beside them were concerned therein, even while they stand as a solemn admonition and warning to all people, even wherein he saith, beware of men, and dig deep for the foundation, even as unto the rock, or if not, the building cannot endure the trials and temptations of the day? but alas! have they not said that they themselves are the rock, which (as *J. M.* saith,) the Lord would have all to take for their foundation, even by succession from the Apostles, while yet they may see many rotten links in what he calls his regular unbroken chain of Popes, &c., to which he refers as an infallible, unerring, and sure guide in all things appertaining to salvation? and so cheat poor souls which they turn away from faith in Christ, and from taking heed unto his solemn admonitions, that so they might bring them into bondage to themselves, nay, even to great men of the earth, whom they set up over and above the revelation of truth, whereupon Christ's Church is built.

Hence they arrogantly assume a right to make faith and prescribe rules for all nations, even to denounce sins, and extol sanctities of their own devising, to prove or judge of men's fruits thereby, even of things not to be found in Scripture, while they pass over the sure marks which our Lord prescribeth for judgment; and is not that a wonderful and horrible thing, to condemn all that dare think for themselves, and prove honest to the conviction of conscience, even to pronounce them obstinate heretics? as in *letter xlix.*, page 190, and divers other parts of his volume, while he not only passeth over the blackest crimes of his own rabbies, but even exalts and extols such as our Saviour saith woe unto; who love the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in public places, and to be called of men rabbi or master; who grow great and lordly by devouring the labour of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, and for a pretence make long prayers; such the Lord

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saith should receive the greater condemnation—see *Mat.* xxiii. 6. 7.—*Mark* xii. 38. 39. 40.—*Luke* xx. 46. 47., and yet doth not *J. M.* say, that such should sway the sceptre of the Kingdom of Heaven, as respects the fate of all nations in the eternal world.

Alas! was there ever a more subtle wile devised by Satan, than first to assert that they had a grant or patent from Heaven to make merchandize of the souls of men; and that it should be blasphemy or heresy to deny the validity of their title, written in priests' language, which none beside them should ever understand? is not that a marvellous thing, to claim a peculiar grant or legacy, which should disinherit all others, the world over, and that none should understand the language of such bequest but the legatees themselves? and when they brought the people to believe so much, then to persuade them, that they had got great insight into the secret things which only belong to God, even things not fit for mortals to pry into, yet they say all must believe them implicitly, whatever they say of things handed down to them by tradition (though not to be found in Scripture,) the profession whereof they call faith, even while they deny the things that are revealed, which belong to all men, wherein they deny the Scripture testimony of the light, grace, and inspiration of God in the souls of men, to be sufficient to convince the sinner of his sins, and to draw him unto Christ, who alone can grant repentance and forgiveness of sins, and give that hunger and thirst after righteousness which is blessed indeed; but if the leaders of the people have for ages taught their flocks unbelief in the efficacy of those blessed promises, is it any marvel then, that they draw such impenetrable darkness over themselves, as not to believe even the report thereof?

The Scripture saith, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and is not that abundantly verified in those who light upon the case of Peter, in order to establish their claim to a carnal succession of exclusive right, to dispose of the mysteries of the gospel, even while they should see that nothing could more decidedly overthrow their pretensions altogether, than Peter's example and precept? nay, did they only observe his tremendous rebuke of Simon the sorcerer, because he offered him money, and thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money; therefore Peter said unto him, "thy money perish with thee,

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“because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money; thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God”—see *Acts* viii. 20. 21. there it is plain without controversy, that according to Peter’s testimony, whoever gave or took money for divinity, could neither have part nor lot with the Apostles, and if they had neither part nor lot with them, how could they be their successors? and even *J. M.* himself admits (as he cannot deny) that they took pay for masses, which he holds forth to be their principal gift; and if they should first need money to get qualified for their ministry, and then took money for the exercise thereof, should they not in that case be the successors of Simon the sorcerer, rather than of Simon Peter?

Alas! what have they discovered in Peter to establish the pope as his successor? was there ever a character more at variance therewith in any wise? whether we view him as a disciple, an apostle, or a tempted and tried believer? and first, behold him leaving all to follow Christ; which when he recounted, he was told that the blessing only awaited such as followed him in the regeneration—*Mat.* xix. 28. and so he was reminded, that the business was a change of nature, and not of mere system or profession, further than as the good fruit was brought forth out of the honest and good heart; but not a word referring to creeds and priestly succession; nay, but (mark simply,) in the re-generation, even as Peter himself writes, in reference to the divine nature—*2 Peter* i. 4.

And behold him again asserting that Christ is the Son of the Living God, to which sense and mind, Jesus pronounced the peculiar blessing of those that so knew him by the revelation of the Father, as being the heavenly order of the true and living faith and knowledge of God; which revelation opens the way into the Kingdom of Heaven, whereby alone men can truly know and own God; and so he owns them, and as they can thus call him by his name, he in return calls them by name, for such only are his indeed; yea, they dwell in him, and he in them, who binds and looses, and gives the entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom; even as Peter writes of the same blessing, as being applicable to true believers without respect of persons; nay, so far is he from ascribing it to himself exclusively, or in-



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dividually, that he rather applies it to states, conditions, or growths in grace, even as to the state of the living soul, which should know the Living God, (the Father Almighty,) and not to persons, dignitaries, sects, nor creeds, &c., which likewise agree with that of Paul, who saith, "that no man can call "Jesus Lord but by the holy spirit—1 *Cor.* xii. 3.—compare *Mat.* xvi. 22. 23. with *Mark* vii. 33. 34.

But what way soever we view Peter, (although he was a most precious stone in the building,) we may see that he was to retain nothing but what he obtained through the like precious faith in the revelation of God, as was and is common to all true believers, according to their different states or measures; so far as respects the common salutation, even as he himself, and Jude writes.—And is not that a most striking and instructive lesson, which we may learn from Peter's conduct and example, even of the heavenly order of the Lord's dealing with his true disciples; that although he condescended to walk among, teach, and converse with them, even for their and our instruction and example? yet behold the primary instruction which he established, even this, that after all his converse and heavenly example before their faces; still they could only retain what they held through revelation or inspiration; (I might refer to many instances, but shall not now digress from the case of Peter,) as we may see how remarkable it is, that although being for years conversant with his dear master, and had (with the other Apostles) received the commission to go teach all nations; still let us take notice for our instruction, that with all that, he was not even to know that a Gentile could be saved, until it was revealed to him in a vision, and when it was revealed to him, he saith, "God hath shewed me that I should call no man common; (there we may see, that gospel knowledge, was, and is, only to be attained through revelation,) and Peter then testified," of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him *Acts* x. how remarkable to find this thrice repeated.

Now let all that plead for a carnal succession to the chair of Peter, take notice, even of that memorable visit to the house of Cornelius, and see if it would not decidedly overturn such pretensions altogether, insomuch that I am ready to query, whether

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Peter did not gain as much instruction by that interview, as did Cornelius? even when he saw the shortness of all finite comprehension, and the unsearchable knowledge of God (whose ways are a great deep,) he exclaimed, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted; (doth not every nation there, fully imply every sort of people,) so Peter saith, of a truth God is no respecter of persons; but now they say that he is a respecter, not only of persons, but of the very orders of men: Nay further, they even take on to tell the very individual persons of whom he is a respecter, and say, he respects popes and cardinals, &c., saying, they are built upon Peter as his successors.

Was there ever the like presumption, or could any thing be more grossly carnal? surely those the Apostle upbraids with being carnal, were harmless in comparison of such carnal claims to succession; yet see how sharply they were reprov'd, saying to such, are ye not carnal and walk as men, seeing that one saith, I am of Paul, another I am of Apollos, and I of Cephaz (or Peter,) &c.: and then retorts the charge against them, saying, "who then is Paul, or Apollos, but ministers?" &c.—see 1 Cor. i. 12. and iii. 3. 4. &c.—Yet we do not find, carnal as they were in that respect, that they ever thought of such a thing, as that none should be accepted beside their favourite order; nay surely, that was reserved for the woful perilous times that Peter and other Apostles foretold, was then near at hand, of which I may treat more largely in its place; however, I must admit one exception, even in the Apostles' days, as we find, that some of the offspring of the old sin-soothing Pharisees, laid claim to a like divine exclusive acceptance, saying, that except they were circumcised and kept the law, they could not be saved; and so they built their hope of salvation upon a conformity to outside profession, while they talked of building upon Moses, even in like manner, as the same carnal generation now a days speak of building upon Peter; but they seem to forget, or have not known, that if they come into Peter's chair, they must come in by the same door as he did, even by the revelation of the Father through Christ, who is the way and the door, who saith, all that climb up any other way are thieves and robbers, surely then, all who climb up by succession, as by the vote of multitudes, or

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by principalities or powers, or by the strength of armies, as they have done (without even blushing for shame,) in former ages, when Emperors set them up as bulwarks of the state policy? or yet if they climb up by education, wisdom, knowledge, arts, or parts; or by all of them together; such climb up some other way than by Christ alone, whose covenant is his law written in the heart, and his spirit in the inward parts, even as revealed to Peter.

But the worst never can be told to the full; were we to take into account the fearful consequences of usurping the Lord's prerogative over the conscience, to the subverting the soul; even to the holding people in spiritual bondage to the fear and tradition of men, who beguile souls from digging deep for the true and living foundation, while they set at naught the heavenly admonition of him, who saith, "be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren; and call no man your Father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in Heaven; neither be ye called masters: for one is your master even Christ."—See *Mat.* xxiii. Who then is the Prince of the Apostles, seeing the Lord rebuked the like thought in them, saying, "ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you?"—*Mat.* xx. 25. 26.—how will ye answer these things, oh! ye that give and receive such heathenish lordly titles, as break and set at naught the Saviour's commandments?

Alas, alas! will it serve as an excuse in the great day, for to say, that there was a time wherein the policy of Princes deemed it expedient to set up an imperial high priest, in order to counteract the distractions of the Empire; while at the same time, the avarice and ambition of the bishops, called for all the favour that could be obtained from the state? and seeing that temporal and spiritual alliance, brought forth such a goodly Prince as their Pope; and although he could not be seated surely on his throne, without feigning his pedigree to descend from the Apostles; yet if the setting up of such a great grand Vizier to preside over Christendom, hath raised a greater scandal against the purity and simplicity of the gospel; and caused the way of truth to be evil spoken of, more than ever the Heathen did, how then will they answer for it, who still contend for such measures?



## SECTION VI.

*Some further reflections on the presumption of flesh and blood claiming a divine succession from Peter ; shewing the fallacy thereof, especially, in that wherein flesh and blood is prone to change, stumble, and reap corruption ; even as demonstrated by a slight glance at some of their ways and workings.*

**W**HAT claim can they have to Peter, who would climb up to his chair by a succession of great lordly voters, and candidates of like stamp? surely though high and dignified as they are esteemed, Peter's cause is yet above them, even as heaven is higher than the earth, yea, and though by great worldly interest, state policy, or philosophy and vain divination, they may have stolen or forged the poor fisherman's name, and clothed themselves with the saint's words, which they would strain to fit themselves, to cover a vile carcass, in order to get gain and preeminence in the sight of men, far beyond any thing that ever Simon the Sorcerer looked for, even giving out that they themselves are some great ones, to whom all people should give heed ; alas, alas ! was that the kind of chair that Peter sat in ? nay, verily ; for however they may make mountains of voluntary humility, they could no more get up to such a chair with the humility of Peter, than they could create a living man.

Is it not remarkable, that when a people choose to be deceived, the justice of Heaven permits or suffers them to choose their own delusions ? which, although it be a truth that may stand as a general memento to all people ; of what profession soever ; yet here I may apply it to such as build upon a carnal line of what they call the successors of Peter, &c. ; for even suppose they could wrest the Scripture, to force such a meaning therefrom (with their traditions,) as that the inheritance of the gospel might descend by succession, or be transferred to heirs and successors like one of the kingdoms of this world, yet I say, even suppose they should form so gross and carnal a conception of the Kingdom of Heaven, as that it should be assigned to the government of frail man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; yet

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with all that, how could they fail to observe, that the Kingdom of Heaven must stand in Heavenly order? yea, and that even those very Churches which had been rightly established, were warned in the Revelations, of the danger of their degeneracy and fall, (even at the time of giving forth that portion of Scripture,) yea, they are told, that if they did not repent and amend their ways, the Lord would fight against them with the sword of his mouth, and kill their children with death, and give unto every one according to their works, that he would come quickly and remove their candlestick out of its place except they repent; nay, farther, we find some of them charged with saying they were true believers, while they were the synagogue of Satan.

Now who would dare to say, that it was merely their profession or their creed, that appeared so vile? nay, surely, but it must have been their spirit and their deceitful ways that were condemned; for we are told, that they were not what they professed to be, and therefore their profession is called blasphemy, and that is for our warning—read *Rev.* i. ii. iii. chapters.

And seeing they had, even then, such as said they were Apostles, and were not, but were found liars; who would attempt to say, that their fault was a want of that outward ordination that should proceed from Peter or Paul, &c.? nay, verily, for any thing we know, they might have had a form of Godliuess without the power thereof: and for ought we know, they might be as truly called, as either Judas or Demas, seeing that such as turn from the truth or spirit in the inward parts, shall be found liars, let them profess what they may.

And if the Seven Churches, or even those of Ephesus and Pergamus, had so degenerated (while yet the Apostles and their labours had been fresh amongst them,) that they were then in danger of being cast off from the favour of God? what would it avail them in such a case, to be able to recount their numbers, or plead the accuracy and orthodoxy of their creeds and traditions, or that they should rely on the stability of their establishment and succession? would not that rather aggravate the case in the sight of him from whom there is no appeal, who only loves righteousness, and hates iniquity, without respect to the persons, the orders, or the devices of men?

And as to that very Church of Rome itself, which he saith could never err; yet hear what the Apostle saith unto her;

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“if God spared not the natural branches” (meaning the Jews) “take heed lest he also spare not thee”—*Rom.* xi. 21—and in the viii. chapter he saith, “if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;” there are the conditions, even life and death set before all people without respect of persons, (no exception to the successors of Peter,) which also applies to Churches, as sure as to individuals; and if they should die away, or loose the life of the spirit of Christ in the inner man, what then would a dead carcass avail, even though as great as nations and multitudes? or what would the glory of their high priests, high profession, and many inventions do for them in such a case, but hide from their eyes the things that belong to their peace?

And we read in the same chapter, that “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, and if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his;” there we see that the election or choice is according to his purpose, who will have mercy on whom he will, and the carnal mind with the works thereof is in the enmity and reprobation, to be cast away, while on the other hand, as many as are led by the spirit of God are his children, heirs, and joint heirs with Christ; mind that (as many) all conditionally, read *Rom.* viii.—and moreover, I might challenge the most keen-eyed critic, to spy out any thing in all that epistle to the *Romans*, pointing to a presumptuous claim to succession, or tending to build up any man or order of men in self-confidence, or to exalt one man over others; nay, but what saith he in that epistle, “who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?—to his own master he standeth or falleth—let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, &c.,” and warns all, “not to be highminded but fear.”

And seeing that however men might force a construction in favour of such a carnal order of succession, still it must be subject to the conditions, even of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, for therein alone doth the Kingdom of God consist. *Rom.* xiv. 17.—And seeing that such a requisite must be retained, or the inheritance forfeited, so as to revert back again to the disposal of the Lord, the original donor, to give it to whomsoever he will, and that is the order and condition of the disposal of all



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the gifts and callings appertaining to the Kingdom of God ; yea, that they are all subject to be forfeited, even by slothfulness ; and the slothful servant, or the sleepy foolish virgins, have no power to transfer it to heirs or successors ; but the Lord taketh it from them, read *Mat. xxv.* Oh ! all of you that wilfully deceive yourselves by relying upon a temporal or human succession ; there ye may see, that the lamp, or strictest profession ; the Virgin or the gift, was of no avail to them, further than as they occupied therewith according to the Lord's good pleasure, who gives and takes, and changes as he sees meet, and mark, mark, mark, so is the Kingdom of Heaven, or all the gifts and callings thereof likened unto, and let them see to it, who say that they can be held, retained, or transferred at the will of man, whose breath is in his nostrils.

Wherefore, seeing that the Kingdom of Heaven (or the gospel state) could only be retained by the nation or people which bringeth forth the fruits thereof ; what shall we say then of such as wilfully plead for a human succession ? are we not forced to acknowledge, that no delusion could scare men who chose to be so deceived, as to close their eyes at noon day ? I mean even so far as respects common observation, for now I allude to the learned, who have always been making the great blunders of all ; and must needs be masters of arts in the science of confusion ; affecting to know that whereof neither themselves nor any body else could tell the meaning, whereby they acquired great fame in the world ; for the more they duped the people, so much the more the world wondered after them ; so that finding the bait to take so effectually to their purpose, they fell out among themselves about the meaning of that whereof they knew no meaning, and so got mighty fierce against each other, whereby their renown went forth throughout the nations, which revered them so much the more as they affected to be wise above that which is written, and differed about things they could never comprehend, even things not fit nor lawful for mortals to pry into ; even as Hilary saith, “ it is a thing deplorable as dangerous, that there are as many creeds as opinions among men ; as many doctrines as inclinations, as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us ; because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them as arbitrarily,” &c.—“ Every year, nay, every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible

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“mysteries,” &c. “We anathematize those whom we defend ?  
 “we condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our  
 “own in that of others,” &c. There was the very root and  
 ground of heresy, even beguiling the people into forbidden  
 knowledge ; and thus were the bishops and their lordly orders  
 exalted over the conscience of the people, whom they betrayed  
 into dangerous and presumptuous speculations, and over whom  
 they reigned in their various changes and fluctuations, like what  
 we read of the waters where the whore sitteth, which are  
 peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.—*Revs.* xvi. 17.

And thus were the Apostles' predictions and warnings mar-  
 velously verified (even literally,) nay, were we only to ob-  
 serve, how the believers are forewarned of the Apostles' fears,  
 “lest as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so their  
 “minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in  
 “Christ ;” and so they were warned, “to beware lest any man  
 “spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tra-  
 “dition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after  
 “Christ.”—see 2 *Cors.* xi. iii. and *Col.* ii. 8. which also we  
 may read still stronger to the same effect, in divers parts of the  
 New Testament, even in Peter, John, and Jude ; and Paul  
 saith, the mystery of iniquity was even then at work ; and he  
 tells the Ephesians that after his departure should grievous  
 wolves enter in amongst them, even of their own selves, and so  
 he refers them to his own example, how that in all things so la-  
 bouring as they knew that his own hands ministered to his ne-  
 cessities, &c., while he warned them with tears night and day,  
 aye and now warns every one of us, not to trust to ourselves,  
 nor yet to any man, or order of men, but to the Lord alone,  
 and to the word of his grace, which is able to build up and to  
 give an inheritance amongst the sanctified—*Acts* xx. Thus we  
 see, the Apostles directed the people unto the Lord alone,  
 while they foresaw the woful desolation that awaited such as  
 became slaves to the fear and government of self-seeking men,  
 whose end was to bring them into bondage, that so they might  
 make a gain of them.

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Although I know but little of history, yet I have read more  
 than enough to shew how remarkably the Apostles' forebodings

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of a woful falling away was verified ; that even in the times of cruel persecution, the bishops began to extend their views of ambition, not only to an unrighteous pre-eminence over their brethren, but even to grasp at empire and renown in the world ; which I shall not attempt to set forth in full detail to such as may read tenfold more about them than I have done ; but let it here suffice as we pass along, just to remind them of the confusion which was raised in divers nations, by their ravening after pre-eminence ; even so early as the days of Paul of Antioch, or Samosata ; who appear to have united the office of Minister of State, with that of Patriarch of the Church, (even while the poor Christians lay exposed to grievous persecutions ;) and that even then, he had his partisans and rivals, in that age of innovation and overturning in the so called religious world. And if in such times, the two parties of Bishops (while applying to each other the epithets of schism and heresy,) should be so base as to plead their quarrels before an Imperial Heathen tribunal ; what then became of that spotless unbroken succession, which *J. M.* boasts of ?

And if even then, in the third century, under an Heathen government, as the historian relates, that, “ as Christians were  
 “ caressed by one Emperor, and persecuted by another ; in  
 “ seasons of prosperity many rushed into the Church for base  
 “ ends. In times of adversity, they denied the faith, and re-  
 “ turned again to idolatry. When the squall was over, away  
 “ they came again into the Church, with all their vices, to de-  
 “ prave others by their examples ; the bishops, fond of prose-  
 “ lytes encouraged all this, transferring the attention of chris-  
 “ tians from the ancient confederacy for virtue, to vain shows at  
 “ Easter, and other Jewish ceremonies, adulterated too with  
 “ Paganism.”—See *Clarke's History of Intolerance, Vol. I. page*  
 215. Many who deplored such depravity, laboured for a time to stem the torrent, until seeing a tide of immorality pouring into the Church, they withdrew, and testified against it ; and so were called heretics, and many nicknames, such as puritans, &c., and in process of time were persecuted and banished, by such as called themselves the successors of Peter, who dealt sorely with the successors of Novation and divers others.

But what shall we say to these things, if even Eusebius and Cyprian, (who joined in condemning the Novations for their



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over zeal against the prevailing abuses, still bewailed the corruption of manners and principles, so as for the latter to confess, “that the principal study of the bishops of his time, was to get money and estates—that they followed after pride, and were at leisure for nothing but emulation and quarrelling, and, that they neglected the simplicity of the faith, and renounced the world in words only.”—*Clarke’s History, Vol. I. page 207.*

If the foregoing hints respecting the early ages of the Church, (even while under persecution) call aloud unto such as trust in man, or in a human succession, to look to the ground of their dependance, what shall I say then to that which followed shortly after? if we but take a slight glance at their ways and workings, from the days of Constantine,\* when the flood-gates of temporal power, wealth, and luxury, were opened upon the Churches, and vast revenues and benefices flung out amongst such as were called clergy; insomuch that in process of time, the filthy intrigue, and policy of the state became rapidly blended with the government of the Church? aye, even so far, that the influence of kings and emperors, was of greatest weight in the election of such as they called vicars in Jesus Christ.

What else but such worldly power and wealth, could make the bishops so gross and ravenous, that they could not agree about which of themselves should be entitled to their anti-Christian pre-eminence, until they submitted their dispute to a king named Theodorick, a professed Arian, whom they call an heretic? but as I might have noticed divers other cases more revolting; so I do not set forth this, as the most abominable feature in the catastrophe; far be it from me to compare the like, to the scenes of tumult, sedition, and bloodshed, excited by such like elections, wherein they made flesh their arm to a witness; but I have simply noticed the above, in order to remind them how inconsistent with themselves his infallible divines can turn to obtain their own ends; wherefore then does he tell the world that

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\* As it is recorded, that a voice from Heaven like that of an angel, was heard to proclaim—“this day is poison (or venom) poured into the churches,” alluding to that of pouring forth wealth among the bishops, &c., in the days of Constantine: yet however such a voice was heard by the human ear; I have no doubt but it was heard, and well understood, by that ear which could hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

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they cannot err? of whom the historian saith, “that they were  
 “too much taken up about the establishment of their Churches,  
 “to hear that voice which calls to glory by way of virtue; that  
 “they were too intent on obtaining dominion over others to go-  
 “vern themselves.”—*Ibid.*\*

\* It is remarkable through all ages, that at what times soever signal favours were conferred upon believers; Satan was then most busy with his wiles, to turn such favours to their destruction, which was never more largely demonstrated, than in the days wherein Constantine proclaimed Christianity the religion of the state, and of the empire; then was the time for the devil, (the destroyer) to play his masterstroke, in order to accomplish by his bait of worldly policy, affluence, and the smiles of princes, what he could not effect by means of that persecution, which had rather strengthened than abated the true Christian's faith and perseverance, while sustained by an invisible arm: But when the Christian profession was proclaimed the religion of the state and of the world at large, then did the rulers betake themselves to make the most of the new order of things for their own advantage; and therein we may observe Constantine playing a profound masterstroke of state policy, wherein he flung out among the ambitious clergy, a profusion of wealth, donations, and benefices; perhaps more than was lavished on the old Heathen priesthood, which the wisdom of man would conclude should promote manifold ends of state policy, in order to bring the people thoroughly under the sway of the ruler, first, to secure the interest of the clergy, by satiating their avarice and ambition, so as to raise them above any order of Heathen priesthood that ever went before them, whereby they were thought still the more honourable; and being thus made thorough Heathens in the main, must needs please the Heathen world, to see no trace of Christianity left in the state, but the bare name, (without the power or virtue,) and that name pleased the mere nominal Christian professor also.

Howbeit all the blame of such monstrous novelties, should not be charged upon the emperor, seeing the covetous priests were not so honest as to tell him plainly that such order of things was rank Heathenism; and that if they partook of his moiety or promotion in that wise, they would then have no more part or lot of a true Christian, than Simon the sorcerer: nay but they did not fully impress the emperor with that momentous truth, because their avarice and ambition was rather gratified, by that which opened to themselves and their relations, a new field for their aggrandizement in the world, even in a way they should never have thought of, before the church became thus thoroughly Heathenized, under the name of Christian; nay even in many ways the very name itself was assimilated to that of the old Heathen phraseology, even calling their pastors priests, and their overseers bishops, and their meeting houses they called churches, temples, or sanctuaries, which they soon began to decorate and adorn in magnificence like the Heathens themselves, and in process of time, set up even images and altars therein; all of which with many such like things, that savoured of the vain customs of a gorgeous generation,

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And further more, was not the influence of earthly potentates, or emperors, of greatest weight likewise, in approving or rejecting their ordinances or traditions? yea, insomuch, that the idol they would bless under one emperor, have they not cursed the same in another reign? I may only remind them of their own account of the counsels of Chalcedon, and the fifth general council in the reign of Justinian; and if they would be instructed by such examples, they may find more than enough of a still deeper dye.—By their idols, I mean such as they idolized for the sake of their subtle reasoning or invention of creeds, rules, and institutions; or (to speak plainly) their endless windings, novelties, and intricacies, which the priests set up through their philosophy and vain deceit, to please an heathen world, and to beguile or corrupt the people from the simplicity which is in Christ, that so they might bring them into bondage to themselves; even as the Apostle feared, and saw working in his day; and if the mystery of iniquity was then at work, how much more manifest, when the great Roman Empire (then mistress of Nations, and wallowing in their wealth and iniquity) took on also to be mistress of the kingdom of Heaven; and even claimed exclusively, the very keys thereof? how then could we expect, that her way should be the way of holiness, so plain that the fool could not err therein? or in other words, how could all her laws, ordinances, and traditions, be fulfilled in one word, even in this, “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?”—as in *Rom.* xiii. 9.—*Gal.* v. 14.

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gave the priesthood a pompous air of preeminence and dominion over the people, whom they ruled as their rulers pleased, while they kept putting into their mouths, and raising them to titles of preeminence, lordship, and vanity; insomuch that they became so leagued in state policy, as to have it enacted, that whatsoever the priest called heresy, should be deemed sedition or rebellion against the state; whereby a woful door was opened for persecution, or declamation, against every tender conscience that testified against the sins and spiritual idolatry of this mistress of nations, and dare not sit down in the lap of her adultery or witchery.

\* Seeing that *J. M.* has quoted so much from what he calls the fathers, in order to prove the uninterrupted unity and consistency of his Church, it seems passing strange, that he should not have found something even among them, of a very different stamp; howbeit, that they were all on the side of Mother Church, (running with the current,) would be folly to deny, seeing it is from thence they derive their fame; otherwise the Church would disown



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Nay verily that became foolishness unto her; for how much soever she glorified herself, she knew not the straight and narrow way, seeing the glory of her way consisted in this, that it was broad, and the gate wide, yea, even so as that the nations

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them, be they never so pure; yet even among them, may be found many striking marks, that God was not without a witness in their conscience, that often beamed forth a ray of light, though like as it was with the rulers of old; if they had fully confessed or obeyed the dictates thereof, they should be turned out of the synagogue.

Yet hear what Augustine saith, although by his letters, the historian takes on to demonstrate, that he had two opinions on persecution, viz—that he thought it right when he was in power, and wrong, when he was not in power: *Clarke's History Vol. I., page 30*—yet doth he not acknowledge, “that the yoke imposed upon many Christians in his days, was more intolerable than that under which the Jews formerly groaned.”

But Hillery speaks much plainer, for, after bewailing the opinions then prevailing, that men availed themselves of worldly aid to promote and sustain the true Church: he proceeds thus; “tell me, ye bishops; who are of this way of thinking? of what aid the Apostles availed themselves, when they preached the gospel? or to what great ones of the earth did they recur, in order to convert, (as in fact they did,) almost all nations, from idolatry to the worship of the true God? was it in palaces they sought favour?” &c. continues Hillery; “the same church, that formerly through endurance of chains, persecutions, and banishments, extended its faith, now diffuses terror by means of proscriptions and prisons, seeking to be believed through the effects of force.—It now banishes the priests of those same sects which anciently drove its own ministers into exile. In short, that same church now seeks to be applauded by the world, which only by being hated of men can be pleasing to her spouse. When, with such scandalous abuses before me, I compare the church of the present times, with that which Jesus Christ confided to our ancestors, I cannot but exclaim that it has undergone the most deplorable change.”

And respecting their doctrine, Hillery saith—“it is a thing equally deplorable and dangerous, that there are as many creeds as opinions among men; as many doctrines as inclinations, as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us; because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them as arbitrarily.—The homoousion is rejected, and received, and explained away by successive synods.—The partial or total resemblance of the Father and of the Son, is a subject of dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries.—We repent of what we have done, we defend those who repent, we anathematize those whom we defend.—We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our own in that of others; and reciprocally tearing one another to pieces, we have been the cause of each others ruin.” so far Hillery see *Clarke's History, page 921. 322.*

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of the earth (with their pomp and deceit) might go in thereat; and if kings or emperors took a turn at ruling the church, did not some of the popes on the other hand (as opportunity offered) aim at still more than imperial sway in the ruling and disposing of empires, states and nations; as if they had never read, that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world?

And now what say those that choose to be deceived, like men who have eyes and see not? do they not count it a leading mark of infallibility, and a confirmation of their being the true and lawful succesors of Peter and Paul, that such a lady as the great Roman Empire (or the offspring thereof) should have been for so many ages, the guardian of the keys of heaven committed unto them? and so he recounts their multitude, wisdom, learning, greatness and dignity, &c. as undeniable proofs of the infallibility that is lodged with his people at this day; even though descending to them through such a gorgeous line of succession, yea and even dates it from that of Peter and Paul being put to death at Rome; but is not this the upshot of all his boasted claim to succession and infallibility, that some how or other he has got to reign where Peter and Paul suffered? but let him beware lest he be joined to that self same spirit whereby Peter and Paul suffered, and by which their Lord and master was and is crucified.

Have they not read, that "when Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone?" *John* vi. 15. but he appeared unto those that saw their dangerous tossed condition, even in peril of life, ready to sink, and so hath he ever done, blessed be his name; and now men would make a king of the profession of his name, while they crucify him spiritually, as *John* saith, long after he had ascended, he saw him crucified in the great city, which (spiritually,) is called Sodom and Egypt *Rev.* xi.--8.

As to them that arrogantly claim to themselves exclusively, such great and infallible powers (in pretence of a divine commission, as heirs and successors to Peter;) do they not join with that spirit which crucified the Lord of glory; and have they not above all others blasphemed that adorable name and power of which they make profession, that is to say, if they take on in his name to be mediators between God and man for all nations, and to perform works which none but God

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could do, and to say, that without them none could be saved? do they not thereby offer indignity to him that came to save his people from their sins?

Is it not remarkable, when a people choose to be deceived, that the justice of God permits them to choose their own delusions? and if they willfully kick against conviction, and the reproofs of instruction in the conscience, such cannot see the glorious order of the gospel, even though so largely set forth as we read in scripture of the new covenant, as being a peculiar dispensation of the pouring forth of the spirit upon all that believe and obey; even upon old and young, servants and handmaids, without respect of persons, according to Peter's testimony *Acts ii.*—and that should not be according to the old covenant, nor after the law of a carnal commandment (through a succession of Priests,) but after the power of an endless life, revealed in the believer, as the immovable rock upon which the church of the New Testament should be built; and if men wilfully neglect or despise such a glorious offer of grace, mercy, and glad tidings; and for self-ease or reputation, run with a multitude to set up a carnal priesthood and succession, like the old covenant, (nay, worse every way,) and desire to be in bondage thereunto, rather than to strive to enter in at the straight gate, or labour to dig deep for the revelation of the true and living foundation; is it any marvel then, in such a case, that the justice of God should suffer them to choose their own delusions?

For all the religious buildings in the world, of what name or profession soever, that are not built upon God, or of God, must needs be built upon man, or of man; and all that, is of the beast, the whore, and the false prophet, which deceiveth the nations, and stupifies them with the bewitching sorcery of that golden cup, which mystery Babylon holds forth, glittering with the magnificence and antiquity of her rules, orders, and ordinances, (mark her antiquity) for she hath long sat as a Queen, and how many are the different religious professions that have been defiled in the bed of her false divination, polluted rest, or carnal wisdom, wherewith she had committed fornication with them, even as with the kings of the earth? by whom she shall yet be stripped naked, and her filthiness discovered, as sure as ever set forth in the xvi. chapter of *Ezekiel* and in *Revelations*.

And although they are diverse from each other, and have



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set up many heads and horns, wherewith they have pushed one at the other, yet are they not all under a measure of the dominion of that love which proceedeth from the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; even that love wherewith they build up each other in deceit? loving only, all that love them, and such our Lord calls hypocrites? but such can never love their enemies in that mind, nay, nor yet their neighbour as themselves, neither can they see that love which fulfils the law and the gospel, it is foolishness unto all, of what profession soever, that are drunk with the divers lusts, and many inventions, sought out by the votaries mystery Babylon, to silence the alarms and terrors of conscience, and lull the poor soul asleep in carnal security.

Behold, the Lord saith, "I will write my laws in their heart and mind, and they shall all know me," &c. But doth not *J. M.* say in effect, that he should not so put his law in their mind, and that they should not all know him, but that still the priests' lips should preserve their knowledge, and their fear be taught by the precepts of men, as in the old covenant? and so, having taught the people unbelief in the unspeakable gift or inspiration of God, (which comes by Jesus Christ;) they do not believe therein no more then a Deist, nay, I have heard a Deist acknowledge more of the efficacy and universality of the spirit or grace of God, than he will admit; he even makes a boast of his brother hirelings, being such famous work-masters, as to have brought over their flocks to such unbelief, as not to give heed to inspiration; but rely on themselves implicitly, who have taught them that the lips of the priests alone should preserve their knowledge; and what else did our Druid ancestors? but at the very best, it can only be like as under the old law, so he would have them still, though without that sanction or certainty, and is not that as much as to deny Christ? even to deny the effect of his coming, of whom the Scripture saith, "He was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and he saith, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkuess, but shall have the light of life"—read *John* i. and viii. chapters, and see whether the chief priests of these days deny such effect of his coming as therein set forth?

And are they not of Antichrist that so deny Christ, and deny

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the Scripture also, which saith, that all might know Him from the least to the greatest, according to the promises of God? but would they not make his promise of none effect, who say, that still their fear toward him could only be taught by the precepts of men as it was of old? but such may read their portion in the xxix. chap. of *Isaiah*, where “the Lord saith, for as much as  
 “this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips  
 “do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and  
 “their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore,  
 “behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people,  
 “even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their  
 “wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent  
 “shall be hid.”

And is it not marvellous indeed, to behold, how he hath proceeded to hide his counsel from the great, the wise, and the prudent ones of this world, and to reveal it unto babes, to the unspeakable glory of our blessed Redeemer, who came to save his people and redeem them from sin, and from the serpent's wisdom, and the effects thereof? and from all such sinsoothing monsters, as would beguile and destroy people through their subtilty, whereby they hunt souls, to make the heart of the righteous sad, and daub the sinner as with untempered mortar; but here is the marvellous thing and the wonder, that such is the wisdom (whether in the learned or unlearned,) and they are the people that the Lord would confound; even the great, the wise, the strong, and the confident, who hath dishonoured him through the bruit of their arrogance, but he hath shewn that his weakness is too mighty for them, and his foolishness wiser than them all, even as we may read in i. ii. iii. chapters of 1 *Corinthians*, and may rest assured that he will not always endure their reproach, though he bear long with them for the manifestation of his power and unsearchable wisdom, even as he that bruise the serpent's head, takes his enemies in the strongest part, triumphing over them, and making a shew of them openly, (which sometimes he may choose to effect as by little and little, or by degrees, giving them space to repent) though they know it not; which is also a marvellous thing and a wonder, even as it was when he walked amongst men.

Look now, oh ye crafty double-minded rabbies, (who yet think yourselves full of sincerity;) who were they then that

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could not discern who he was, even when the multitude followed him? yea, and even the publicans and harlots, soldiers and officers, heathens, strangers, and Samaritans, had a sense of his power and virtue; yea, while the very devils trembled before him; who were they then that could not perceive who he was? were they not the chief priests and rabbies of the day, who claimed infallible order and succession, with their wise scribes, self-righteous pharisees, crafty doctors, lawyers, and exalted rulers, who said, "he hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him;" saying, "have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him, but this people who knoweth not the law are accursed?"—*John vii. 48. 49.*

Yea, and such rulers as did believe on him, would not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; and the reason is given, that they loved the praise of men—*John xii. 42. 43.*—which shews, that the great rage of the Jews profession, (when their measure as a professing nation was near filled up,) consisted in the orthodoxy of outside rituals, (which outwardly appeared beautiful to look at,) rather than a renovation of heart and life; which if it be any ways our case at this day, we shall be far more inexcusable than they, whose lamentable degeneracy (through their rebelling against the good spirit which the Lord gave to instruct them,) is written for our warning and admonition; even to admonish us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and to beware of saying within ourselves, that we have Abraham to our Father, or Peter for our predecessor; seeing that God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham; and if we are not instructed thereby, how then should we hear, even though one rose from the dead?—*Mat. iii.*

**POSTSCRIPT.**

Whereas *J. M.* very often repeats the complaint which *Jeremiah* utters against false Prophets, saying, "I have not sent these Prophets yet they run," &c., applying it to all that are not sent forth by his priesthood, as may be seen throughout his volume; does he therefore mean to assert, that the pope is become the God that must send forth all true Prophets under the gospel? and that whoever dare to believe that God should have the sending of them, without the pope, must needs be schisma-



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tics or heretics? seeing that (as he argues) all that power and prerogative is now vested with his order; but mark the treachery of his parallel in this matter, (even as if he expected his readers should never look into the Bible,) seeing that the passage to which he refers, strikes at the very root of all his pretensions, inasmuch as the false Prophets which *Jeremiah* cries against, were such as had been sent forth and upheld by the established priesthood of the times, who had even been set up by divine appointment in their season, yea, with a sanction so certain, that no pope could ever prove the like for his order, yet they so corrupted themselves, that they could not endure the true prophets, whom the Lord raised up, and sent forth to reprove them, and their people; nay, but what said they? “come, and let us devise devices against *Jeremiah*; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet; come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words”—*Jer.* xviii.

11. And did not Pashur the priest, (who was also governor of the house of the Lord,) beat *Jeremiah*, and put him in the stocks, which was by the house of the Lord? and we may see, that the false prophets, of whom the Lord saith, “I have not sent these prophets, yet they run,” &c.—went hand in hand, and were upheld, even by the chief priests themselves—compare *Jer.* v. 30. 31. and vi.—13. 14. and viii.—8. 10. 11. 12. and xviii.—18. and xx.—2. and xxiii.—21. and xxv.—34. 35. 36. and xxvii.—15. 16. and xxxii.—32. &c.

Are not even these passages of *Jeremiah*, (speaking of the confederacy of false prophets and priests, and their pastors,) a marvellous prophetic description of the ways and workings of priestcraft throughout ages, even to the present day? and thus is his treachery highly aggravated, wherein he so often quotes, “I never sent these prophets, yet they ran,” &c.—presuming thereby to prove, that all must be false, who are not sent forth by his priesthood; while yet he could never prove, that an earthly priest could belong to the free gospel; nay, I might further ask him of prophets under the old law; what priest sent forth Amos, or sent Zephaniah, who prophesieth that the Lord would consume the “stumbling blocks with the wicked,” &c., and would “cut off the remnant of Baal, and the name of the black coats with the priests,” &c., and saith, “he

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prophets are light and treacherous persons : her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law ; the just Lord is in the midst thereof ; but the unjust know no shame." And what priesthood raised up or sent forth Zechariah, whom they slew between the porch and the altar ? nay, doth not the holy martyr Stephen say to that priesthood and their adherents ; " which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted," &c. ?—*Acts vii. 52.*—now is not his treacherous dealing strangely manifest, wherein he quotes *Jeremiah*, in order to prove the right and authority of his own priesthood, to raise up and send forth, or reject whom they would ? even while he should know, that it overthrows his cause altogether ; yet is it not still more fearful than all the rest, for him to assert by consequence, that the Lord cannot now raise up and send forth whom he will, without the sanction of the Pope or his hierarchy ?

## SECTION VII.

*Proving that the Church of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is not to be circumscribed by the will, wisdom, or authority of men, nor by the dimensions of their orders, commandments, or traditions in any wise, but stands in righteousness, &c.*

*Also, reflections on J. Milner's boast of exclusive unity, as a distinguishing mark of the true Church; proving that to be no gospel unity, which (as he saith,) is sustained by the priests' authoritative sentence; but true gospel unity stands in the fellowship of the holy spirit, and not in a conformity to the commandments and traditions of men.*

**I**F I have lengthened out the foregoing sections, far beyond my design or inclination, the cause thereof may appear obvious, seeing I could not pass slightly over that main subterfuge, whereupon all *J. Milner's* towering superstructure appears to be erected; even that of his pretended succession to the chair of Peter; that although my readers may think me tedious, I myself am aware of rather doing injustice to the argument, by endeavouring to cut it short, though another might do much better with less than half the words; as I have not taken the most advantageous texts, choosing rather to shew, that the very Scripture he professes to build upon, clearly overthrows his claim to succession or infallibility; I therefore leave the intelligent reader to observe how much of the Bible may be found still more against him, even shewing by example upon example, and precept upon precept, how far safer it is to believe with the heart, and trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man, or in princes; even though esteemed as princes of divinity.

And having so far overpassed due bounds of brevity, I shall aim at making amends in what follows after, by endeavouring to cut it short as plain truth will admit; yet I do not mean this as an apology, further than to express regret at the necessity there appears for thus far dwelling upon subjects, which may be so far from an edifying tendency, as rather to be in danger of dissipating the unwary mind, or drawing it out from the measure



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of the gift of God, which is given to every man to profit withal; which hint I mean as a caution by the way.

But to proceed, as *J. Milner* claims for his priesthood, an exclusive possession of the rock upon which the Church is built, so in like manner he lays claim to the Church which is built upon that rock; and as a proof thereof, insists that it must be to his own Church, our Lord referred the injured brother, in the case of any that should trespass against him; and so he quotes *Mat. xviii. 15. 16.*—saying, “hear the Church,” from whence he argues, as if the passage in question, extended to the regulation and imposition of faith and doctrine, even as it takes in the rites, ceremonies, and traditions of the Church, which empowers one brother to act as a spy over another, whom he shall accuse of a trespass, in case he finds him to deviate from the traditions of his Church; and so to proceed against him as in the case of a trespass; now the reader may look, whether the above is what *J. M.* means to wrest out of *Mat. xviii.*, to which he refers in many parts of his book—see *letter xi. page 114.*—*letter xiii. page 3.*—*letter xxvii. page 117,* &c.—saying, hear the Church? whereby he takes on to establish the authority of his creeds and traditions, even though there is no mention of the like in that whole chapter which treats of trespass and forgiveness, which yet he never once names, when he refers to *Matthew xviii.*

Was ever the like heard, as to refer to Scripture, to prove that which is not even mentioned in the text, while he passeth over the very words of that text? surely then, we need not marvel if such a man should say, that none but his priests could expound Scripture; for who but they would take on to prove by Scripture, what could not be found in the whole Bible? alas! what can he wrest out of that chapter, to uphold and perpetuate a carnal corrupt Church, or to sanction those rites, ceremonies, traditions, and commandments of men, which are not to be found in all the Bible? nay, but that very chapter to which he refers, rather stands as a witness against his many inventions.

For it is clearly evident, that the text applies simply to a trespass, whereby one man may in any wise have injured another—see *Mat. xviii. 15. 16. 17.*—“Moreover if thy brother  
“shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between  
“thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy  
“brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee

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“one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnessed every word may be established: and if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican.” Now for him to add any thing to the above, beside what applies to a trespass, wherein one man may injure another; would be wresting the Scripture, and adding to the words thereof, as if he would not have our Lord to mean as he saith, but as *J. M.* should add thereto, a deal of his own carving, by a gross private interpretation, while yet, he does not even touch upon the main subject of the text; for the text, as it relates to a trespass, or injury, is an incomparable illustration of that which fulfils the whole law; seeing that all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*Gal. v. 14.*

And there in *Matthew xviii.*, we are commanded to tell a brother his fault, whenever we see him trespass against that law of love, yea, and not to stop there, but to seek his restoration; not only by the help of one or two more, but even to proceed (if need be) for the help of the whole congregation that should be agreed together in that precious life, which binds the living in the unity of the spirit, which is the heavenly bond of peace: Nay further, if he will not hear them, we are warned not to deceive him (by shewing an appearance of fellowship with such ways,) but rather to treat him as a Heathen man and a Publican; and how is that? but if the Heathen or Publican be an enemy, we are commanded to love our enemies, and to forgive them that trespass against us? and all this is to bring us to the test, whether or no, that mind be in us, which can indeed from the heart fulfil that royal law, even the law of love; and such are the fruits whereby the true Church is to be known by all men; and whoever takes on to prove his Church by any other rule, sets up man's rules, even the rules of the beast, which are diverse; and so despiseth or passeth over the one heavenly rule which our Lord laid down, whereby his people should be known, even “by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another”—*John xiii. 35.*—And *John* in his first Epistle refers to the same test.

And furthermore, (in the same chapter) our Lord himself sheweth *Mat. xviii. 20.* what his Church is, even as he saith, “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there

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“ am I in the midst of them ;” and so we may see, that there is nothing in all that chapter, tending to ensnare or entangle the simple ; nay, but commences with a rebuke to such as thought who should be greatest, by setting before them the example of a little child, even for the throwing down of every thought that should ever desire to have self exalted above others ; which, (if men had any fear or love of God) should for ever knock down all their antichristian distinctions of lordly preeminences, which is a foul trespass indeed against the law of God, which admits of no priority beyond that of brethren—*Mat.* xxiii. 8. all of which is so far from confirming his supremacy, that it rather spoils it altogether, seeing that whoever compels a brother to do violence to his conscience, commits a sad trespass against him, yea, and runs the awful hazard of offending one of the little ones.

We may observe the chapter throughout, treating of trespasses, injuries, and offences, even as he that knew all things, knowing what is in man, and the deceit of the heart, sets forth these things, as weightier matters, and of greater magnitude, than all the traditions, creeds, or ensnaring divinity of crafty self-seeking divines upon earth ; for there the committing and avenging of trespasses, are alike excluded ; even as we read of one, who said, that to love God above all, and his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole-burnt offerings and sacrifices ; and when Jesus saw that he thus answered discreetly, he said unto him, thou art not far from the Kingdom of God—read *Mark* xii. 30. to 34.—*Mat.* xxii. 37. to 40.—*Luke* x. 27.

There we may see or read our Lord’s own rule or mark, set forth in most clear and expressive language, whereby all men should know his Church, even as by “ this shall all men know “ that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”—*John* xiii. 35.—and “ where two or three of such are gathered together in his name (or his power and virtue)” there is he in the midst of them ; and there is his Church, as in *Mat.* xviii. 20.—and to that rule the Apostles bear abundant testimony, setting forth the fruits of the true Church, even the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against which there is no law—read *Gals.* v. 14. and *Roms.* xiii. 8. 9. 10.—therein lay the Apostles’ religion, who (while they warned the unruly,)



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would not have dominion over mens' faith, for by faith they stand, as we may read in *2 Cor. i. 24.* And if the Apostle would not have dominion over mens' faith, who is he now that claims such dominion? nay, but that is no faith which other men have dominion over.

What shall we say then to the rule of faith which *J. M.* would enforce? is it not like unto that of the old chief priests, pharisees, and Sadducees, "who took council, and laid wait to entangle our Saviour in his talk, and catch him in his words," and so they feigned themselves to be just men—read *Mat. xxii.—Mark xii.* and *Luke xx.*—there we may see that the religion of the high priests and high professors, lay exclusively in the mere orthodoxy of their notions respecting their traditional points of doctrine, or questions of human policy, while they passed over the weightier matters, even judgment, justice, and the love of God; and therefore the kingdom should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; even though our Blessed Saviour had strove with them, during that day of heavenly visitation, until he wept over them; but they made the commandment of God of no effect, by their tradition, and outside ceremonies, even making clean the outside, while inwardly they were full of extortion and hypocrisy, until their rule resolved itself into a mere heap of religious mummery; and yet, has not *J. M.* far outstripped their extortion, in his pretended rule, whereby he insists upon extorting from every man, (on pain of perdition,) a blind implicit subjection to his Church, and (in *letter xiii. page 4.*) he saith, his Church should be known by certain exterior visible marks, even like as the cloaths and garments of the king's son, and the place he sat in at a levee, should distinguish the prince from all others; and quotes in *letter xiv. page 8. 9.*—"he cannot have God for his father, who has not the Church for his mother: if one could escape the deluge out of Noah's Ark, he who is out of the Church may also escape.—To abandon the Church is a crime, which blood cannot wash away.—We know that no one can be saved out of the Catholic Church," &c., "out of this Church neither name of Christian," &c. "avails, nor is forgiveness of sins," &c., "nor eternal life to be found"—and so we may behold him ever and anon exclaiming with reference to *Mat. xviii. 17.*—that whoever will not hear his Church, shall be as an Heathen and publican—

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see *letters xi. xiii. xvi. xxvii. &c.*, which Church he also applies to his own priesthood, saying, that they alone are possessed of the four distinguishing marks of the true Church, viz—

**UNITY,  
SANCTITY,  
CATHOLICITY, AND  
APOSTOLICITY,**

as set forth in *letter xiii. to letter xxx. inclusive.*

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And although he far outdoes the old pharisees in his arrogant claim to exclusive justification, it yet remains to be proved, whether he has even as valid a title as the pharisees had, to that righteousness which he claims, to the despising and rejecting of all others? I shall therefore proceed to notice each of his distinguishing marks as they fall in course.

And first, I shall make a few remarks upon his boasted Unity, but must try to be short, as I seem enlarging at unawares; however, I need not long dwell upon it, seeing that his own language on the subject, is as strong a refutation of his claim to Unity, as any I have met with, insomuch that I am inclined to doubt, whether he does really believe in the existence of all that glowing Unity whereof he boasts? but seeing that he traces it throughout eighteen hundred years, I am quite at a loss what to say; are we to conclude, that he thinks a bishop or doctor need not care what they write, so it suits their purpose? or do they suppose that all men should so adore them, as to take leave of the faculty of reason for their sake?

Does he then really count it a mark of Unity in his Church, that throughout many ages, there should have been such fierce violent contests amongst his popes, cardinals, and bishops, pushing as with heads and horns, striving who should be greatest, (until the fattest and strongest, thrust the weaker ones aside as heretics,) not to mention the blood that had been spilt in the support of divers such like claims? nor yet to mention the jarring conclusions of councils and synods respecting their canons, creeds, or institutions, with their do and undo, about questions never known in Scripture, whereof a few pages of ancient history should suffice the reader, nay, even in the preface to Grier's reply, there is so much glaring disunity instanced

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amongst popes and councils, and their divers orders of monks, &c., as might rarely be found in any Pagan institution on the face of the earth; nay, nor even amongst the professors of the Koran.

And there is another view of the subject, which might be profitable for him and his brother bishops deeply to re-consider, (which is this,) seeing that he mentions 90 different heresies, or breakings off from his Church, within the first four hundred years after Apostles days—(*letter xv. page 10.*) whether some of them, or the succeeding ones, might not possibly (or rather probably) belong to the true Church, seeing that John saith in the *Revelations*, that the true Church should have to flee into the wilderness, which implies a state secluded from public habitation? and moreover, a due regard for divers predictions of the Apostles, should excite a serious consideration thereof; and why should such examination seem grievous, seeing that the Apostles' way was called heresy by the old orthodox Church of their day? *Acts xxiv. 14.*

But (though the Apostles warned men every where to repent,) we do not find that ever they stamped the title of heretic upon any Church; neither do I believe they would be guilty of such abominable presumption, inasmuch as the word heretic, (in the Scripture sense,) means one that is condemned in himself;—*Titus iii. 11.*—who then could believe that the Apostles would be guilty of applying such a title to any gathered congregation of people whatsoever, seeing it is to the Lord alone it belongeth to take vengeance, and not unto man? nay, he sees not as man sees, he looks at the heart, whose prerogative alone it is, to judge or to condemn.

And now were we but to look at that very Unity whereof he so loudly boasts, which he saith always subsisted among his own people; yet was there ever a novelty brought into his Church, but what had been carried at every point of the sword? but lest this should carry me out of bounds, I may therefore notice but one particular instance, namely, that of setting up images and relics in their church houses; (in defence of which *J. M.* has filled pages of his book—see *letter xxxiv. &c.*) Behold the opposition which was raised against them; even priests against priests, bishops against bishops, popes against popes; yea, even kings, kingdoms, emperors, and empires, rising up



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against each other for ages, before the popes were able to engraft that infamous novelty of images into an article of Unity and uniformity, at a sore expense of blood, which I may further notice in its place.

But wherefore should I reason with such as wilfully close their eyes, seeing that he might read an hundred fold more than I shall set forth, not only of the jarring feuds which had existed amongst such as Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, &c., but even among their Church dignitaries themselves; and that not merely with regard to practice, but also of doctrine, even at all times, down to this day, as I myself have observed their authorised priests and bishops express quite opposite sentiments; nay, I have heard even a noted priest declare in a large assembly, that their Church never held such doctrine as that none besides themselves could be saved; while another priest equally noted, protested against his assertion, even asserting that he would prove, that the Church never allowed that any out of her communion could be saved; there they differ point blank on a subject which affects the salvation of all; and this is no solitary instance, confined merely to one order; I have heard their people in general, (as long as I remember) avow quite opposite sentiments on that unspeakably solemn subject, which I do not now notice, merely on account of their notorious disunity of sentiment; nay, but I notice it in order to remind them how the priests are beguiling the people into an irreverent presumptuous sort of legislation, even upon a subject which ill becomes frail mortals to legislate upon, seeing they must all come to judgment themselves, where God alone shall be Judge, and not man nor priest.

Objection.—It has not been denied that priests might err, or that even bishops and popes themselves may err, and have erred; but how can that affect the infallible Church?

Answer.—Was ever deeper subtlety than that? for to enjoin the people to bow implicit obedience to the priest, because he is ordained by the infallible Church, (falsely so called,) which admits that the priest himself may err; alas! what is that Church to the people, who are commanded to bow to the priest, in a bond of unbroken unity? is not that a far more fearful source of error, than any of those rules against which he so loudly exclaims? for mark, and take notice, that we only speak

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of rules, or mediums, as each have a reference to Christ that cannot err, while they that profess to believe in the holy spirit, fully admit the deceit of the heart, and danger of delusion, and consequent necessity of watching and trying the spirits, whether they be of God, according to Scripture, and fruits of holiness; but according to his rule, if the priests or bishops err, the people must profess Unity with their error, while the Church is a mere stalking-horse to cloak up the deception.

I noticed in the outset, that *J. Milner's* claim to exclusive unbroken Unity, is as clearly refuted and overthrown, by the very arguments he adduces to establish it, as any I need advance against him, unless he means that men should take leave of reason and conscience for the sake of bowing down to his decrees, of which I leave the reader to determine from his own words, who saith, “when debates arise among Catholics concerning points of faith, the pastors of the Church, like judges in civil contentions, fail not to examine by the received rule of faith, and to pronounce an authoritative sentence upon them; the dispute is thus quashed and peace restored; for if any party will not hear the Church, he is, of course, regarded as an Heathen and a publican.” And again, “at all events, the Catholics, if properly interrogated, will confess their belief in one comprehensive article; namely this; I believe whatever the holy Catholic Church believes and teaches—see *letter xi. page 114.—letter xvi. page 21.*

Now what does all that amount to, but that the priests alone must pronounce an authoritative sentence? such a sentence (no doubt) they pronounced, when they condemned Christ and his Apostles, who were such as *J. M.* calls laymen, yea, even providing honest bread with their own hands, though he has dubbed the Apostles up with the name of priests, to make them tally with his own cloth; and yet how comes it, that of all the millions of laymen that have existed for many ages, he would not allow one of them a voice respecting their own faith or hope of salvation; nay, but all must submit to his authoritative sentence, and that he calls Catholic Unity; and speaks of it as a genuine mark of the true Church, saying, “the Catholic Church, speaking by the mouth of her pastors, are admitted and proclaimed by all Catholics throughout the four quarters of the globe, from Ireland to Chili, and from Cauada to India.”—*Letter xvi. page 20.*

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Yet how can he claim even that sort of Unity exclusively for himself, seeing that under Nebuchadnezar, there appears to have been a still more general Unity and assent to the authoritative sentence of the priests of his golden image? and though that Unity was such as he describes his to be, with regard to an authoritative sentence; yet theirs appears to have been far more universal in that day, than his; seeing that whole nations, with their divers religions, bowed down to the sound of Nebuchadnezar's authoritative sentence, except a few captive Jews.

And now if such like assent and concurrence be his only proof of Unity and peace, (which he saith is restored by such a sentence) is it not Babel, even confusion itself, brought forth by the old mother of hypocrisy? which is judged and condemned by the pure gospel unity, which stands in sincerity and truth, wherein every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, and no one to judge another in the innocent use or disuse of temporal things; even as respects eating or drinking, or the observance of days or times, about which they have fought furiously, and made a God of eating and drinking, even as *J. M.* saith they do in their sacrament.—Doth not the unity which consists in such things, stand in hypocrisy and enmity; if so be that it should be destroyed by a want of conformity therein? read the xiv. chapter to *Romans*.

I may slightly notice, that with all his cry of hear the Church, he was well aware, that in Italy, Spain, or Portugal, they never exclude such as commit the greatest of all trespasses, even to conceal a weapon in the doublet to stab a brother, though he that so carries such weapons, may be deemed a murderer, which is the worst of all trespassers, and such a man should be condemned in himself even to a witness, unless his conscience be woefully seared: nay but it appears he may have full unity with such men and their deeds, seeing he never even mentions a trespass, when he treacherously refers to the text (which treats of it,) for the purpose of defending a carnal priestly authority.

Wherefore I say again, if they pronounce sentence of exclusion against a man, who from scruple of conscience, dare not conform to their prescribed rules, while they overpass the wickedness of him whose conscience is so depraved as to sport with the life of a brother, by hiding a dirk or weapon in his doublet, because he may conform to mother church, or to any thing



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else: is not that the serpents' unity indeed, more hideous than the swallowing a camel, while they strain at a gnat? I might fill a volume with such like comparisons, but let it here suffice to have stated this one example, to remind them to beware of such treacherous Unity, and learn not to slight that great commandment, whereupon our Lord laid the great stress of all, which is like unto the first, even that "of all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—*Mat. vii. 12.* And surely all men of tender conscience, would that their conscience should be left free to serve the living God, and not to have their "scruples quashed by an authoritative sentence," which would be a sore trespass indeed, and so far from being a mark or bond of unity and peace, that it is a bond of iniquity and enmity.

**Objection.**—Some may object, that nothing but wilful perverseness could induce any people to dissent from the decrees of Mother Church, in the due observance of those things which appear harmless, while it is a duty to yield much for the sake of peace.

**Answer.**—Such is his objection whose conscience is not exercised to discern good and evil for himself, but has been pinning his faith to the sleeve of another, if that could bear the name of faith which a man had never proved for himself; but that objection will be found as empty as him that made it, when we reflect, that as soon as things harmless in themselves become an object of adoration, or veneration, the observance thereof becomes superstition or idolatry, and of course the stricter such observance is enjoined, so much greater is the sin of compliance, and so much more, the duty of all men to turn away from it—see *2 Tim. iii. 5.* I say the duty of all men that respect that first and great commandment, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind, and Him only shalt thou serve;" now if the heart and mind be any ways drawn out after the observance of outside things, though it be but to serve tables or observe days and times, whereby the affections become so far divided, and the mind estranged from that one object which only is to be served; even diverted and divided by things of nothing, whereby also the flesh may be amused with trifles, while the lusts and affections thereof may be saved alive; for the Apostle saith, "an idol is nothing in the world"—*1 Cor. x. 4.*

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So we may see, that it is the attention which is paid to things of nothing that becomes sinful, and that maketh the idol, and of that cometh idolatry, where the unknown God is bowed unto, even in creeds which are not tasted, felt, nor comprehended.

And now although I might instance many cases, both of example and precept, quite to the point, yet I may only notice one striking example, and that, even in the Old Testament, under the dispensation of types and figures, which might comparatively be called the times of ignorance which God winked at; and yet even in those times, how do we read of the brazen serpent which Moses raised up in the wilderness, at the special command of the Lord, whereof we read that it healed all that looked upon it, which had been bit by serpents with a mortal wound, and so was even an especial type of Christ, who should indeed heal all that look unto him in faith, who himself also makes mention thereof, *John* iii. 14. and yet when that brazen figure, which had been made an instrument of such miraculous healing, came to be idolized; Hesekiah broke it in pieces, calling it “a piece of brass;” and now (mark well) where we read of that act of his faithfulness, in breaking that figure to pieces (which had been revered or respected during many ages) mind I say, the next word in the text saith of him who broke it to pieces;” he trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that went before him” see ii. *Kings* 18.

Was there ever yet a way devised, more likely to betray people into Idolitry or superstition, than by affecting to imitate (or shall I say mimic) that which others had practised (nay though it might be like the practice of the Apostles themselves) if thereby we make unto ourselves the likeness of something in Heaven above, or that had been in the earth beneath, while we forget that the gospel which the Apostles preached, did in no wise consist of gestures or postures, nor of meats, drinks, or divers washings, (like that under the law;) nay, but in life and power, even in that which cometh down from God out of Heaven; for the kingdom or gospel state, stands not in word but in power—1 *Cor.* iv. 20.—and surely if it could not stand in word then, much less can it stand in any thing without us now, nay, but as our Saviour saith, “go not after them that say, see here, or see there, for

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the Kingdom of God is within you."—*Luke xvii. 21.*—there and there only it can be known, felt, and tasted, by the true believer. And if it be a fearful state, to be such unbelievers in the vital in-dwelling power of Godliness, as to run out into bodily exercise, which profiteth little; how much more fearful is that state, which, "by an authoritative sentence," would enforce upon others a blind conformity to their bodily exercises, and call that "Catholic Unity and peace?"

But now *J. M.* saith, "inspiration is quite fallacious, and has conducted many into errors and impieties," and thus would he scare the people from entering in, even like the Jews, who said that Christ "had a devil and is mad, why hear ye him;" or like the evil spies, who terrified the people by an evil report of the dangers and impossibility of entering in; even while they beguile the simple, and amuse them by imitating some of the supposed postures of those worthies of old, who wrought righteousness in the face of all dangers, though the recompence of their reward was for their own faithfulness, and not for mimicing that of others who went before them.

The experience of all ages proclaims the proneness of the human mind to idolatry, even as the fruits of the natural man, who hates the light because his deed are evil, and so he would do any thing to maintain a false rest, rather than come home to Christ, whose word is as a two-edged sword, which would lay the axe to the very root of the corrupt tree, and break up the old man's rest, and spoil all his goods, yea even all his self-righteousness, as well as his unrighteousness; and seeing that covetousness, or selfishness, is the main root and ground of all idolatry that ever was in the world, inasmuch as it blindeth the mind, and bindeth up all together in a chain of darkness and delusion; and here lieth a main bond of unity between priests and people; and more especially in all state religions, of what profession soever; they are mighty tendend of each others faults and failings; for the priest would not disquiet the greedy money-monger of the world; nor would he interrupt his devotion, while he falls prostrate at the shrine of his darling pursuits of worldly honours and profits, &c., which is the God he loves with all his heart, who yet in his qualms of conscience, may desire a portion of the priests' odors and ointments, and especially, of that enchanting divination that might throw him into a spiri-



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tual slumber, lest being awakened, he should be amazed and terrified at the sight of his own condition, seeing that the eyes of the true physician of souls, (which alone could heal him soundly, and love him freely,) are as a flame of fire to such a state.

And in return for having their hurt healed falsely, the people on their part, fail not to reverence the priests and their nostrums, and so build them up in iniquity, who (while they affect great humility and self-denial,) like a slice in their own way, of wealth, rank, and promotion in the world, even full as much as others; all of which is mightily promoted by such a confederacy; and thus the great City Babylon is upheld, even in divers professions, somewhat like old buildings, which hang long together, by leaning one upon the other; all loving only such as love them, which is set forth throughout the Scriptures in the similitude of an harlot; and so we find old Israel prone to go a whoreing after the unity of the nations, as we read in *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekeil*, and *Hosea*, &c. And our Saviour calls them an adulterous generation; but the anti-Christian Babylon outstrips them all, even as *Revelations* stile her the great whore, of whose Unity I need say but little, seeing that she is set forth, as sitting upon peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues—see *Rev.* xvii. 18. And the kings of the earth committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her; behold then the strength and extent of her Unity; howbeit, that is all a mystery, nay, her very name is mystery, Babylon, the great, the very wine of her joys, held forth in her golden cup, is wrath indeed; behold there a notable description of her mystery of deceit; all her joy is wrath, her delicacy filthiness, her love hatred, her oneness multifarious; and as to her Unity, seeing she sits as a queen, her authoritative sentence must needs be of a piece with the height of her dignity.

Objection.—Are there then no other people concerned herein but merely what belongs to one Church alone, would not that go to bring Babylon into a very small compass?

Answer.—Far be it from me to say that none else beside them are concerned therein; nay how well would it be for the world, if even all others were clear? but where is the society at this day that is not some way or other ensnared thereby: even so captivated in their divers systems and many inventions, as to be thereby

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beguiled and bereaved of that true godliness, which alone gathers the soul to God in the life that now is and that which is to come? nay but when the Lord ariseth to judge Babylon, will he not first of all deal with those daughters, who have provoked Him to jealousy, (under a high profession of reformation,) even before he pours forth the phials upon the mother, which she cannot escape?

And what shall we say, if even much of the idolatry practised by divers casts of Pagan priests, might be traced to the gross carnal imitation of some pious act, which might have been good in the origin? or peradventure to some carnal construction of a sacred text, which enjoins us not only to offer up all that is bestial and earthly within us, but even to offer ourselves a living sacrifice unto God? and what if even the horrible act of submitting to be ground under the wheel of the obscene Juggernaut, (mentioned by *J. M.*) might have originated in a supposed imitation of a divine ordinance, even by the gross carnal construction of some wise and prudent priests, or councils, from whom God always hides the things of his spiritual Kingdom, which therefore, in process of time might grow to that monster of blind superstition?

And if Juggernaut has crushed his thousands, have not the decrees whereof *J. M.* boasts crushed their millions, who cast down their conscience under the wheel of that authoritative sentence, which he calls Catholic Unity and peace? and all by tradition or a private interpretation of Scripture, even by men who claim an exclusive right to interpret them to their own private ends: was ever the like private interpretation as that claimed by him, who would dissect a text, to take therefrom an atom, to establish his Church authority, and bring all into bondage to their confused decrees, even to make men offenders for a word or syllable, wherein themselves, though ever learning are never learned, neither understand each other, nor yet what themselves affirm? witness their fathers and councils contradicting each other and themselves too; yet would have all to fall down and be crushed under the wheel of their authoritative sentence; and that they call Unity and peace.

But the Unity of the Apostles was not circumscribed by a mere conformity to rituals; nay, surely, but so far otherwise, that when Peter so unwarily slid into his old orthodox system, as to compel the Gentile converts to conform to the cere-

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monies which he had not yet quite laid aside ; “ Paul withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed”—see *Gal. ii.* and yet Peter calls Paul “ beloved brother ;” so we may see that their Unity did not stand in a carnal conformity to any prescribed rule, or order of men, but in Christ, the power of an endless life ; and therein all were of one mind, and spake the same thing, while they did not abuse that liberty which was permitted for edification and not for destruction ; but what shall I say, or why should I have lengthened out so undesirable a theme ? seeing I might rather have made short work on it, and have summed up the whole matter, by saying, that the gospel Unity is for ever hid from all the wise men in old Adam, who are in the serpent’s wisdom, and therefore, it is foolishness unto all the great imperial self-seeking councils of the earth, even as it is hid from the dignitaries which they set up, who are taken and comprehended in their own craftiness.

Therefore, all that (from age to age,) have known Christ to have shewed them their sins, and forgiven them for his name sake ; may with reverence adore Him, in a sense of his heart-consoling language, in that He saith, “ blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake ; rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy ; for, behold, your reward is great in Heaven ; for, in the like manner did their father’s unto the prophets.”—*Luke vi.* And has not all this been doing to a little remnant from age to age, even by the chief priests and rabbies of the times, with their councils, rulers, and multitude, while they were all made friends as in unity together ? but alas ! what will an unrighteous confederacy (or boast of Unity) avail them that glory therein ?



## SECTION VIII.

*Reflections upon J. Milner's second and third distinguishing marks of the true Church, (which he terms Sanctity and Catholicity,) shewing the emptiness and fallacy of his boasted exclusive claim to Sanctity of Doctrine, means of Sanctity, together with his divine attestation of Sanctity and Catholicity, &c.—See letter xix. to xxvii. page 34 to 122 inclusive.*

**I** SHALL first notice his means of Sanctity, and may say, doth he not therein far outstrip the Heathen or Jewish devotee, in his appeal to carnal ordinances, for means of Sanctity? although in the outset (as if it were for decency sake.) he saith, his counsels attribute the cause of justification or sanctification to the mercy of God, which (if we observe what follows,) seems a more empty compliment than would be set forth even by the Heathen, (who attributes all things to the power of God,) seeing that in this, he falls far short of them, that he holds forth, as if God could not, or would not sanctify or save the soul, without the handy work of his brother priests; yea, as if the glorious gospel was as much beholden to sophistry and sorcery, as any institution ever broached since the confusion of Babel?

The Scripture saith, “it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” read *Heb.* viii. ix. x. chapters, there it is asserted that no outward or earthly institution, (even though ordained of God himself, for special purposes in its season,) should have any possible tendency to cleanse the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; nay verily, that would be robbing the Saviour of his honour, and his creature of the efficacy and fullness of that grace which alone bringeth salvation, and sanctification—see *Titus* ii. 11. 12. 13. 14. And now for him to set forth and extol the efficacy of what he calls his seven sacraments, as being such indispensable means of sanctification (even in those gospel times) appears more inexcusable than the carnal Jewish ordinances which made nothing perfect, seeing that his sacraments could never take away sin, or the guilt thereof; however they might tend to darken the mind,

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and lull the poor sinner asleep in false security ; seeing also, that whoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace, read *Galatians* v. chapter throughout.

And seeing that the Scriptures attribute sanctification to Christ alone ; would it not be a fearful despising of the riches of his grace, for poor sinful mortals, to take on to perform a part of that which none but him that made the world could effect ? and if such should make a gain of the like deceptions, how great would be their condemnation ? and it is beyond controversy, (that however dignified or qualified men should be, to call sinners to repentance, or turn souls to God, (that yet their justification or sanctification is of Him, and through him alone, as his unspeakable gift—see *John* xvii. 17 and 19.—*Rom.* iii. 24.—1 *Cor.* i. 30.—1 *Cor.* vi. 11.—*Ephes.* v. 26.—1 *Thes.* v. 23.—*Col.* i. and ii. chapters.—*Hebs.* ix. 14. and chapter xiii. xii.—1 *Peter* i. 2.

Objection.—Although there be Scriptures too numerous to be quoted, which proclaim the Lord alone, as the justifier and sanctifier of his people ; is there nothing therefore to be done on man's part ? Answer—yea, verily, there is very much to be done on man's part, (which still must be all the work of God alone,) even that while man have the light, he may believe and walk therein ; that so he may see his fallen and undone condition, and the filthiness thereof, so as to be drawn to look unto the Saviour, even as in the last extremity, yea, to be brought to breathe forth, “ Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean,” but while he has any other resource, there is no Saviour for him ; all other physicians must first of all be seen to be of no value ; for though multitudes throng and press about the Saviour, they only are healed who are past all remedy ; but I see this to be a theme that would draw me out beyond my limits, nor should I have touched upon it, but to glance at the order of gospel redemption, and to shew what egregious folly it should be, for man to run to a creature more helpless than himself, for the means of sanctification, seeing that Christ alone is the means ; as all that were ever sanctified should proclaim ; yea, and whoever depends upon any other means, is filthy still ; and all the righteousness of such worse than filthy rags.

And as to his setting forth the power and efficacy of his baptismal water of regeneration, transubstantiated bread and wine, and holy oil, &c., which, being (at best,) but an imitation of

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the lively figures whereby the Saviour was made manifest to the people, even while the figures in themselves were as nothing, but the Saviour to which they pointed is all in all: and seeing the gospel order is a state of substance and not of figures; his magnifying such outside imitations at this day, shews how great a stranger he is to the one blessed effectual means of sanctification: but as I aim at brevity, I may only ask, why he is not afraid to assert, that he could make any rain, river, or spring water upon earth, to regenerate a man, or wash away sins? or does he believe such to be the water whereof Jesus saith, he that drinketh shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life? according to *John iv.*

Or does he believe as he saith, that he could bless bread and wine, so as to change them into that body and blood of Christ which is the life of the world, and that cleanseth from all sin? And yet that such bread and wine may be taken in at the mouth and cast out into the draught, even while he reads as in the xv. chapter of *Matthew* and vii. of *Mark*, that “whatsoever thing entereth in at the mouth cannot defile a man, because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, but that which cometh from within out of the heart defileth.”—And surely if nothing “from without, that goeth into the mouth and is cast forth into the draught can defile,” neither could any thing taken in at the mouth and cast out, &c., sanctify a man, seeing it could not reach the heart and conscience which is the seat of defilement.

And as to what he calls the sacrament of Extreme Unction or anointing the sick with oil, who would say, that the Apostle should be so absurd as to send us to the oil of beasts, herbs or trees, for sanctification or salvation? surely that would be no better than to send us to the Egyptian calf, or Heathen mistletoe, which the Apostle never intended, who knew what he meant, yea and even the babe in Christ knows it right well, though the priest may affect to stumble on the text, with his private carnal interpretation, just as suits his craft, to make a gain thereof.

Yet however strange the above may appear, as the reader may see at large throughout his book, but more especially in *letters* xx. xxxvi. xxxvii. xl. xli. xliv. still it is not less extraordinary, that after all he has boasted therein of his exclusive treasures and channels of means of Sanctity; we find him denying or con-



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tradicting the whole substance thereof in—*letter* xix. wherein he asserts, that it is notoriously false, to say of his people, “that the essence of their religion, and hopes of salvation consist in forms and ceremonies, or in other exterior things,” now for what end or design he puts forth such a salvo (of which the above is a very short extract;) I leave the reader to determine and make what he can of a man, who labours throughout hundreds of pages, to seth forth the efficacy and solemnity of his “forms, ceremonies, and exterior things;” and to shew that without the priest we could do nothing; and yet after all that, for him to say that the essence of religion was not in such things, or in the handy works of such priests; wherefore then doth he consign all to eternal perdition, who abstain from those things in which “the essence of religion doth not consist,” even calling them heretics incessantly; against whom he had no occasion but their abstaining from those things wherein he saith “the essence of religion or hope of salvation doth not consist?”

Nay hut he will not remit a jot or tittle of his “exterior things,” even as regards the innocent child, see his animadversion upon Doctor Hay, because he would not assert that the neglect of his baptism will affect the salvation of a child—*letter* xx.—*page* 52. 53. And yet for him to have asserted, in his foregoing letter, that it is calumny, or rather blasphemy to say of his people, “that the essence of religion and our hopes of salvation consist in forms and ceremonies, or in other exterior things;” now what can we say to such a heap of contradictions and unmeaning jargon? but that Babel is as sure confusion at this day, as it was when the people assayed to build a tower to reach up to Heaven; and all that assay to build up thither by their own wisdom and prudence, will as sure be confounded as ever they were; but I fear our modern Babel builders, have more sordid ends in view, than the poor old wanderers ever thought of, if so be that they look to make gain or merchandize of the people, by thus taking away the key of knowledge; yea, even by raising such a mist of darkness, confusion, and ignorance, as that they may make an easy prey of the people, and take them captive at their will, and so lord over their conscience, and that have been the upshot of Idolatry throughout ages.

But now I may be asked, is not the world vastly refined and enlightened in those latter ages?

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Answer.—How far it is enlightened I must leave, but that it is refined I may admit; seeing that the manners of the people are refined; sin is refined; deceit refined; but nothing so refined (or the delusion so disguised) as Idolatry, even in all societies; which I may further notice in its place, but here I am to wind up, and cut short his means of Sanctity; and whether I attribute it to refinement or whatever else, there is something monstrous (not to say worse,) in what appears the fundamental of his boasted means of Sanctity; even that his priests should be so gifted with more than miraculous powers, as to regenerate and sanctify people with elementary water; and that by the same power he affects to make God, as *J. M.* saith, true God as well man—*letter xxxvi. page 40.* And thus the creature takes on or professes to create the Creator, yea, and to eat him, and cast him forth, &c., and again make a new one; yea, and that for money too; and a goodly price they have made thereof, even for many ages, not only of wealth, but renown in the world; which brings me to notice

*J. MILNER'S SANCTITY OF DOCTRINE,*  
see *letter xix. page 33. to 45.*

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And that wealth and renown with the friendship of the world, being the gift that blindeth the mind and perverteth judgment; and he knowing that trade to have been driven on throughout Christendom for many ages, by his brother bishops, seeking who should be greatest, even like the Heathen, or like the princes of this world: all to the setting at nought our Saviour's injunction, who saith, it should not be so among his followers, I say, he knowing all this, how could he lay claim to that exclusive Sanctity of Doctrine, as may be seen in *letter xix. &c.*, and not to blush for very shame? seeing that (so far from Sanctity,) nothing could be more filthy, than for a professed gospel minister to preach for hire, and divine for money, to seek for pre-eminence and gain from their quarter—(see *Isaiah lvi. 11.—Micah. iii. and Matt. xxiii.*) And have not his bishops and councils, laid such a foundation as has been a sore plague and stone of stumbling throughout Christendom, and had he shewed honesty enough, to confess that to be the rock whereupon his Church was built, I should never have contradicted him.

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Objection.—It may yet be objected, that so far as respects doctrine, the priest does not arrogate to himself any power, nor would he venerate the cleanest water, bread, wine, or oil, &c. as such, but ascribes all the wonderful changes, virtue, and efficacy thereof, to the power of God alone, which should rather establish than detract from the Sanctity of his doctrine.

Answer.—Is not that the language of all Idolaters? for who would ever have bowed to an idol, until he was first persuaded that it had power communicated from God; on which account only, they have ever adored their idols? the Scripture saith, the first man is of the earth earthy, but he that cometh from Heaven is above all. And now we know that elementary water, bread, wine, or oil, &c. are not only of the earth, but even inanimate substances; and whosoever takes on to communicate the power of God to an inanimate substance, may be called either an Idolator or magician.\*

These are grievous things for me to write, which I might have forborn, if I had not yet a far more weighty cause: but seeing that in the world, there are Lords and Gods many, which are bowed unto in divers ways, through the lust of the flesh, and of the eye, and pride of life; which are not of the Father; who hath sent the son, and given him freely, to redeem lost man out of all these things, and out of the deceivableness of his own heart and the lusts thereof; and seeing how grievous it is, that mankind should be bereaved of that unspeakable gift, by stopping short, or taking up a rest, in what is even worse than imitation of the lively figures whereby the Saviour was made manifest; whose message, first of all, was that of repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins; and seeing that the indispensable necessity thereof, was set forth by so likely a figure as that of plunging all over in water, even to shew forth the necessity, not only of being plunged into a thorough sense of sin and of the guilt thereof; but to be drawn to Christ, who alone can wash and cleanse us from all sin, whose shoes

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\* If the Heathen did believe, that God might be made of gold, silver, brass, wood, stone, or animals, &c., and should we likewise believe, that Christ may be composed of bread, wine, or water, &c., wherein lieth the difference, seeing that neither would say that the mere elements or symbols were deities, nay but that which was communicated thereunto from above? do not each therefore, meet upon the self same ground? wherein they are all comprehended in the same region and circle of carnal reason.



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John saith he was not worthy to bear, who should baptize with the Holy Spirit: and now would not our case be deplorable indeed, if we should look no further than to be dipped in water by another, (who yet had not even a commission to administer that figure,) without coming to be baptized by Christ himself, so as to know for ourselves what it means to be buried with Him in baptism, wherein also we are raised through the faith of the operation of God? according to *Matthæw* iii. 11. and *Col.* ii.—and so to be made partakers of his sufferings; seeing there is no other way of knowing Christ whom we profess, so as not to worship an unknown God, of whom we read, and hear others speak, but that we may know Him for ourselves, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write; who is not far from every one of us, in whom we live, move, and have our being, if happily we should know Him to wash us from our sins in his own blood?—read *Acts* xvii.

And so we should not take any man's word, without coming to taste and see for ourselves, that the Lord is good, who feeds the hungry with good things, and the bread he gives cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, who saith, “this is that bread which came down from Heaven; not as your father's did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”—So mark, not eaten in like manner with the mouth, &c., as all such eaters die; but that part which partakes of the bread that Christ gives can never die, as He himself saith, “he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever, for the words that He speak they are spirit and they are life.”—read *John* vi.

But that is foolishness to all that know not the spirit and life which was all and all in the midst of them, when he saith, **THIS** is my body and blood, &c. which is meat and drink indeed, (even spirit and life; for God is a spirit,) but now alas, they look down to the grain of wheat, and to the grape, which cometh out of the earth, instead of looking to Heaven, where the wine is drank new in the kingdom: but all such eaters and drinkers as feed upon outside things, feed upon the husk, and would guzzle with the swine, and even while they boast of the Sanctity of their Doctrine, they hinder the people from coming unto Christ; who giveth freely without money and with certainty; that so they might sell that worthless and uncertain

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thing, which goeth into the mouth, and is cast forth, &c.

Doth not such shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, not entering in themselves, and such as would they hinder? yea, do they not hinder all, whom they turn to any thing that is without them, seeing our Saviour saith, "the Kingdom of God is within you?" and warns us not to go after them that saith, "see here, or see there."—*Luke xvii.*—and as he saith, it cometh not by observation, how then should we look for that in the observation of ordinances, which is a heavenly spiritual influence and dominion within, even the unspeakable gift of God; it cometh not by observation or human wisdom or prudence, neither is it known by any private interpretation, even of high priest or bishop, however eminent, arch, lordly, reverend, wise or prudent of this world, all their notes and comments are worse than vanity, even as a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not entered by note or comment, or private interpretation, nay, but by putting off the old man with his deeds, and the affections and lusts thereof; and putting on the new man after the image of the Creator, even in righteousness, (not after the image of the priest or his sanctity;) and that new man partakes of the new wine in the Kingdom of the Father, of which he is born, and of the hidden manna, which is for ever hid from all that would only take it in at the mouth, or the carnal imagination of the old man, which knows not the new name or new creation, it is foolishness to them all; for none knows it, but he that receiveth it, who has the witness in himself; and such knows the anointing oil that saves the sick, even the oil of gladness of salvation; having it immediately from Him that is appointed to give unto all that mourn in Zion, the oil of joy for mourning; mark, for mourning; oh! ye that dwell securely in your carnal wisdom and renown in the earth; after whom the world wonders, crying up the Sanctity of your Doctrine, while they wallow in the earth, and feed together upon the husk which the swine did eat.\*

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\* I am aware that many readers would even exclaim, have our forefathers been wrong for ages? and is all the world wrong to this day?

Answer—Should they not be rather surprised to reflect, that they had been paying for their religion for ages? yea even paying for that which no man can sell to another, seeing that no man can sell the gift of God; nay it

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But the true worshipper, (who is a Jew but not outwardly,) knows what he worships, and need not wander abroad after a priest, to explain the mysteries of an unknown God, where both fall into the ditch; for is he not an Idolater, who worships, and knows not what, but as he hears told by the priest? and however such may boast of Sanctity, is he not filthy still, not knowing the way of holiness which is so plain that the fool should not err therein? if in faith he be a way-faring man in the way of holiness, and given up to take such a fare as is provided for that way, which is a way the vulture's eye hath not seen, nor any ravenous beast gone up thereon; it is hid from the keen-eyed commentator, and the covetous hireling, who would make gain of the gospel; even as it is hid from all the wisdom of the world, whether of the learned or unlearned; but the redeemed go there, and know their Redeemer, and his name, Jesus, Emanuel, how is that? why, by what He doth for them in the day of distress, even in the day of despair, whom he drew out of the horrible pit and miry clay, setting them upon that rock which is above man or priest; and put a new song into their mouth, even the song of the redeemed praises to his name, to whom the babe sings Hosanna, while the chief priests and scribes are sore displeased, saying in their carnal confidence, come not near me, I am holier than thou.

**J. MILNER'S DIVINE ATTESTATION  
OF SANCTITY.**

See *letter* xxiii. and xxiv. page 71. to 103. inclusive.

I shall not follow him in what he calls a Divine Attestation of the Sanctity of his Church, being such unaccountable tales of miracles, &c., some of which he states to have been performed at graves, and wells, and by the touch of old relics, &c., even as if he would have them in imitation, or to exceed Christ and

is his free gift alone, who saith, "come ye, and buy without money and without price: wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread," &c.—See *Isaiãh* lv. 1. 2. behold then the solution of the whole riddle? the priests chose to make money, and so to bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so.—*Jer.* v. 31. and so they lap it up; and *Revelations* saith, the whole world wondered after the beast; is not that as great a wonder as the other?



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His Apostles—see *letter xxii. page 72. 76. 78. 80. 86. &c. to letter xxiv. page 100.*

But that I should not be misunderstood, I may say in the outset, once for all, that I am so far from denyng the operation of miracles in any age, that I should count him near a kin to an Infidel, who should deny the possibility thereof, nay, even the very course and ordering of Providence, is nothing short of one continued chain of wonders beyond finite comprehension, but above all, His powerful speaking in the conscience.

As to those miracles or legends, which he sets forth for a Divine Attestation of the Sanctity of his Church; it is none of my business to question whether they be real, fictitious, or imaginary; but the gross absurdity of his asserting such miracles, as connected with the cause for which he states them to have been performed, carries with it, such a self-evident refutation, as that I need not have noticed them, only lest I should appear to concur with his assertions, by silently passing them over; I may therefore just advert to one or two examples, leaving the reader to judge whether the miracles he attributes to them, be not as far from attesting the Sanctity of the performers, as the raising up of Samuel, was from attesting the sanctity of the witch of Endor?

I may first instance his speaking of Bernard, of whom he saith, “all the miracles which St. Bernard mentions of other saints, quite disappear when compared with those wrought by himself, which for their splendour and publicity never were exceeded,” &c. *letter xxiii. page 79.* now mark, that said Bernard was a notorious promoter of that infamous project (the disgrace of Christendom,) called the Crusades, and moreover, after he had succeeded in preaching up and setting forward the second crusade, his schemes sustained such a failure, that most of the deluded multitude who espoused his infamous cause, perished miserably in the enterprise; and yet, to behold that same Bernard, to be not only a promoter of such abominations, but also proved a false prophet, by the failure of what he so vehemently urged forward; and *J. M.* reading all of this in his own books, proceeds thus, “Saint Bernard himself (in answer to his enemies who reproached him with the ill success of the second Crusade,) in the most celebrated of his works addressed to pope Eugenius III., refers to the miracles which God enabled

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“him to work, by way of justifying himself for having preached up the second Crusade; and in his letter to the people of Thoulouse, he mentions his having detected the heretics among them, not only by words but also by miracles.”—See *letter xxiii. page 80.* and *letter xxiv. page 94.* now mark what he holds forth to the world as an attestation of the Sanctity of the Church, but is it not rather an attestation of infamy?

Objection.—It may yet be objected, that although some things about Bernard appear monstrous, yet should not I be afraid to write so irreverently of a man, who is exalted as a saint, and extolled by the world?

Answer.—Should I not rather be afraid to deny my Saviour’s cause, than to hold up any man in direct opposition to Him, who saith, “My Kingdom is not of this world; if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight: but now is my Kingdom not from hence?”—*John xviii. 36.* And if I see Bernard and *Milner* setting at naught our Lord’s declaration, and respect them therein, what iniquity could be greater? And is it not a desperate setting at naught, and doing despite to the gospel (which is peace on earth good will to men, and love to enemies,) for such as profess to be ministers thereof, to take on to promote it by such rapine, slaughter, and desolation, as marked the march of the Crusades? and now to call such pre-eminent saints, and extol their miracles, is so fearful a mockery of heavenly order and mercy, as might even be a scandal to Mahomed.

The next to Bernard, whose miracles he sets forth as a divine attestation of the Sanctity of the Church, is, his St. Dominick, which he calls a prodigy—*letter xxiv. page 97.* even while it is notorious that the same Dominick was a zealous and violent promoter of the Inquisition, and joined with the Crusades to exterminate the poor distressed Albigenes; such are the men in whom he could see nothing but saintship and sanctity; and why so? but because they appear the most zealous advocates of ecclesiastical dominion, that so the clergy might domineer over conscience, and bear down all that was so honest toward God, as not to dissemble or deny their faith, or bow down to the unrighteousness of an imperial state religion, mixed up with Jewish and Pagan rites, congenial to the views of a gorgeous and pompous generation, which aimed at grasping all; that so their

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kingdom might indeed be of this world, to the great scandal of Christendom, yea and to the grief of many of their own profession.

But it is still more wonderful, that very grief and shame, did not withhold him from ever naming South America; where he saith, "that Lewis Bertrand converted 10,000 Indians by the "gift of tongues in the space of three years."—*Letter xxiv. page 96.* Alas! what kind of conversion could that be? surely if the South Americans became like their invaders, our Saviour's description of the Pharisees was abundantly verified in them, even that having crossed sea and land to make a proselyte, they made him twofold more the child of hell: I say, let him look into his own histories of the invasion and conquest of South America, and see how the original owners of the soil, even the poor unoffending natives were betrayed, robbed, and murdered, yea and massacred in tens of thousands by the Spaniards, aye by such as he calls the spotless spouse of Christ; nay and that in a manner so treacherous and barbarous, as would be a disgrace even to cannibals.

And did not those monsters that invaded them (under a mask or pretence of conversion,) betray and murder each other from time to time for many years? one colony of adventurers still going out with design to circumvent and destroy the other, until they were often consumed one of another? Alas! was ever greater mockery, than for such men to pull down the images of the natives, in order to erect the image of the Cross, and of the Virgin Mary (as they call it) in place thereof? surely if there be any meaning in such images, their cross must be a signal of disgrace, (and a very signal one too,) whereby they not only crucify the truth, but put it to open shame, even to a vengeance.

What shall we say then, when we behold *J. M.* in divers parts of his work, speaking of the South American conquest and conversion, with apparent pleasure and self-complacency, even like one that was as void of human feeling as a mill-stone; for surely the heart must be quite dead to human or religious sensibility, that could glory in such achievements, while it should rather bleed and blush for shame, in a retrospect of such unparalleled cold-blooded treachery, which is a sad demonstration, to what a pitch of depravity the human mind may be reduced, by pride,



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avarice, and bigotry; yea, what a disgrace to humanity, that the sons of Adam could still become such monsters; but the unjust know no shame.\*

I should not have followed *J. M.* so far, in noticing what he calls a Divine Attestation of the Sanctity of his Church, as proved by miracles; only to shew a specimen of such barefaced presumption, seeing that he compares his miracles to those wrought by Christ and his Apostles; as being not only like theirs in effect and magnitude, but wrought to the self same end, namely, to prove his own to be the only true Church in the world.

But mark the difference; Christ heals and does cures to manifest His love to all mankind, yea, even heals the man that was armed to crucify Him. But how great is the difference, if Bernard and Dominick, &c. work miracles, to justify the destruction of nations and people not a few, nay, of all that oppose them? but was it ever heard, that saints should work miracles to prove that devils belong to the true Church; Alas! what doth our Lord say to them that savoured of treachery or persecution? Doth he not say to such; ye are of your father the devil, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning? and ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers.

And as to his drawing out the minds of the people, to dote after cures from old wells and dead men's bones, what doth that

\* Had *J. M.* been clothed with true humility, he should be far from exulting in (what he calls) the conversion of South America; nay, but could he only take an honest glance at the state thereof, would he not rather mourn over them? only to observe the disposition and pursuits of the inhabitants of their cities and see if the follies of the heathen be not still retained therein, or rather exceeded, if so be that the wealth of the mines, together with their thirst of fashion and vanities; their viceroys, bishops and abbots, &c. engross the attention, and be the primary objects with the grandees thereof? what then would avail the pomp and parade of their high profession of Christianity, while the heart and attention was thus engrossed and filled with vain objects? would not their high profession of Christ rather add to their condemnation, if their inconsistency therewith, tended to the dishonour of the Christian name? Would not the old Pagan natives rise up in Judgment against them.

And when we reflect that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household."—*Mat. x. 36.*—it may therefore be queried, whether it would not be easier to bring over the very Heathen to the true knowledge of the Saviour, than those that are fortified with a profession that they know God, while by their works they deny Him?

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prove, but his gross ignorance of the well of the water of life, and of Him, of whom a bone should not be broken? yea, his gross ignorance of Him that is the healer of all diseases, out of whose side came the water and the blood; for after all his boast of the miracles in his Church, we may see that the great disease of all has not been healed even to this day, no, not a whit more soundly amongst his own people, than those he reviles; I shall only instance for example sake, that sin, which is the substance or ground of all disease, has still as great dominion over them, as over other people, nay, but were we to look at their manners, would it not rather seem to have more dominion? or why else do some of the best of them make themselves prisoners for life, like the old Pagan vestals, even men and women apart? Alas! has Satan so bound them, that they are not yet restored to the natural liberty of the creation of God, in righteousness and true holiness, according to his prayer, who designed that it should be effectual to whom it is applicable, even that of, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil”—*John xvii. 15.* And nothing but his grace alone could effectually preserve even from one lust; therefore, while they run to old walls and prisons to keep them chaste, away with their boasted miracles.

And whereas he instances the miracle of a nun and a hermit, foretelling the death of the King and Queen of France, and the banishment of the clergy, as an attestation of the Sanctity of his Church—*letter xxiii. page 86.* Now although I do not vouch for the accuracy of his statement, yet surely if it proves any thing, it is to shew, that God is no respecter of church dignitaries, if a poor girl, or a solitary recluse, might have more revealed to them, than all his whole conclave of cardinals, bishops, and priests, put together.

**CATHOLICITY,**

see *letter xxv. xxvi. and xxvii. page 103. to 122. inclusive.*

The third distinguishing mark which *J. Milner* sets forth to prove his to be exclusively the one only true Church, is, Catholicity; and so he asserts that his is the only Catholic Church, which word Catholic, (he saith) means universal; and as a proof thereof, he proceeds to describe how widely it spreads

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over the world, &c.—See *letter xxvi. page 110. 111.* If that be his proof of its being the only true Church on the face of the earth, I need not dwell upon the absurdity thereof, seeing that our Saviour saith in *Mat. vii. 13.* “wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat; because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” which is a solemn memento for every soul the world over.

And as I before observed of old times, (according to his rule) Nebuchadnezzar’s Church should have been the only true one, when the dominion thereof reached over the whole world. And by the same rule, even old Jezebel might have laid a claim to Catholicity; when the whole kingdom of Israel excepting seven thousand bowed to her worship; yea and even at this day, by the same rule, Mahomed and the Pagan Jugernaut, might make the like presumptuous claim, seeing that many nations of the world profess their faith; nay but is not that same sort of Catholicity which he claims, noted in revelations as a distinguishing mark of antichristian or spiritual Babylon? even that she sat upon people, and multitudes, and nations and tongues? yea that all nations drank of her wine, and that “power was given (the beast) over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations,” &c.—see *Rev. xiii. xvii. xviii. chapters*; and though these things are of no private interpretation, but stand as a warning to every state and condition of mankind, (even to individuals, as to nations and churches) yet do they not exactly correspond with the demerits of his exclusive Catholicity? as he asserts in *letter xxvi. page 100. 111.*

*J. Milner* himself admits (as he cannot prove otherwise,) that the word Catholic was not applied to the Church in the Apostles days; “hence,” (he saith,) “The title of Catholic did not occur in the primitive edition of the Apostles’ creed,” (nay, he might also have added, that neither could the creed itself be found in the Scripture,) but in the process of time, he admits by consequence, that the title Catholic was applied to such as would force or impose their faith upon others, wherein he saith, “No sooner did heretics and schismatics arise,” &c., “than there was found to be a necessity of discriminating the main stock of her faithful children, to whom the promises of Christ



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“belonged, from those self-willed choosers of their articles of belief, as the word heretic signifies, and those disobedient separatists, as the word schismatic means.—For this purpose the title Catholic or Universal was adopted, and applied to the true Church and her children,” &c.—*letter xxv. page 104.* So there is the upshot of all his boasted Catholicity, even that he claims a right to lord over God’s heritage, aye, even over the conscience of all men, and would have them to bow down to all the forms, traditions, and ceremonies, which the great Roman Empire substituted in place of polytheism; and such as cannot conform, he calls “self-willed choosers of their articles of belief,” (or heretics,) if they will not chuse his articles; and although the Scripture saith, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”—*Roms. xiv. 15.* yet he calls such as would be so persuaded, “self-willed choosers, heretics,” if they should dare to choose as the Scripture directs, rather than bow to his prescribed articles.

And yet he calls his Church Catholic or Universal, saying, that Papist or Romanist, &c., are nicknames; even while he writes above 500 pages to prove them to be nothing else but thorough Papists, yea, to prove, that salvation cannot be sure to any that denies the pope or his fathers; and I am persuaded that even his own people would say, that such should properly be called a Papist, whose salvation is staked in the acknowledgement of the pope, &c. And if he has laboured at such length to prove them to be Papists; hath he not laboured yet more abundantly, to prove that his people could not, or should not be Catholic? that is to say, if Catholic means Universal; for surely the universal Church, must be that which owns the universal spirit and grace of God, which bringeth salvation and hath appeared to all men, and must own the salvation which cometh by that grace alone, through sanctification of that spirit, whereof a measure or manifestation is given to every man to profit withal, according to Scripture—*1 Cor. 12. 7.*—*Titus ii. 11. to 14.* And Peter declares, “of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”—*Acts x. 34. 35.* So there we find the universal Church consistent with God himself; whose boundaries are nothing short of every nation, and the conditions, simply to fear God and work righteousness;

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there we do not find the smallest patrimony reserved for the pope, nay nor any sect, to the exclusion of all others, of every nation, who should fear God and work righteousness.

Wherefore, if a man say that communion with his sect affects the salvation of all men, even while the bond of that communion consists of many traditions and ceremoais not to be found in Scripture, does not such a man proclaim aloud, that his Church is the very reverse of universal? and while he proclaims liberty, doth he not wofully betray into bondage? and are not such like unto those Jews to whom our Lord said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above, ye are of this world, I am not of this world." *John* viii. 23.—Mark the words (from beneath); and doth not his Church communion tend downward, as it consists of things below, even of carnal things of this world, which see death and corruption? but the communion of God's universal Church, leadeth up to God, from whom it comes, as it consisteth of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, wherein Peter and the Centurion are of the same Church, whose dimensions are not circumscribed by rudiments, traditions, or commandments of men, but in righteousness, even a being born of the Spirit, which alone maketh righteous, according to the righteousness which is of faith, which speaketh on this wise, "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend or descend to bring Christ from thence, but what saith it, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and heart," &c.—*Rom.* x.?

Mind then, that is the word of faith which is every where, not only in heaven, but very nigh us, even in the heart; and he that believeth not therein, doth not believe in the eternal universal Spirit, of which our blessed Lord saith, as the lightning that lightneth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto the other, so shall he be in his day—even him whom we are warned to seek, if haply we might feel after him and find him, who is not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being—*Acts* xvii. So then if we have faith, we shall not say, who shall ascend for the word, or even look to the saints to make intercession for us, nor say, who shall descend or go over the seas to bring the word from councils, high-priests, or renowned rabbies, for so saith the unbelief of those that believe not in the universality of the spirit and grace of God, which is the guide of one true Church, even that which the

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Scripture saith, hath appeared unto all men, (mark all men,) even the rebellious who rebel against the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, or how else should they rebel against it—see *John* i.—*Titus* ii. 11.

Wherefore, if he saith, that the holy spirit is only communicated through the medium of his clergy, he denies the universality thereof, and so he cannot be of the universal Church, whereof the one Lord is the head, and guide, who baptizeth all the members of that one Church that believe in Him, through one living faith, which purifies the heart, as saith the Scripture; “For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit”—*1 Cor.* xii. 13.—and such only know what it means to have their bodies washed in pure living water, to the answer of a good conscience, according to *1 Peter* iii. 21.—whereby alone they work righteousness, and bring forth the peaceable fruits thereof.

There we may see that the one universal Church must be in the one living God, who is every where; and besides Him there is no other—therefore his Church cannot be circumscribed by men, nor the nations of men, which before him are accounted as the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance; for all flesh and the goodness thereof is as grass, and as the flower of the field; surely the people is grass; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever—see *Isaiah* xl. 8. I should therefore fear to apply the title of Catholic or Universal to any particular society upon the face of the earth exclusively, nay, and that for divers reasons too much for me to express; first, because such compact of fellowship is of man, who therein presumes to set bounds to the Lord’s prerogative; hence, if any society do assert, that the holy Spirit could only be communicated through the medium of their priesthood, or their orders, and not otherwise; should I not then deem it presumption, if not bordering on blasphemy, to concur so far with the like assertion, as to call such Catholic or universal? but above all, I dare not concur therewith, because it savours like that of deciding for the day of judgment, which alone is even tremendous to contemplate with the utmost humility: dare we then presume to legislate thereon? Nay but hath not even the Judge himself described the solemnity of that



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day, without even once naming of churches or professions, further than to shew that the most confident should meet the most direful doom of all ; on whose side also the most orthodox is placed ; even as respects the rich man and Lazarus, whose church or creed is not mentioned, even while his poverty denotes that he had nothing to depend upon but the mercy of God alone, while yet the rich man might shew forth his orthodoxy, pedigree, and succession ; even as the very son of Abraham, whose riches also might apply to religious as well as to worldly consequence, seeing that his purple and fine linen describe both.

Look now, O ye that place such unbounded confidence in a church, why should you deceive yourselves, seeing that the Lord hath not deceived you ? nay but what saith He of such as could plead their having taught in his name and done many wonderful works ? doth he not say even to such—“ I know you not, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity ? while yet they that were accepted knew not that they had even ministered unto him”—read *Mat.* vii. 22. 23. and xxv. 31 to the end.—*Luke* xiii. 26. and xvi. 22. 23. 24.—There we may see that it is not according to profession nor succession we shall be judged or rewarded ; nay but simply the righteous, and unrighteous, or workers of iniquity (and whether is it iniquity or arrogance to take on to justify one society and condemn all others ?) for every reason therefore, I dare not call any people Catholic or universal in the sense *J. M.* saith ; that is, thereby to adjudge all the world beside, as heretics or schismatics, even as the counterpoint of the term—see *letter* xxv. page 104. And therefore, were I to give to one church such a title of vanity, as I knew could not belong to any people on the face of the earth exclusively, should I not thereby act the hypocrite and deceive my neighbour, even to the violating of that innocence which should appear with open face, whereby we should sustain that love which is without dissimulation, even while the worst part of such dissembling, goes to judge and set at naught all the world besides an arrogant priesthood, to whom we only mean a deceitful compliment, even while we read that *Paul* saith to the *Romans*—“ Why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ : for it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God,” &c.—*Roms.* xiv. 10. 11.

## SECTION IX.

*Reflections on J. M's. exclusive claim to Apostolicity.—  
See letter xxviii. xxix. xxx. page 123 to 168 inclusive.*

**T**HE fourth and last mark which J. M. sets forth as a proof of his being the one only true Church, is, (what he calls) Apostolicity; and so he produces his Apostolical Tree, even a great Image, and the fruit bearing branches he pictures out to be, (together with the Apostles,) such as were chiefs of the papal hierarchy, or violent abettors and supporters of the supremacy thereof; such he calls saints and holy fathers, while he paints out the trunk of his tree, to be that of Christ and the Popes; and likewise he paints out such as withdrew from communion with the Popes; who (for conscience sake,) could not hold fellowship with them or their carnal mandates and traditions; these he pronounceth withered and dead branches, fallen from the parent stock.

And thus by a carnal private interpretation of Scripture, or by a presumptuous tradition, he applies the saying of Christ being the vine, and his disciples the branches, to such as grew up out of the seat and authority of the great Roman Empire, and the hierarchy established thereby; as if that parable could be so gross and earthly, as only to mean that all the candidates for the Kingdom of Heaven the world over, had been thus doomed to perpetual slavery; to truckle down under the decrees of state councils, and lordly pontiffs, and their creatures, so as to be tossed about with all the bare-faced absurdities of their bulls and decretals; and that no better fruit than they bore, should ever be brought forth to the glory of the heavenly husbandman. But if he was not afraid to deal so proudly, it might yet seem marvellous that very shame did not restrain his arrogance; alas! is that all he ever knew of the Heavenly vine or the fruit thereof, to make it subservient to a carnal generation?

But far be it from me, to follow his beadroll of saints throughout, seeing the Scriptures warn us to avoid endless genealogies, and not to give heed thereunto—see *Tim. i. 4.—Titus*

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iii. 9.—yea, and we are warned to “cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of.”—*Isaiah* ii. 22. and none should slight or set at naught such solemn admonitions; and if his fanciful tree, is not of man to a witness, I know not what is? for could any thing be more subtilly calculated to betray the simple, and draw away the unwary mind from the sense and fear of the Living God, (and from his light and grace which bringeth salvation,) than such a presumptuous reliance upon man? Doth not the Scripture say, “Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord?” and in proportion as men are brought to trust in man, so far will the heart depart from the Lord, (even while he meaneth not so;) and all *J. Milner's* sophistry could not prevent such a consequence.

Alas! what will men that are dead a thousand years avail me; nay nor even men that are yet alive? would it not be far safer to fear the Lord, and look toward his mercy seat, than to trust in the best of men? for, if Noah, or Daniel, or Job, or Moses, or Samuel, could only save their own souls; and could not even deliver son nor daughter?—see *Jer.* xv. 1.—*Ez.* xiv. 14. to 18. and xviii. 4. 20.—What solid ground then have we to trust in any son of humanity, in a matter wherein our all is at stake? surely the Saviour of all men (who alone giveth repentance and remission of sins,) hath not consigned his people to such a hopeless forlorn case; alas, alas! what would it avail us, to say unto Peter, Paul, or Stephen—“Give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out? for if we reject the light which Christ giveth, to rely upon that of others, it will be our condemnation.”

How then dare we to rely upon a self-appointed succession of men, who have been presumptuously self-ordained throughout ages? for what is man in such a case, seeing every man at his best estate is altogether vanity?—*Psalms* xciii. 5.—And if even such a man as Peter did greatly err, even so shortly after he had been chosen and ordained by Him that could not err, as we read in *Mat.* xvi. 23.—*Mark* viii. 33.—and *Gal.* ii. chapter? what shall we then say to that choice, ordination, and succession, which is set up and upheld by flesh and blood? even by great self-created grand Visiers, whose very righteousness is worse than filthy rags? And what is *J. Milner's* great Tree which he calls Apostolical, asserting it to be the alone true head and judge, not only



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of all nations and people, but of all ages, even to the world's end? But alas! is not that far more arrogant than Nebuchadnezzar's great tree; even in setting up and throwing down whom he will? all of which is of man, or man's device, whereof cometh the beast, whose number is the number of man, even of the man that is high and lifted up, as we read, "Man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish."—*Psalm* xlix. 12.—yea, even that whereof Nebuchadnezzar is a signal figure, who was changed as a beast; though he is called a great tree—(*Dan.* iv.) of which we read, "The great tree that thou sawest, it is thou Oh king, whose height reached unto Heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair and the fruit thereof much; and it was meat for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and the fowls," &c. And now although this may be applicable to every man, according to the measure wherein he partakes of the same nature, (it being of no private interpretation,) yet that great potentate is set forth as a remarkable illustration of all that would be exalted to a self-important dominion over the creation of God, which bringeth downward to the state of the beast; even as set forth in the example of the king of Babylon; (who hath an ear let him hear,) that which leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity.

But what shall we say of *J. Milner's* great image, or presumptive tree, which he calls apostolical? is there not much less room to hope for him, than for Nebuchadnezzar? seeing he claimed but a dominion over the earth in his own times; and a day of trial and visitation was afforded him, whereby he profited even seven fold; insomuch that when he was humbled and saw his condition; he gave God the glory, even proclaiming that the most high ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will; but doth not *J. M.* claim exclusive dominion even in heaven itself, like what we read in revelations of the reign of mystery Babylon the great, in the nominal christian world, nay doth he not claim it, not only as respects dominion in the kingdom of heaven, but have not divers branches of his tree so contended for earthly dominion also, as that the sheeps clothing was often so torn off in the conflict, that the whole body of the ravenous beast was plain to be seen with the eye which was not blinded by the God of this world.

Alas, alas! will not old Babylon's great tree, rise up in the

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condemnation against this modern one, seeing that was humbled and repented to give God the glory due unto him? but doth not this continue to say in effect, like Lucifer, I am the son and offspring of the morning, and will ascend into heaven, and exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of congregation and be like the Most High? read—*Isaiah* xiv. and see whether such a state is not more clearly decribed therein, than in the image of *J. Milner's* tree? but above all the rest, will not the old king of Babylon rise in the judgment to condemn him for this cause, even for this; that although he might have believed (like *J. M.*) that God was in his golden Image; yet he did not stout it out, to persist in saying that He could be no where else? for he frankly confessed that he was in Daniel, though he had faithfully testified against his ways, yet he saith, “In him is the Spirit of the Holy Gods;” for which cause he esteemed him before all the wise men of the world, and so bore testimony to the excellence of the Spirit, and that the heavens did rule, and giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will; but when will his priesthood be brought to such a godly confession; seeing that he is still so arrogant as to say in effect, nay, but it is our inheritance, even by a regular unbroken line of succession, who can give it to whomsoever we will?

And seeing that he goes about to lift up himself with his popes, over and above God and man, in the image of a great tree; let him look at—*Luke* xiii. 6. 7. 8. and behold the parable of the tree, which should only be accepted according as it brought forth fruit unto God; who alone is the judge thereof; and had power to cut it down and destroy it from ever being a fruitful tree before him; yea, or to dry it up from the very roots in a night, as we read in *Mat.* xxi. 19. 20.—*Mark* xi. 13. 20.—and although these parables stand as a solemn admonition to every individual soul, as well as to Churches, being of no private interpretation; yet we may take notice by the way, how that warning in *Luke* xiii. 9. was immediately uttered against the Jews, who then presumed like him, (though with more apparent reason,) to rely upon their outside profession, or succession; but behold the tremendous rebuke poured forth against their delusive confidence; which remains for the admonition of all Churches, as well as individuals, the world over, but more directly to the condemnation of such as should deceive themselves

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and others, by relying upon any name or succession whatsoever? yea, or any other thing short of knowing the Lord for ourselves, through the gift of his own good Spirit, which alone can make fruitful unto his praise; seeing that it is only he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

And such have no confidence in the flesh; nor in any thing that is given to change, but in the Lord alone, who changeth not; who is their keeper, and the judge of the tree, and of the fruit thereof; who saith, "I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish; I the Lord have spoken and have done it"—*Ezekiel* xvii. 24.—and there we may see in both Old and New Testament, the Lord alone proclaimed to be the ruler and judge, in heaven and earth, whose glory he will not give to another, nor his praise to any image of man's invention; and doth not that man dishonour him, who takes on to be sole judge and arbiter, even to dispose of his gifts and callings? yea, to make saints and sinners of whomsoever they will, as we see marked upon the branches of his great fanciful tree; like presuming to decide for the day of Judgment? Alas! how fearful is even the recital of such arrogance.

But as I said, I should not follow his endless genealogies, because the Scripture forbids it, yet I may just notice a few examples of the fallacy of his conclusions, not only as respects us whom he assigns to irrevocable perdition, but also respecting some of his renowned saints, and lordly pontiffs, upon whom he would affix a benediction as unalterable, as if he claimed a seat as Judge Advocate to the great and final Judgment; I should have preferred some manner of expression less awful, but could not clearly set forth the magnitude of the subject without expressions in some measure adequate thereunto; and for further demonstration, it may be best to divide the subject into two parts, and treat separately of those he justifies and exalts to glory, and also of those he pronounceth withered branches, or accursed, and prepared for the fire.

And first, with respect to his Apostles and saints, were we only to take a slight glance at a very little of their ways and workings, yea, even of the most celebrated of his popes and renowned saints; we need not look far to perceive, that their



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manner of life, and their policy, would be found very far short of even sustaining the character of honest humble men, in the common walks of life; howbeit, some of them might have been choice men until they were so taken captive as to become proselytes and zealots, in the cause and support of a monstrous, imperial, and corrupt hierarchy; but then look at their workings upon that stage, and see if a trace can be found about them, like the disciples of Him, who (among all the self-seeking tribes upon earth,) had not whereon to lay his head? and whose kingdom is not of this world, nor would he partake of the glory and honour thereof, but testified against every appearance of deceit and dissimulation? yet behold the ways and workings of many that pretend they grow out of Him, even as main branches, (yea, as his very representatives,) and see if his saying be not verified in them, wherein he saith, “Many shall come in my name, and shall deceive many?”

Wherefore, look now at the very best or most renowned of them all; as I have no mind to stir up the filth of the earth, by touching on the countless intrigues, broils, and tumults, of such of them as fought hard for worldly and ecclesiastical empire and dominion; but as I mean herein, only to glance slightly at the first and chief of them, as a bare specimen; I say then, only look at that very Gregory the Great, whom he so often mentions, calling him “that holy pope and saint,” &c. (whom I deem the first pope,) yet behold how he flattered and fawned upon corrupt monarchs, and had their persons in admiration because of advantage, which the Scripture notes as a mark of desperate depravity!—*Jude*—yet did not even that very Gregory the Great, (whom he sets forth as a model of perfection,) flatter and fawn upon the Emperors, in language that should make any honest man to shudder.—But lest any reader should take this to be an exaggeration, (or think I write at random,) I subjoin a short extract quoted from his writings in the annexed note, as a specimen.\*

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\* The days of Gregory was a period, wherein the strife between the Eastern and Western Empires appears to have got to the height; even a strife about which of their Churches or bishops should be the head, and have the preeminence over all the world; so they set up their separate heads, and furiously pushed their horns against each other with might and main; even calling on the emperors to espouse their quarrel in support of their antichris-

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We need not marvel that Gregory should be so highly exalted and extolled, by such as sought for pre-eminence, and strove to be greatest, seeing what a distinguished champion he proved in the cause of their exaltation, even while he affected to protest against any man being set up above others, or called universal bishop; could any thing be more remarkable, than that while John of Coustantinople was called universal bishop, "Gregory" pronounced the epithet vain-glorious, proud, profane, impious,

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tian claims; and the council held in the year 588, having conferred the title of universal bishop upon John, Patriarch of Constantinople, sorely displeased the Bishops of Rome, who sought the like dignity and preeminence for themselves; (mark, both these Cities were then the seat of the Empire,) and in that behalf, Saint Gregory the Great, (as he is called,) wrote long, fawning, and wily addresses to the Emperors; well knowing, that if he got them heartily to espouse his quarrel, he might soon shoulder out his rival.

Although such quotations would far overpass my limits, yet, in justice to this narrative, I may not forbear to give a short extract at least, from one or two of his letters. And first to the Emperor Maurice, Gregory saith; "Our most religious Lord, whom God hath placed over us, among other weighty cares belonging to the Empire, labours according to the just rule of the Sacred writings, to preserve peace and charity among the clergy," &c. And so he proceeds (after much flattery,) to make a long exclamation against the clergy, which seems pointed at such as stood opposed to his own pre-eminence, or that of his see; concluding thus, "We are teachers of humility, but patterns of pride, hiding the teeth of wolves under a sheep's countenance! The end of all this is to make a fair appearance before men, but God knoweth the truth! Therefore, our most gracious Sovereign hath been prudently careful to place the Church at unity, that he might the better compose the tumults of war, and join their hearts together. This verily, is my wish also, and for my own part, I yield obedience to your Sovereign commands;" and so Gregory goes on. "My desire is that our most religious Sovereign would lance this sore, and that he would bind with the words of his imperial authority, the party affected, in case he makes any resistance," &c. "The care of the whole Church is committed to St. Peter, the Apostle—the prince of all the Apostles, for to him it is said, "Peter, lovest thou me! Feed my sheep," &c. "Behold! he hath the keys of the Kingdom, and the power of binding and loosing is committed to him; the care and principality of the whole Church is committed to him; and yet he is not called universal Apostle.—Though this holy man John, my fellow-priest, labours to be called universal bishop! I am compelled to cry out, O the corruption of times, manners," &c. "Priests who ought to be weeping upon the pavement, in sack-cloth and ashes, covet names of vanity and glory, in new and profane titles," &c. I would to God there might be one "called universal, without doing injustice to others;" &c. "But far

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“and execrable,” and said—“There was no universal Apostle; and that whoever assumed this blasphemous and infernal title, was the follower of Satan and forerunner of Antichrist?” See *Clarke’s History of Intolerance, Vol. II. page 61*—referring to *Fleury’s Hist. Eccles.*

But whether Gregory reprobated the title of universal bishop

“from Christians be this blasphemous name, by which all honour is taken from all other priests, while it is foolishly arrogated by one,” and so he goes on “This man (John,) contemning obedience to the canons, should be humbled by the commands of our most pious Sovereign. He should be chastised who does an injury to the holy Catholic Church,” &c. “by which he would elevate himself above the Emperor! We are all scandalized by this,” and so Gregory proceeds. “I hope in God that he will never succeed in bringing my neck under his yoke, not even by force of arms,” &c.

Thus we may see with what wily language Gregory flattered the Emperor Maurice, in order to engage him to espouse his quarrel against the Patriarch of Constantinople, because he took the title of universal bishop; yet it appears that with all Gregory’s address and persuasions, he did not prevail upon the Emperor Maurice to do as much as he desired for the promotion of his supremacy, which of course displeased him. “Let us now mark what followed;—Shortly after, the Emperor Maurice was dethroned and murdered, by one of his centurions named Phocas,” whom the historian calls “the vilest of the human race—a monster stained with those vices that serve most to blacken human nature;” in proof of which, they instance—“his cold-blooded murder and dissimulation,” Clarke saith (in his *History of Intolerance*,) that—“Phocas was execrable in the use of power: intemperance, deceit, and cruelty, were the outlines of his character; but we will not further pollute our pages by detailing his crimes; yet, see how the sanctity of Gregory hails the murderer of that emperor whom he called his most religious lord, his most christian and pious sovereign, who has merited so highly from us,” &c., and yet when he was likely to meet a man more to his purpose—“Mark then how he celebrates the march of the blood-thirsty rebellious regicide and usurper through seas of blood to the imperial throne, as though religion and morality could be no ways affected by such enormities.”—Thus begins Gregory to salute Phocas—“Glory to God in the highest, who according as it is written, changes times and transfers kingdoms,” &c., citing, that according to Scripture—“The most high rules in the kingdoms of men, and to whom he will he gives it; he then goes on with more of the like flattery, concluding thus—“Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, and for your illustrious deeds let the people of every realm, hitherto so vehemently afflicted, now be filled with gladness; may the necks of your enemies be subjected to the yoke of your imperial rule,” &c.

See Jones’s *History*, vol. i. page 400 to 411 referring to *Decline and Fall*, Campbell’s *Lectures*, &c., and Clarke’s *History*, vol. ii. page 57.



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because he desired that dignity for himself, and had rather no man should have it, than that his own see should be under that of another? or whether he really thought as he said? I shall leave every body to think of that as he pleases, (either ways it speaks volumes;) is not all that Babel, even confusion itself? and is it not deplorable, that such a great and good man as Gregory might have been, should suffer himself to be dragged into that city of confusion, and to be so mangled therein as to become ravenous after the vain-glory thereof, insomuch that he appears even to have played the politician with such address as to bring over the Emperor to his assistance, so as to be able to shoulder out his rival the bishop of Constantinople; seeing that Phocas took the title of universal bishop from him, and conferred it upon Gregory's successor, (called Boniface III.) with the power also of transmitting it to all his successors? while yet Phocas on his part, might consider that he got an ample equivalent, if therein he was siding with the strongest party; so that in that covenant, we cannot doubt, but each party valued his acquisition far higher than that of thirty pieces of silver; and thus was a principality set up; which our Saviour saith should not be among his disciples—see *Mat.* xxiii. 8.—*Mark* ix. 33. 35. and 10. 43.—*Luke* xxii. 25. 26.

Alas! is that the ground from whence the most towering branches of his Apostolical tree hath spread forth? Who then would call it a Heavenly tree, which was nourished and sustained under the delusive cry of, help, help, higher powers and earthly potentates, or we shall never be able to establish the exclusive dominion of our supremacy? Is not the Scripture verified in them? which saith, “Upon a lofty high mountain hast thou set thy bed; even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice, &c. “Thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst encrease thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers afar off; and didst debase thyself even unto Hell; thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet sayest thou not, there is no hope; thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou hast not grieved; and of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me nor laid it to thy heart”—read *Isaiah* lvii.—and what shall we say to these things if Gregory and Boniface joined hand and hand with such as Phocas, and offered base adulation

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to one that is called a monster of vice in every thing except that of promoting the measures of the bishops, who in return helped to establish his usurped dominion? and if they found a life in such a confederacy, and did not grieve nor lay it to heart? were such burthens so slight for them to bear, that men should not cease to extol their deeds, and cram their words and example down the throats of the people to the world's end? nay, do they not still assert without a blush, that such can never err?

Alas! how unlike is such base cringing and dissembling, to the conduct of the ancient prophets, Nathan, Elijah, Amos, or Peter or Stephen? &c. yea and how different it is from the manners of the early christians, who confessed to the purity of the gospel through suffering and death; not by courting earthly potentates for alliance, nay but cheerfully suffering their revilings; as may be seen by the testimony of Justin martyr and Tertullian? compare their language addressed to the rulers on behalf of themselves and fellow sufferers, who saith—"We thank you for condemning us, because there is such a happy variance and disagreement between the divine and human judgment;" &c., and surely the cause of such great difference is very obvious, when we reflect, that they sought the favour of God rather than of men; they did not want to be called rabbi, or universal bishop, like Gregory, who (when another got the title) exclaimed, that—"Whoever assumed the blasphemous and infernal title of universal bishop, was the follower of Satan and forerunner of Antichrist," &c., yet when he got satiated with the corruption of episcopal preeminence, or perceived that his own see should be able to shoulder out all others, so as to get exalted above his rival, behold then with what ease he could sit in the seat of a pontiff, or universal bishop himself?\*

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\* Clarke saith in his History of Intolerance, vol. ii. "Gregory has been applauded for his skill in winning the favour of princes, and making them subservient to the designs of the church; that probably it was in the spirit of that art, he received the image of Phocas, and gave it a niche in the oratory of a saint; and that he wrote a letter of salutation to the savage tyrant while his hands were still reeking with the blood of Maurice and his sons, congratulating him on his accession to the throne."—Clarke continues—"If we had no knowledge of the character of Phocas, but what might be gleaned from the letters of Gregory; in the room of viewing him as an usurper and a monster of vice, we should consider him as a legitimate prince, and

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If such were the planting and ingrafting of the godliest branches of his Apostolical tree; and such imperial potentates the husbandmen thereof? then let him that glorieth in the fruit of that tree, only take an honest retrospect, and he may soon perceive what it brought forth; was it not that of cursing? yea, was it not common (throughout many ages,) for the most approved of his renowned Popes or Apostles, (marked on his tree,) to thunder out their anathemas against both rulers and people who declined to bow down to their decrees? even as *J. M.* saith, for a difference about the time of keeping Easter,) nay, but often laying nations, kings, and kingdoms, under an interdict, while yet the causes thereof were merely such as concerned their temporal prerogative, even as if that had been a part of their ministry, while yet they pretend to respect the New Testament, which saith, “bless and curse not”.—*Roms. xii. 14.*

But it is far from my design or inclination, (neither would my limits permit me,) to enter into a detail of the monstrous novelties which have been set up by those that *J. M.* has marked upon his Apostolical tree; nor should I have even noticed the foregoing, but for this vaunting challenge which he puts forth, to prove his own priesthood by their fruits, to be exclusively the only true Church upon the face of the earth, and saith, that his “Apostolical tree, &c.” “shews the uninterrupted succession

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“model of virtue: but we must suppose, that when he offered the incense of adulation to a regicide, he was influenced by a feeling which hurried him from the remembrance of past crimes to the anticipation of future favours.”

“Notorious offenders against the laws of God and human society, have frequently been generous friends to the church: this was the case not only with Phocas, but also with Brunehaut, Queen of France, to whom Gregory wrote, requesting her to exert her power in behalf of the church, and extolling in high terms her faith and love of religion: while stained with every crime of which a woman can be guilty—He also wrote to the Governor of Africa praising his valour and piety, and exhorting him to employ all his might to repress the Donatists;” Clarke continues—“It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the aggrandizement of his see was the object which lay so near the heart of Gregory; that he was prepared to pursue it through thick and thin; how otherwise shall we account for his praising Maurice while living, and reproaching him when dead; for his caressing such a foul traitor as Phocas, and exulting in his accession to the throne as in the advent of the Messiah; and for his celebrating the virtues and imparting the services of such a woman as Brunehaut.”—*Clarke's History, Vol. II. page 57 to 61.*



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“ of the Catholic Church in her chief pontiffs and other illustrious prelates, doctors, and renowned saints, from the Apostles of Christ, during 18 centuries, to the present period,” &c. and saith, “ That God himself has borne witness to the sanctity of that Church,” &c.—see *letter xxx. page 166.*

Wherefore it seemed amply due, to point out the nature of those fruits whereof he boasteth, and so I have been constrained to notice a few berries, (as it were) of some of his favourite branches; in order to remind him or the reader, of the daring and unparalleled insult offered to our Saviour and his Apostles, by classing them together with the whole tribe of Roman pontiffs; could any man devise a comparison more revolting, or more degrading to the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, than to compare them to that monstrous thing brought forth out of the belly of the great Roman Empire? Alas! who would appeal to such hacknied policy, and gorgeous morality, to select a perfect model of the sincerity, simplicity, and self-denial of the Apostles? yet doth not *J. M.* and his fellow-priests, take on to prove, that the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven have been exclusively given up and committed to the care and keeping of such courtiers, as had the worldly policy, address, and perseverance therein, to climb up to the chair of a pontiff? and that it is only to them alone the things of the Kingdom can be revealed, which were ever hid from the wise and prudent of this world, while revealed unto babes; Alas! could there be a more accurate fulfilment of the Apostles warnings and prophecies, of woful apostacy and falling away coming upon the Churches?

Well hath it been said, that when nations came to be Churches, (even national Churches,) and Churches became kingdoms; then Antichrist came to be great: Babylon the great, the great whore began to appear; and the world might see man sitting in the Temple of God, and the man of sin worshipped as God, yea, even the wisdom and power of man, set up as the wisdom and power of God in the Churches of Christ: and so the beast came to rule, whose number is the number of a man, and his wisdom even of the beast, yet below that of the ox or the ass, for the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib; yea, and the ass was made to speak as a man, and reprove the madness of the prophet, when he went after the princes of the earth.

What is man then, even the greatest and wisest of men, as that

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of the prophet, (when his heart goes after the wages of unrighteousness for preeminence or promotion,) all his wisdom and knowledge is but as a brute, a beast, as saith the Scripture; yea, worse and more foolish than the ox or ass, only as God is known to be that wisdom and knowledge in man; else it is but a man of sin, the great whore, a sinful woman; for sin is the deceit and transgression of man, deceiving himself; even as the woman's sin was in that of being deceived, and first in the transgression; and thus, man deceiving himself is the man of sin, or sinful woman, (that bringeth forth deceit,) even the great whore who would appear to be the wife of her husband alone, as the Church should be to Christ, but as God, not being all in all with man, (that is the man of sin,) even so the adulterous woman, the great whore is the apostate Church, (or people) who would be thought the spouse of Christ, and one flesh with God in her, her head and husband, but joined with man and his affections, and with forms and ceremonies invented by man, even cleaving to the traditions, teachings, wisdom and power of man; so the spouse becomes harlot, and the Church the great whore.

All this may be equally applicable to individuals as to gathered societies or Churches, being of no private application, sin or deceit is the same in individuals as in councils or congregations, yea, the same now as ever it was, and every man must bear his own burden; so that whoever trusteth in man or priest, or in any outside profession, deceiveth himself, and may deceive others, let his name to religion be what it may, for, as the godliness of flesh set up, is Antichrist indeed; so mystery Babylon, or the mystery of iniquity and deceit cometh of man, and his carnal things; but godliness cometh of God alone, and his spiritual things; for "God is a Spirit."—*John* iv. 24.—and when people or Churches were wholly spiritual, then the wisdom and power of God was all and all therein.

But to return to the story of *J. Milner's* Apostolical tree; I would ask, why, or wherefore those he called saints and holy fathers, were, and are exalted, and set up above all others, and praised up to the skies? Is it not because they were zealous promoters and abettors of ecclesiastical sway and dominion over the conscience of men? and as they were exalted and extolled by that self-same order which they laboured to exalt and set on high; should not therefore, their brother self-seekers, (who loved the

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praise of men, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in public places, and to be called Rabbi,) praise such as exalted and extolled them, even in the highest strains of flattery, in order that they themselves, in their turn, might come in for a share of that praise which their soul lusteth after, and which they so profusely lavish upon their brethren? and so build up each other in that frothy life, wherein their works they do to be seen of men; which also tended to stimulate others to keep the old man in his palace, with his deeds, yea all his goods in peace.

If the simplicity and self-denial of the Gospel (as preached by the Apostles) had been retained amongst them, and held forth in the same life and manners; then the vain world should not so highly extol them, neither should they court the friendship of earthly potentates, nor have joined in with the world in the ways thereof, but rather testify that their deeds are evil, and so have profited the people indeed, though they should not then make such multitudes of proselytes; nay surely, if Gospel simplicity had been held forth in primitive purity, so as that all should be fulfilled in one word (even love) then the wealth and pomp of those renowned Rabbies, should never have been raised to that pitch in the Christian world, to appear such a monster amongst mankind, as to be hated, loved, feared, and honoured.

Yet would it not be more horrible than all the rest (and hard to be uttered,) if some of them should be the more highly esteemed and exalted on account of their cruelty to them they stiled heretics? which seems hard to acquit them of, while we read some of their letters, addressed to the civil authorities, stirring up the rulers and people (as did the chief priests of old,) and making their minds evil affected against all they called heretics, &c., even though many of their own people in divers ages, (to their credit be it noticed,) were far from being so easily drawn into such work as their bishops desired; nay, but what shall we say, if (as the historian saith) even such men as Cyprian and Augustian, are found calling Novations and others, such names as—"Puritans, cursed heretics, and children of the devil," &c.? and thus inflaming kings and rulers against them, even while the chief crimes they had to charge them withal was, that they were over zealous and strict in their discipline, and that they testified against the growing pomp and ceremonies of the established hierarchy? If even such as they began to sow



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the seeds so early as their times, we may observe in their successors a woful crop indeed, insomuch that in process of time, they became violent promoters of crusades, even against the poor tormented and afflicted Albigenses, (as I shall notice in its place,) yea, and promoters of the Inquisition itself, even calling it the Holy Office; and so we may here observe, that the more of such work, the higher the saintship in his estimation; witness his eulogium upon him they call Saint Dominick, whom he calls a prodigy of miracles—see *letter xxiv. page 97*—which said Dominick was a notorious supporter, if not the very founder of Inquisitions; are such then the fruits by which his favourite Apostles are distinguished; even such fruits as should not be once named amongst Christians, had not the bishops and their councils promoted the measures thereof?

And thus have I slightly glanced at this revolting subject, in order simply to demonstrate as I pass along, that what he extols and holds forth as heavenly fruits, and saintly virtues; are yet the greatest of all abominations; and he that reads but little, even of their own history, may see, that all I have here instanced, can scarcely be called a bare specimen of what is set forth by their own authors, without looking far into their history.

And moreover, if I might be permitted to stumble upon a page of our own history, should I not be tempted to ask, what made a saint of Thomas A'Beckett, whom he has marked upon his tree? was it not his furious turbulence and rebellion against his king and country, whose necks he laboured to bring under the feet of popes and bishops; even carrying his purpose so far as to lose his life in the conflict? but whether they besainted him through a real personal regard for his violent ardour in the cause of their preeminence, or whether they did so in order to excite others to espouse their cause in like manner, or both? I shall leave every body to judge of that as he pleases, only just to add, that whoever reads his work, may take notice, how far he goes to reprobate even a slight suspicion of the like turbulence in others, whom he chose to condemn; insomuch that I can hardly forbear saying, how comes it that less than half the folly that makes a saint of one man, should make a devil of another, in his estimation.

And now if any should think it too bold, for such a poor silly rustick as I am, to speak so freely of those rare personages, I

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say, let them set down all that to the account of *J. M.* who, although he tramples all my brother rusticks as in the mire, even as if we should have no souls but what were in the hand of his priesthood; which yet I should have passed over, had he not dishonoured the Almighty Creator of all things, by speaking lightly of his workmanship, and of the unspeakable gift of His good Spirit, even while he takes on to adore that monstrous carcass whereof he should rather be ashamed, unless he glories in his shame; and if an ass reproved the madness of the prophet, who smote him, why may not I say, that the very creation groans and is oppressed, (even to this day,) by the blindness of self-seeking, worldly-minded leaders, who, though they say they see, yet cannot perceive the Lord as an adversary in the way wherein they go, while they love the wages of unrighteousness, and the promotion arising therefrom, even far surpassing any thing we read of Balaam.

But did we ever hear of Apostles dwelling in king's houses, courts, and palaces, and going a whoring after the favour and interest of earthly potentates, in order to get promoted to Arch and Lordly stations, that so they might be called holy and reverend, &c.? or did we ever hear of Apostles joining hand in hand with the deceitful state-policy of the world, for the purpose of promoting their own objects? surely such lordship, holiness, and reverence, would rather disgrace a Mahometan priest, but could have no claim to gospel simplicity, and selfdenial, nay, surely, there is no iniquity against which the Scriptures bear a more tremendous testimony.

The Apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ being quite of another spirit, brought forth fruits altogether different from those marked on his tree, and He that is the judge of the fruits, and of the tree, hath given peculiar marks whereby them that are his may be known; and although His marks are altogether as different from *Milner's* as a sheep is from a wolf; yet how much safer is it to look to our Lord's mark than to that of the hireling? mind then, this is a case in which I dare not mince matters, therefore see how it stands; Christ sets the wolf and the hireling together on one side, and Himself and the sheep on the other—see *John x.*—and he saith of His sheep, that they should be hated of all men; yea, and bids them rejoice and leap for joy, when all manner of evil should be spoken against them

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falsely for his sake; and so He saith, they should not be of the world, therefore the world hateth them; and he saith they should know his voice and follow Him, and not the hireling.

And thus He speaks to and of his own little flock, who are one, and their way one, and that way is love, which should fulfil and comprehend all; yea, that is it whereby all men should know His disciples; and even though their opinions might, and did differ like their faces, yet having that love as the main body of divinity (wherein stands their oneness) they could not then seek for supremacy or preeminence over their brethren; nor a high station or great benefices, &c.; nay surely, would it not be as impossible for a true disciple of Christ, to seek after or retain arch or lordly titles and stations in the Church, as it would be for a devil to have a place in Heaven? such could not be of Christ's flock; nor ordered by Him, who saith—"Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your father which is in Heaven; neither be ye called masters, for one is your master even Christ," &c.—read *Mat. xxiii.*—wherein also may be seen his tremendous denunciation against such as loved the chief seats in synagogues, greetings in public places, and to be called of men *rabbi, rabbi*, doth he not say that they are the hypocrites and blind guides, who shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, and neither go in themselves nor suffer them that are entering to go in? but to what purpose should I reason with such as set at naught even the very sayings of Christ himself?

Have not such as adhered to what they believed to be true (rather than conform to mother church) been called heretics, and all manner of evil spoken against them for ages past? yea, and that falsely, seeing they were called heretics and hypocrites, because they would not be such; for had they dissembled to run with mother church against their conscience, they might have been called good Christians; though then they should be heretics and hypocrites indeed, if so be that they suffer their faith to be subverted, even by giving heed to foolish questions and endless genealogies so as to sin against conviction; for a heretic is one that is condemned of himself and not of another—see *Titus iii. 9. 11.*

Christ is the way and the truth, and "hath left us an ex-



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“ ample that we should follow his steps,” and neither Him nor his Apostles ever affixed the title of heretic to any people for adhering to the spirit or light in their conscience, nay, but rather commended themselves to every conscience; and our Lord and Saviour saith, “ I judge no man, though if I judge my judgment is true.”—*John* viii. 15. 16.—Surely then, his sayings and example, stands as a rebuke or just judgment against all that is high and lifted up, and more especially against any, who in his name, should arrogantly claim to themselves a prerogative over his creation, which their Lord did disclaim; for let them shew if they be able, where did ever Christ affix the title of heretic to such as would not receive him or his doctrine? Did he not rather rebuke them that suggested the like measure, saying unto such, “ Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of?” and He saith, “ The measure ye mete shall be meted to you again.”—See *Mat.* vii. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.—*Luke* vi. 36. 37. 38.—and *Luke* ix. 54. 55.

Objection.—Should any object that *J. Milner's* priesthood are not such pompous or lordly personages as here set forth; seeing that even the present order of the state, promote not their wealth or dignity in these nations;—

I should answer, that I have nothing to do with what any people are, respecting state affairs, that is none of my business, as I would not be betrayed into questions of state policy or the like, while yet I may answer *J. M.* that if the whole burthen of his argument, stumbles upon degrees, orders, wealth, and dignity, (wherewith his book is so stuffed, and he dwells so much upon that of honour, dignity, learning, rank, and talents, &c.) that it looks as if such he took to be chief corner stones of the Church? and as often as he touches upon the subject of the emolument and dignity of the Protestant Churches, doth he not admit, that they occupy the very places, and receive the tithes and benefices which belonged to his own predecessors? and of course, his priests and bishops are the forefathers of all that wealth and pomp, which have done such a world of mischief in the Protestant Churches; it is from them the Protestants and Dissenters took the example of all their tithes and great benefices, together with their University degrees of masters of arts, and lordly stations and titles of preeminence, &c., which, however such may be called the grossest part of Popery, even the love of money, which the Scripture calls the

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root of all evil.—1 *Tim.* vi. 10. That is the main root out of which these woful evils did grow, even while they boast of the tree, and glory in the fruit thereof, which being so desirable in the eye that the Serpent doth beguile, that many Protestants partake thereof, even while it brings spiritual death and darkness over the Churches, and disrobes them of the heautiful garment of righteousness and gospel simplicity.

And while it is so evident, that the said wealth, pomp, worldly friendship, and dignity; which came forth from his old mother, through the policy and councils of the Roman Empire (whereby tithes, great benefices, and lordly stations and titles, were first set up amongst Christians;) I say while it is evident, that this is the bait which hath choked many Protestants, is it not marvellous, that *J. M.* should so grievously bemoan, that he is not permitted to partake of so much of the said poison as his soul lusteth after? even while he may see it sticking in the throat, and coming out through the nostrils of many Protestants, yea, even while they pretend to be loud against Popery, but doth he not speak in many parts of his book, as if because that old bait had choked so many Protestants and others, that therefore it should do his stomach good, and no harm at all?

Now is not all that because the God of this world hath so blinded the mind, that unto this day he cannot yet see that which chokes the good seed? and moreover, while he boasts such great things of the purity, simplicity, and disinterested self-denial of his brother rabbies of the present day; let him reflect how wofully he might mistake their real state and condition of soul, lest while he may imagine such things could not harm them, he might yet find them so much inclined to the old vomit, as to be able without a qualm, to swallow down the whole fruit of their tithes and great benefices, together with the annexed degrees of mastership, and arch and lordly stations, and titles of vanity, wherein they still glory, as if ravening after the chief seats in synagogues, and greetings in public places, and to be called of men rabbi, rabbi, and all such abominations, against which our Saviour pronounced tremendous woes; and though they wrap themselves up in a spacious profession of Christ and the Scriptures, (as in sheep's clothing,) What would that avail but to add to their condemnation?—But if such be Apostolical fruits, surely then might the grand lama be called a fruitful bough!

## SECTION X.

*Some further Reflections on the fruits of J. Milner's Apostolical Tree ; shewing the fallacy of his repeated assertions, that all true religion and morality hath been derived from his priesthood, even while it is proved, that their influence and example, hath rather tended to obstruct the increase of that righteousness ; which our Blessed Redeemer came to bring in and establish ; while they laboured to scuttle the people down in old sinful Jewish and Heathenish practices (which he came to end) even retaining their wars, oaths, and tithes, with divers vain and expensive courses of iniquity and oppressson, which (through them) have been as an evil root, bringing forth death, darkness, and unbelief, with their consequent evils and calamities through many ages, even to this day.*

**I** AM aware that my reader will think with myself, that I have already dwelt longer than is profitable on the fruits of his no Apostolical Tree ; but inasmuch as he repeatedly boasts that it is to his people or priests alone, the world is beholden for the purity of the Christian religion and morality, &c., which he holds forth as the peculiar fruits of his renowned popes and fathers, to distinguish them to be superior to all other people ; and seeing that he repeats such a vaunting challenge, it should be noticed how far the dominion they have gained over the people, tends to promote the peculiar blessing of the gospel, throughout the nations and people that profess implicit obedience to them and to their mandates ; that both themselves and all that rely upon them, may yet seriously reflect, whether their influence and example, have not rather wofully tended to obstruct the brightness, purity, and efficacy of the unspeakable blessings which the gospel was designed to bring unto all people.

It seems therefore needful in the first place, somewhat to glance at the nature and magnitude of the unspeakable blessings which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ bringeth unto all that receive Him in the way of his coming ; that such as extol the fruit of *J. Milner's* Apostolical tree, may yet reflect how wofully they fell short of the good things that God giveth liberally.



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And first, he came to bless mankind by turning them from their iniquities, and turning them unto God, that so they should serve Him in righteousness and true holiness—*Luke* i. 75.—*Acts* iii. 26.—And thus to establish peace on earth and good will to men, even to love their neighbour as themselves, nay, even to love their enemies; and so there should be no wars, oppression, violence, nor deceit, in his righteous Kingdom, but all should speak the truth in sincerity; even that their yea and nay should stand without an oath as in *Mat.* v. 33. to 37. to the end of the chapter, there we may see that we should do unto all men as we would have them do unto us.

God is love, they that dwell in Him dwell in love; and that love should fulfil the whole law and the prophets, and was the message of the gospel also; even as foretold in the old, and testified of in the new Testament throughout, in texts too numerous for me to attempt to quote, of like import as these following—*Isaiah* ii. 4.—also *Isaiah* xi. 12. 32. and 35. chapters.—*Jer.* xxxiii. 14. 15. 16.—*Micah.* iv. 1. 2. 3. 4. &c.—*Micah.* vii. 19. 20.—*Mat.* v. 6. and 7. chapters—and *Mat.* xxii. 3.—*Mark* xii. 31.—*Roms.* xiii. 8. 9. 10.—*Gals.* v. chapter.—1 *John* iii. 5.—*James* i. 4.—and v. 12.—1 *Peter* i. chapter.

And seeing the whole current of Scripture tends to illustrate the glory and purity of the gospel state, and also shewing forth by a cloud of examples, (in the Old Testament,) the great depravity of mankind by nature, and how much they needed the Mediator of a better covenant; of whom the Prophets prophesied with great and precious promises, and the Apostles bore ample testimony to the power and efficacy of the Heavenly spiritual influence thereof upon the soul; and also of the consequent effects of that influence upon their actions and demeanor amongst men, in all holy conversation and godliness; witnessing against wars, oppression, oaths, and deceit, &c., which continued for some ages after the Apostles, as we may read of some (long after their time,) who would say, “We are Christians and therefore “can neither fight nor swear,” &c.

But alas! what a woful change took place, even as was foretold by the Apostles? which was verified in the life and conduct of the bishops, when they came to be Lords over the heritage, and to arrogate to themselves a dominion over the people; and became great and lordly both in church and state; see then what a sad

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change they brought to pass among professed Christians, insomuch that at last they could even promote wars and fightings themselves, and some of the worst abominations of the Heathen, and it may even be questioned whether some of their people did not overpass the Heathen in wars, fightings, oaths, and violence; yea, and that oftentimes with their popes at the head of such doings? even while they might read, that such were the evils the gospel should do away both root and branch.

And yet even to this day, how is the old Heathenish leaven and practice still maintained and upheld amongst professing christians of all denominations? and where is the instance that may not be traced to the popes themselves? if we only look (as I have said) at the case of war, which should not have been once named amongst the followers of the Prince of Peace, who came to end and do away that evil in common with all the evils of the world, and so He healed the wound of one that came to destroy Him, as a testimony against war, saying, that—"All they who take the sword shall perish with the sword"—*Mat.* xxvi. 52.—And that was sufficient for his Disciples; and why should it not have sufficed their pretended successors? Nay, but who are there now (that profess the gospel) who would be so hardy, as so far to set at naught the glorious end of our Lord's coming into the world, if they had not been emboldened therein by the example of those renowned rabbies? for, was not his coming, to bring peace on earth, and good will to men, yea even love to enemies? but who could say they had good will to men or love to enemies, while yet they prepare war against them?

And again, how did their bishops set up the old Heathenish principalities, in both church and state? although our Saviour saith that such kind of lordship and principality should not be exercised among his followers—see *Mark* x. 42. 43.—*Luke* xxii. 25. 26.—And yet did not these lordly pontiffs take the lead in setting up all the abominations of the Heathen in that respect? insomuch that in process of time, even the whole abomination of the feudal systems, were acknowledged by professing Christians, as fully as ever it had been among the Heathen; nay, but it would rather seem that their poor people lost much of the freedom of an old Pagan Roman citizen, so that the poor often became the very property of the great; insomuch that it was by dint of the sword they obtained even the pitiful redress which

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from age to age they acquired, even by taking advantage of the incessant feuds, broils, and contests, which arose between kings, lords, barons, priests, and bishops, &c., each seeking for more power and preeminence; who often engaged to remit a portion of the rigours imposed upon the people, in order to bring them over to espouse their side of the quarrel; and then (to be sure) they would be careful to magnify their own generosity in granting a boon which yet they sorely begrudged; as is abundantly manifest by their ways and workings down to the present day, which I may yet shew more minutely in its place.

And have not such like sources of oppression been as an evil root, bringing forth incessant crops of calamity? and is it not to be found at this day in all societies, even among many that pretend to deny whatever has been handed down through popes and bishops? yet this may still be found more or less among them, even that overreaching and oppression of the poor, in divers ways, too numerous for me to notice; I need only instance one case in order to turn the attention to others; I say then, look at the rage of mankind, to uphold unrighteousness, rank, pomp, and state, with expensive customs and ways of living, to be supported by unequal and oppressive rents, &c., wherein they often act with such rigour as even to defeat their own object, yea, even to make less in the end than if they had acted the part of a conscientious Christian; howbeit, even some of these will make a pompous display of alms-giving, &c., and really think themselves charitable, and would have others to think so too, while yet they do not like to know, that charity must begin at home in every sense.

Objection.—I may be told that it is an unfair conclusion to say, that this tendency to overreach and oppress the poor, has been promoted in the Churches, through the example of the bishops, seeing that it springs from the depravity of human nature, which they could not prevent, even while they preach up charity and alms-giving, &c.

Answer.—I know that such evils spring from the depravity of the human heart, but was not the gospel designed to correct that depravity? (I might have said more,) and have those bishops in the first place, set forth the solemnity of the doctrine thereof, on that great point, which our Saviour and his Apostles so often repeat, as the great commandment of all, on which hang all the



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law and the prophets ; that is, “ All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them?”—*Mat. vii. 12.* Surely then, he that oppresses or overreaches another, would not be so done by himself ; and therefore breaks or sets at naught this great command of all ; and yet among all the excommunications that we read they thundered forth, we do not find them directed against this crying evil, though the Apostle saith, “ If any man love not his brother, how can he love the Lord ?”—1. *John iv. 20.*—yet we see them pass over this first and great commandment of all, (which is so often repeated as the fundamental principle of a Christian) while yet they would thunder forth their excommunications against such as dissented from their despotic mandates—witness *J. Milner’s* own account of their excommunication about keeping Easter—*letter xlvi. page 138*—is not that like the old Pharisees, who pass over judgment, mercy, and the love of God, while they make his commandment of no effect by their tradition—see *Mat. xv.*—*Mark and Luke xi. 4.*—And I have known some of the pope’s people, go as far as any others, in that of binding on burthens grievous to be borne, in the case of oppressive rents, &c., yet I never heard of church censure against such Heathenish practices. \*

But wherefore need I look after what any people doth, to prove that oppressive customs among Christians may be traced to the example of the bishops, seeing while I answer *J. Milner*, I need only to take his own view of the subject—*letter vi. page 34.* where pointing out such as run into great and vile errors ; he mentions *George Fox*, as one of the most extraordinary for error and folly ; and in order to demonstrate his assertion, he saith, “ that *G. F.* tells of himself, that he was moved to warn (people) to leave off oppression and oaths, and to turn from deceit, and turn to the Lord”—and that *G. F.* did not respect the authorities that upheld the like. Now what does *J. M.* see

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\* Even in the time of the law, we may observe how the Prophets testified vehemently against pride and luxury, and the consequent oppression of the poor ; even denouncing the severest of all judgments against the gain of oppression, which no doubt excited the displeasure of both priests and rulers (who were leagued together) against the true Prophets ; which caused the martyr *Stephen* to say—“ Which of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just one”—*Acts vii. 52.*

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in that as a mark of desperate wickedness in G. F.? Does he mean that his own popes or brother bishops were never guilty of so heinous or unfashionable a crime, as that of warning people to turn from oppression, oaths, and deceit, or if he means to say, that no mechanic or working man should dare to speak against such evils, would not that be to revile the Prophets and Apostles, who were honest working men, which testified against the oppression of the poor—see *James ii.* and 5th chapters.

Now as the subject of oppression has been touched upon, I may slightly advert to one example from what *J. M.* sets forth as a flourishing feature of his Church establishment; as he saith, (in *Address page 19,*) that “In the year 540, there were convents “instituted in Ireland, one of which contained 3000 monks;” now when we reflect upon the population, and the probable resources of Ireland above a thousand years ago; Does he yet glory, that tens of thousands of idle people, should be supported by the hard labour of the poor of such as Ireland could then have been? Would we not now be far underrating the comparison, for to say, that according to the present proportion, he should now desire to see hundreds of thousands of idle monks living on the labour of the industrious Irish? while yet he cares not how vastly contrary such a life should be found, to the precepts and example of the Apostles compared with *Acts xx. 34.—Ephes. iv. 28.—1 Thes. iv. 11. 12.—2 Thes. iii. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.*

And would not so huge a system of monkery, (together with the tithes which the popes set up, prove a more calamitous source of oppression, than any of the evils which now exist amongst us? Even though the people still groan under divers causes of oppression, in the support of unrighteous customs and expensive ways of living among the wealthy, who doth not yet so consider the poor, as to lay these things to heart; insomuch that the prophet’s complaint appears applicable unto us even at this day, when he exclaimed, “Surely the customs of the people are “vain;” and although much of those vain customs had grown up in Christendom, under the fostering grandeur and splendour of these very popes and bishops marked on his Apostolical tree; yet now Alas! we may see many (who yet pretend to deny the pope,) running headlong into the same superfluity of naughtiness, which remains as a snare and a grievous burthen, whereby the

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creation is oppressed, and the Adorable Name of the Redeemer blasphemed.

As I had occasion to notice oaths, I may just query who it was that sanctioned and set up swearing among Christians? Was it not the popes and bishops, even while they read that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, fulfilled, ended, and abolished oaths, as sure as he did wars, tithes, or sacrifices of the law? yea, and commands his followers, as clear and plain as language could express it, "*Swear not at all*"—see *Mat. v. 34.*—and so saith the Apostle *James v. 12.*—and we do not read of swearing among the first Christians, but that they declined it;\* but why the popes should establish swearing, seems quite of a piece with their measures, even because it is so plainly forbidden in the New Testament, and prohibited by our Lord and Saviour, yea, as plain as he testified against traditions and commandments of men, and many other such like things; which admonitions they appear to set at naught, only because they are plainly and powerfully expressed; as if that plainness was a sufficient reason for rejecting his commandments, while yet they impose many things upon the people, for which they can neither shew precept nor example from Scripture; even as though they would persuade them, that the Lord could not speak, nor His people understand, unless themselves alter or amend his language.

And thus through various causes, the beautiful economy of the gospel morality became sadly metamorphosed and distorted, under the darkness which followed the pomp and grandeur of the bishops, insomuch that their people were betrayed into the worst of Heathen or savage crimes, until at last they could even buy and sell mankind in the same manner as they sell cattle, and so the very slave-trade itself came to be carried on among professed Christians, with a train of evils and abuses too much for me to notice, which have not yet been fully redressed, even to this day, but remains as a grievous snare and great scandal to the Christian name.

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Now to conclude this undesirable Section, by way of further

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\* In the edict of Pope Lucius III. against heretics, A. D. 1181, he saith, "If any of them, by a damnable superstition, shall refuse to swear, that alone shall suffice to convict them of being heretics, and liable to the punishments before mentioned."—*Jones's History, Vol. II. page 25 26.*



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explanation of the whole matter.—The voice from Heaven saith, “Come out of her (Babylon,) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”—*Rev. xviii. 4. 5.*—and so the chapter proceeds to describe the inevitable judgments that await her deeds, saying, “How much she glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; therefore her plagues shall come,” &c. “For strong is the Lord that judgeth her; and the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her”—read *Rev. xviii.*

There we see a great power, clearly set forth to be quite distinct from the kings of the earth, and her iniquity, (whether Christian or Pagan,) is described to be that of joining with them, which is fitly called fornication, or living deliciously together, or having unity or fellowship with their ways, whose friendship is enmity with God.—*James iv. 4.* And so it is rightly called fornication, when the love is transferred from Him whom she calls her spouse, and joined with the world; “If any man so love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—*1 John ii. 15.*

Therefore be not deceived, seeing that those renowned Rabbies could never have so far concurred with the kings of the earth, (or earthly rulers) in their iniquities, if the love of the Father had been in them indeed; nay, but should have testified that their deeds were evil; yet doth not their fruits abundantly prove them to be such as our Lord saith, love only such as love them; whom he calls hypocrites, or an adulterous generation?

Now mark, could any language more clearly and powerfully set forth, the breaking up, and dashing to pieces, of all unrighteous confederacies of Church and states, than such a display of the Lord's righteous judgments upon the measure of their iniquities (even in temporals) as expressed in *Revelations xviii.*? there we may see the iniquity of that confederacy, and how the Kings of the earth bewailed and lamented the downfall of such an indulgent mistress, when she lost the combined power of supporting and upholding their corrupt dominion over the people, whom they had so far corrupted, darkened, and drawn into earthly mindedness, as to be fitly called the beast; for when

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she sat upon them, they had a woful rider indeed, whom yet *Revelations* saith, at length should throw her down, yea, and even hate her, though she sat upon peoples, nations, and multitudes; &c. Nay, doth not even *J. M.* himself, complain loudly of the various rendings and Sunderings of his corrupt and filthy compact, which yet he should not deem the less signal, if the mercy, wisdom, and justice of God, should still display his power over them, even by little and little, giving them space to repent; yet it seems *J. M.* would have none to repent or amend their ways, seeing what an outcry he makes throughout, against all, whosoever at any time made an honest stand against prevailing corruptions; even saying all manner of evil against any that attempted a reformation.

And now I shall wind up this section with a few considerations arising out of the reference made to *Revelations*; and first, that we may consider what Babylon is, if we desire to flee and escape from thence, and not be found sleeping within her borders, or comprehended in her spirit, ways, or dimentions. Let us then briefly observe, that Babylon is a great mystery of iniquity within, even in the evil heart.—*Mat. xii. 38.*—*Luke vi. 45.*

And sure it is, that we need not look far to behold what a world of evil things the evil heart hath brought forth from age to age; even in the outward creation, which by reason of the deceit and evil thereof, is thrown into great misery, disorder, and confusion, which is fitly called Babylon, the great, and so compared to a great City, because of its endless variety and the exquisite order and connection of all its parts! and as in all Cities, the name of religion bears chief sway over the whole, so it is in this great mystical City also.\* And as Cities are supported by reason of the buildings leaning on each other, so in Babylon likewise, that thereby the whole and every part thereof

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\* As in Cities, their lofty towering buildings are supported by leaning upon each other; so it is in Babylon likewise, wherein the priestly power saith unto the kingly, only let us rule over you, and yield us implicit obedience and great benefices and renown in the world, and then, in return, we shall sanction all your despotic, oppressive, and deceitful practices, and keep the people subject to all your measures, as to the higher powers—That is the order of Babylon, which in her language is called good government, mutual forbearance, and charity; but the reader should remember by the way, that although her lips are smooth as oil, her language is confounded.

## of his Apostolical Tree.

is sustained as by one main bond of deceit, even the deceivableness of unrighteousness, which in no instance is so strongly marked, as that wherein she is yet believed to be the mistress of all sincerity, truth, and righteousness, even shewing forth a mighty glittering imitation thereof, far outstripping all the idol-makers that ever went before, in that she takes on to give life to her image, and all to settle at ease or bewitch such as should be awakened by conviction to a sense of the soul's danger; nay, *John* saw in her hand a golden cup full of the filthiness of her fornication, and all nations drank of the wine thereof—see *Rev.* xvii. and xviii. chapters—and souls of men were her merchandize.

But wherefore should I attempt to set her forth, seeing that all her ways never can be told? *John* describes this religious Babylon, as far surpassing all that ever went before her; inso-much that when he saw her (in the vision of life,) he marvelled with great admiration; surely then, well might we marvel, had we but an eye to see his prophecy marvellously verified, even that the essence of this great City, is still more marvellous than that of her magnificence, when we behold that all her order is confusion, her sanctity filthiness, her sincerity only deceit, her light darkness, and her very love wrath; that she, in the height of all her splendour, “is fallen, is fallen, and become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”—*Rev.* xviii.—Alas! how hath Christendom (so called,) been overrun with the dark, oppressive, filthy, and hateful ways and doings even of the Heathen, or worse in some of their deeds, even deeds of darkness, for she could not endure the light, because it would discover all her ways and her wares, and bring disorder into her whole economy, and manifest all her glittering polish and refinement to be only deceit and sorcery; so none of her citizens are allowed to be guided by the light or inspiration of God—that would undo all, and appear too mean and fanatic to be allowed among her well-ordered tribes; but I must forbear; suffice it to say, well might the Prophet exclaim, that the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? surely not man or priest, nay, but the Lord alone, who saith, “I the Lord search the heart,” &c.

Babylon is a fearful habitation to dwell in; and seeing the voice from Heaven saith, “Come out of her, <sup>my</sup> people,” we cannot



*Of the fruits and effects*

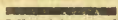
therefore doubt that the Lord hath a people that dwelleth in Babylon, so far however, as to be encompassed about with the multitude and tumult of her ways; which although it applies to the temptations common to all, even in the propensity of their own evil passions and inclinations; yet it will likewise hold good as applying to the evil and vain customs and corrupt influence of those around them, tending to draw down into the pit, who walk after the flesh, to fulfil the desire of the carnal mind, which is enmity with God.—All of which loudly proclaims the danger of loitering within the borders of Babylon, seeing that it is enchanted ground, where divination and enchantment prevails, and wherein nothing is seen or known but through a delusive mirror;—why then should we slight the voice of boundless mercy, which saith, “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

But far be it from me to mean to confine the whole of Babylon the great to his Church exclusively, while many that deny them have been partakers of the sins thereof; nay, how happy had it been for the world, if sin, deceit, and confusion, had been confined to the popes and their priesthood? but alas! where is the society that is clean escaped out of her? and therefore it highly behoves every one, to look to their own standing, rather than judge others; and I desire above all, to take the part that may belong to myself, seeing that he should not deserve even the name of a Christian, who is not more forward to judge himself than others; and therefore I have nothing to do to judge *J. M.* nor any man, but as I dare not cheat him, I mean to leave him the part he brings upon himself by consequence; and therefore, if he saith, that his Apostolical tree, retains, and sustains (exclusively,) the only divine power on earth that emanates from the Most High; is not that the very language of Babylon, which saith, “I am and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; I shall be a lady for ever,” &c.?—read *Isaiah* xlvii. chapter.

There is the language of old Babylon, and doth not *J. M.* boast the very same thing of his Apostolical tree? and therefore, would it not be a most deplorable and forlorn state, to which the human race should be consigned, if so be that the blessed gospel of our Lord and Saviour, should yield no better fruits than

*of his Apostolical Tree.*

those of his tree ? nay, could he possibly set forth a fouler slander upon such heaven-born souls as the Apostles, than to labour to bring them down to the very earth, even to make them appear so carnal and sensual, as to be set down upon a level with those grand viziers, and state politicians, written on his fanciful or fantastical tree.



Could any thing be more earnestly recommended to our attention, than the admirable prophecies and deep instruction contained in the book of *Revelations* ? seeing we are invited to participate therein, even by so solemn an address, as, “ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein,” &c.—*Rev. i. 3.*—therefore, some may object, that it should be deemed too deep and spiritual to apply to outward or human concerns, seeing their peculiar reference to the two opposite ruling powers in the soul ; even to that of the power of sin, self, and satan, ruling the carnal mind which is enmity with God ; and also, of the Lord’s power, with His convictions and thunderings, &c., in the awakened conscience ; even to the overturning of the devil’s power, for the redemption of the soul.

Answer.—I know that all this is true in the spirit, even for the admonition of the spiritual man, but that do not hinder, but rather shews, that it should apply to the outward fruits also, even as our Saviour saith, “ The good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and likewise the evil man evil things ;” and seeing such is the case with individuals, is it not more so with Churches or nations ? seeing as the devil may re-enter a soul after it had been visited, and even cleansed from old sins, so that the last state should be worse than the first ; how much more then may he re-enter a Church, even through self-confidence, as Scripture doth clearly forewarn us ? nay, but is not he that saith his Church state cannot err or fall, in the devils’ service already, and as dangerous an enemy to the poor soul as the devil himself, seeing how he throws all off the watch, to make way for the seven spirits more wicked than himself to re-enter—*Mat. xii. 45.*—(which seven implies the fullness of iniquity) and thus to make the state of the mere nominal Christian, rather worse than that of the infidel, yea, even in the height of self-righteousness, to be so fallen into deceit and

*Of the fruits and effects of his Apostolical Tree.*

iniquity, as to be fitly called "The habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."—*Rev.* xviii. 2.

Yet how consoling is that promise, whereby we are assured, that (after all those ages of darkness under the reign of mystery Babylon,) the everlasting gospel should again be preached unto the nations, even saying, fear God and give glory unto Him, who judgeth all the powers of darkness, and bringeth up his own seed out of the wilderness, whither they had been hid from the face of the dragon, who was wrath with them which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ! but "John saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven," &c., wherein is fulfilled his promise, who saith, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."—See *Cor.* vi. 16.—*Rev.* xxi. 2. 3. &c.—there is the blessed portion of the believer in the new and everlasting covenant, even God in them, and they in him, who maketh all things new, as in *Rev.* xxi. But alas! how dreadful is the portion of the unbeliever, who allows the people no surer stake, than to run a doting after their endless genealogies of the carnal succession of miserable sinners, who could not devise a more fearful crime, than to cause the world to wonder after themselves.



## SECTION XI.

*Of the Scriptures.*

**T**O offer any remark to such men as *J. Milner* upon the reading of Scripture, must appear like beating the air, seeing that he hath intrenched himself and his priesthood within such arrogant assertions as are thus set forth in *letter xii. page 118*, wherein he saith—“ Before I enter upon the discussion of any part of Scripture, with you or your friends, I am bound dear sir, in conformity with my rule of faith, to protest against your and their right to argue from Scripture; and of course, must deny that there is any necessity of my replying to any objections which you may draw from it: For I have reminded you that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation; and I have proved to you that the whole business of the Scriptures belongs to the Church; she has preserved them, she vouches for them, and she alone, by confronting the several passages with each other, and by the help of tradition, authoritatively explains them; hence it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should be against her and her doctrine; and hence, of course, I might quash every objection which you can draw from any passage in it by this short reply; the Church understands the passage differently from you; therefore you mistake its meaning; nevertheless as charity beareth all things,” &c. “ I will, for the better satisfying you and your friends, quit my vantage ground for the present, and answer distinctly,” &c.

I say it must appear like beating the air, to offer any thing, (even though never so much to the purpose,) to any one who takes up such fearful ground as thus asserted by him; but where can he find precept or example to warrant such assertions, (much less to apply it to his own purpose?) surely not in Scripture, nor yet from Jews nor Christians of the first age, unless there be something like it among the old Pharisees, though far less presumptuous; and as to his giving for a chief reason, “ That no Scripture is of any private interpretation,” surely that turns against him to a witness, seeing that he claims for himself and his priesthood, the most private interpretation ever heard of,

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wherein he confines it, not only to his own private order, but that they likewise should apply to it any meaning in support of their own private views, as I have already noticed and clearly demonstrated.

But he that truly believeth, that "No Scripture is of any private interpretation," must allow them to be commended to every conscience in the sight of God, from whom they did proceed; whose spirit and grace alone can make them effectual, to the conviction, correction, or instruction of the believer, who believeth in the light and spirit from whence they did proceed, and desires only to be gathered into the sense and feeling thereof; seeing that it is only the same spirit that can draw the soul unto God, who alone can open the conscience, and manifest the evil thereof, which no man can do either for himself or others, nay, it is God alone that enlightens mankind, and even gives victory over all the lusts and affections which veil the Scriptures, and separates lost man from his Redeemer, who would purify the conscience from dead works, yea, and open the Scriptures as he did to his disciples, as we may see illustrated in *2 Cor. ii. 14. to 17.*

That is the use, the design, and the end, for which the Scriptures were given forth, even to draw the soul to God, from whence they came; and that was the work of the Prophets and Apostles who wrote them, as we may see, that even the Heathen were so admonished, that they should "Seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, who is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being."—*Acts xvii.* Surely then he is nearer to every one than man or priest, and a better teacher too, seeing that his teaching cometh home to the feeling of the heart: And if every one have the faculty and privilege of feeling after God, how should they be void of a sense of the precious influence of Scripture? yea, so saith the Scripture itself—*2 Cor. iii. iv. chapters*—so saith the Apostles and the believer; but the unbeliever or the hireling, (who would make a trade of Scripture, and merchandize of the people,) saith nay, not the Scripture, but our interpretation or commentary is the thing, and thus the thief cometh to steal, and saith, look unto me, and not to the feeling of the heart, (which should bring forth good fruits in life and conduct;) but to my head knowledge, even to the observance of my traditions, creeds,

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and ordinances, which I have devised by my comments on Scripture, &c.

So saith the crafty scribe, the priest, and the unbeliever; and so saith the orator who would turn away the people from the faith; but the true believer (who desires to live by faith,) is well aware, that all their comments, interpretations, or crafty ensnaring conclusions, could do him no more good than the fruit of the tree of knowledge did to Adam and Eve, seeing they could only bring death and darkness unto him, while he should desire nothing more than to partake of the tree of life, which stands in the Paradise of God, who only is the fountain of living waters, whereof he that drinketh shall thirst no more for the broken cisterns of mens' devices, which they that forsake the Lord hew out unto themselves; yea, and call others to drink thereof, though there be no life in them—read *Jer. ii.*

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And whereas he arrogates to himself and his priesthood, the whole credit and responsibility of preserving the Scriptures, so far as they are pure and unadulterated; saying, that had it not been for the veracity of the monks, they could easily have been altered; and that his Church fixed the canon thereof, which (he saith,) “is built on tradition,” and could not be known only through them, nor could we even “know that there are any writings at all dictated by God’s inspiration, nor which in particular these writings are,” without the help of their tradition—see *letter ix. page 67 to 72—letter x. page 82 83 84—letter xi. page 95 to 110—letter xlvii. page 150.*

All of which (I might briefly answer,) is quite of a piece with the old chief priests, scribes, and pharisees, who would set their traditions above the commandments of God, as in *Mat. xv.* and *Mark vii.*—but although like him they claimed to themselves, the care, keeping, and true exposition of Scripture, as the very guardians of orthodoxy; yet hath he not far surpassed them in the exclusive claim which he arrogantly asserts? Allbeit both might be told, that it is not to them we are indebted for the preservation of the purity and authenticity of Scripture, but to the providence of Almighty God.

And moreover he may be told, that the inscrutable wisdom of God, hath made that very thing whereof he so loudly complains, an especial means of the preservation of Scripture, that is, the



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divisions which (from age to age,) arose among the bishops and people, insomuch, that if one should be disposed to alter, or square a text to his own dimensions, others would be ready to make the most of such an attempt, even to his prejudice, from whose fellowship he was separated, which no doubt operated as an especial guard against the corruption of the sacred text, even like as the Prophets and Apostles were often preserved by means of the divisions of the people, who were disposed to destroy them, when their dissensions interposed, which was of the Lord's ordering.

Although I have taken this way of answering *J. M.* because he appears so high in his own conceit, yet I might have cut it short, and deny his assertion altogether; for, let him shew if he be able, at what period the Scriptures were only in the hands of his clergy? nay, even his own book flatly contradicts such an assertion, wherein he refers to the trouble which those he is pleased to call heretics, gave his Church, by rigidly adhering to Scripture rather than tradition; yea, so early as the second and third century, he quotes thus, saying, "They meddle with the Scriptures, and adduce arguments from them, for, in treating of faith, they pretend that they ought not to argue upon any other ground than the written documents of faith:—thus, they weary the firm, catch the weak, and fill the middle sort with doubt," &c. &c. and saith, "It is therefore the wrong method to appeal to the Scriptures." This is a short extract from his own quotations—see *letter x. page 89.*—and of the fifth century he quotes thus, "Do the heretics then appeal to the Scripture? certainly they do, and this with the utmost confidence; you will see them running hastily through the different books of holy writ," &c. "at home and abroad, in their discourses and in their writings, they hardly produce a sentence which is not larded with the words of Scripture," &c.—see *page 93.*

But wherefore should I quote, seeing that he knew full well, (even to say nothing of the Greek or Asiatic Churches,) that all along from the days of Constantine, to the time of the Albigenses or Waldenses, (who first translated the Scriptures into their own language.) There was a regular succession of the Novations, or Puritans, and Paulitians, &c., with divers other large societies, separated from the pope's religion, who stood out stre-

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noas asserters of Scripture ; nay, were they not called heretics, for only asserting the Scriptures to be of greater weight and authority than tradition ? and yet after all that, will he have the face to assert, that it was his own Church that preserved the Scriptures, even all the while that that very Church was calling all people heretics, who denied tradition to be of equal weight with Scripture ; or whoever asserted that Scripture was superior to tradition ; was ever a greater cheat put upon human reason ? only compare a few of his assertions—say *letter ix. page 67 to 72* with *letter x. page 89 to 93*—*letter xi. page 95 to 116*, and see if it be not even worse than confusion itself ?

And as to the merit which he ascribes to his bishops for settling the canon of Scripture ; he may be told, that that is a point which is not fully agreed upon to this day ; nay, is it not one of those things about which we may allow each other a difference of sentiment ? seeing that there is a superabundance of that which each acknowledge, which is amply established by a correspondence of the parts thereof ; yea, even line upon line, and precept upon precept, not only here and there a little, but here much and there a great deal ; yet who would dare to say, that the Almighty never revealed more than his canon ? or who should upbraid a man that might admire parts called Apocripha ? and moreover, with all his affected nicety about his canon, he is yet aware, that it was many ages before his most renowned saints and fathers were agreed on the measure thereof, until at last the strongest party fixed what they chose.

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*Of the Corruption of Translation, &c.*

Nearly the same answer might be given to his outcry against the corruption of our translations, even while he is quoting them himself, and have thereby acknowledged them throughout his book ; yet he saith, “ The errors of these translations were wilful errors, a number of which yet remains.”

Behold then how he goes about to prove his charge of notoriously corrupt—see *letter ix. page 71 72*—there he complains that the word *and* is put in place of *or*, in *1 Cor. xi. 27*—and in *Mat. xix. 11*—he saith, “ *cannot* is put for *do not* ;” and that they have put *babes* for *children*, and *idols* for *images* and the like ; Alas ! to what doth such trifling amount in the view of a

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simple-hearted upright believer, whose faith stands not in the mere crotchets of syllables, or the craftiness of man's wisdom, but in the power of God; he that hath that faith can read enough, plain as his heart could desire, of all that is needful or good for him to know; yea, he may there see, the sinfulness of sin, the deceit of the heart, and the wrath of God against all unrighteousness, and the redemption which comes by Jesus Christ, amply set forth, insomuch that there is left no room for him to doubt, that to walk after the flesh brings death, and to live and walk in the Spirit brings life and peace, so he is warned of the need of repentance and the fear of the Lord; there he is commanded to love God above all and his neighbour as himself, which fulfils the law and the Prophets, and comprehends the whole duty of man; and so he is plainly informed that God is a Spirit, and can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

All of which he may read, not sparingly, nor in obscure language, to cause him to stumble upon a syllable, nay, but with clear and ample promises and warnings, that none need misinterpret the command that saith unto all, watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation; howbeit, I know that even a syllable may open a wide field of criticism and contention, for the mind that is blinded by the god of this world; even such as regard not the Scripture, which warns us against "Doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, railings, strifes, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds"—see *Tim.* and *Titus*—but what shall we say to *J. M.* who makes such a mountain of the mere punctuation of a sentence, "magnifying the fatal consequence of only substituting a point for a comma"—*letter ix. page 71*—is not that straining at a gnat to a witness? yet let him reflect, that it is neither the point nor the comma, that proves so fatal, nay, but it is because that with all their nicety they swallow down the great beast of sin; and that is what blindeth the mind and perverteth the judgment; for surely the Father of the universe, hath not suspended the salvation of souls out of a mere cobweb of grammar.

And as to his assertion of the falsity of our translation, whereof he treacherously labours to persuade his readers, without proving his assertions, though he chargeth the translators with wilful errors, yet he should know full well, that such corruption of translation could only tend to bring infamy on the authors there-



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of, and give a handle to such as would be glad to make the worst of it, nay, even according to his own assertion—*letter ix. page 71 72*—he saith, “There was a general outcry raised against Tindal Coverdale and Queen Elizabeth’s translations, in which the King himself joined, and accordingly ordered a new version, being the same that is now in use;” and does he now tell the world, that the king with the nation and the people, put forth a corrupt translation without offering any excuse? \* *page 72.* And yet after all this ado, let any honest intelligent mind compare all those translations, and see if the general sense be not the same, and whether he would not be equally edified by one as the other? howbeit, I have nothing to do with dialects

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\* Is not *J. M.* the more inexcusable for charging our state translators with wilful errors? seeing their principle error is, that in some instances they copied after the example of the popes, yet not because they liked them in anywise, nay, but because some of them liked the gain and preeminence which they had set up, even as they avow in their preface to the Bible; that they were as ravenous after the emoluments of a British state hierarchy, as ever the popes had been for a Roman one, and of course they would retain all they could, no matter how it came; even though from the popes themselves, so it favoured the aggrandizement and heathenish distinction of their orders; I might notice divers variations of that sort, (I would not call them errors, though errors might grow out of them) but let it now suffice, just to notice the very designation of their orders, wherein they stile overseers (bishops) and inferior ministers they call (deacons) which, though it means the same in their view; yet poor folks cannot tell the meaning, further than to suppose that a bishop must be a lord, residing in a great palace, &c., and deacons to have such or such stipends or the like, which would have been as little understood among the Apostles, as our poor folks understand them at this day; for had their views been altogether plainness and simplicity, we should not then find such a title as bishop or deacon in the whole Bible; yet we find only one bishoprick there, which they assign to Judas; and where would be the loss if there never had been another in the world, no more than in the Bible?

And now, alas! what regard could he have for Scripture, who would reject it altogether, because those state translators had an eye to their own dole in some few instances? nay, for my part, I deem it as one of the wonders of the world, that our translation should come forth even so pure out of such hands, which proves there were good amongst them; this I assert with some confidence, because I have noticed different translations, and might be equally edified by each of them; and moreover, seeing that in all cases, there may be divers ways of relating the same fact, our translators have given us a marginal reading, which even so far, is no small acquisition to the work.

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or modes of stile and language, that might be more or less enticing or grateful to curious ears.

And although it is not for me to attempt to justify translators, yet this one word for all I insist upon (even this,) that Providence has provided the same guard against the corruption of our translation, as for the protection of the Sacred Text itself; and that guard was the divisions and dissensions of the people, who would be disposed to make mountains of such wilful errors; howbeit I only look on this as an outward guard so far as it may reach, while yet I verily believe, that a secret and sacred Power hath superintended and perpetuated the Sacred Text, as a peculiar blessing to mankind; yea, even bearing the very stamp of immortality, even in that wherein it is so marvellously formed to confound the wise, while it instructs and comforts the simple.

I shall conclude this subject of translation, by remarking, that *J. M.* himself, has gone further than any thing I have yet seen, to prove the accuracy of our translations, though he meant not so; for I cannot but attribute some degree of weakness (or shortness) to all the works of men under the sun, but more especially to the learned; yet now, to see a highly learned man, assert the falsity of a language, and even take on to prove it so to be, and yet to prove nothing, does in my mind, speak a volume in favour of the thing which he condemns.

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*Of his claiming an exclusive right to the Scriptures, as a bequest from the Apostles, who, he saith, made their will in favour of his Priesthood.*

As to his claim of that exclusive right, which he saith was bequeathed to his priesthood, to retain, understand, and expound the Scriptures; I would again say, let him produce his title in plain legible language if he be able, seeing he saith, that “They have the title deeds delivered to them by the Apostles, who made their will in their favour, while they disinherited and cast off all others as strangers and enemies”—see *letter x. page 90*—but have I not already amply proved, that they have far less ground to claim the like title or succession from the Apostles, than the Scribes and Pharisees had to be called Abraham’s seed (while they did not the works of Abraham) seeing their dispensation and succession was more outward and legal, which might

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seem a better plea for such a carnal presumptuous notion; but, alas! what excuse can they now offer, to bring the free gospel into bondage to a more carnal and legal course of human divinity than that of the Pharisees themselves? would not that be to deny Christ, who came to set his people free, not only from sin, but even from the yoke of bondage contained in the ceremonies of the law, and from the craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive the simple? and he never forbade the free perusal of Scripture to any people whatever.

I would then ask, on what can they ground even a shadow of such exclusive right and authority? I know that he likewise asserts their exclusive qualification, therefore let that also be examined according to his own challenge, in proof whereof he alleges, as Peter saith no Scripture is of any private interpretation, and the unlearned and unstable wrest them to their own destruction, that therefore his priests were intrusted with the care, keeping, and expounding of them; so that they only have the true knowledge thereof.

But where can he find precept or example to prove that such kind of ordination, succession, learning, or school-divinity, could qualify men to interpret Scripture? or what people, nation or religion, ever held such a principle exclusively? I say let him shew if he can, what people ever held the like principle? surely neither our Saviour nor his Apostles; they never practised, taught, nor set up such kind of learning, as that men should serve apprenticeship at seminaries, and take out degrees of learning or divinity to fit and qualify them to make comments on Scripture; and to say that all should bow down to their decisions, and that none else should be qualified to expound Scripture, or to preach the gospel; Alas! what a libel would that be on primitive Christianity.\*

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\* As to the outcry he makes against the laity, calling them the authors of heresy, sedition, and rebellion, when allowed to read and understand Scripture according to the light and inspiration of the Almighty; which he saith, should only be understood and explained by his own clergy, whom he calls "The only authorised judges and expounders thereof," but where can he find precept or example for such authorised judges and restrictions? surely not in the New Testament; the Apostles never acknowledged such learned authorised judges as *J. M.*, nay, but were sorely assaulted by the learned of



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I say then, I know of no people that ever held such a religion, except the priests of the grand lama:—nay, even the very old Pagan Romans, when masters of the world, did not hold that none beside their own priesthood could expound religion; and I may repeat, that I never heard of such exclusive claims as he assumes, unless it be like what we read in *Revelations*, of the beast or whore of Babylon, who would allow nothing to pass without their mark or the number of their name; yet who can deny, that such exclusive claims, form the strongest hold in all the territories of priestcraft?

What then was the learning and stability which Peter speaks of, when he saith, “The unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction?” surely, he could not

that generation, insomuch that what they suffered from that quarter, may be viewed as a clear epitome of all that followed in succession, even to the present day, seeing how notorious it is, that while they slander the laity with being the authors of innumerable seditions, schisms, and heresies, they themselves were the chief authors of all they so fiercely cry against, yea, first they set up their confused creeds and institutions, and then fell out about the meaning thereof, even pope against pope, council against council, and nation against nation, often to cruel wars and bloodshed, while yet neither themselves nor others could understand what they fought about.

And now to belie the people and the Scriptures too, saying, that all such mischief came by the laity misinterpreting Scripture, when allowed to read and judge for themselves; which after all, was not so much about Scripture meanings, but about the many inventions and novelties set up by the popes and bishops, which could never be reconciled to Scripture, nay, nor were they ever agreed among themselves, further than as the gain or exaltation of their see, produced an accommodating vision, to cause them to see all alike, or rather pretend so to do, insomuch that very shame might have restrained him, from throwing the blame of heresy, anarchy, sedition, and rebellion, upon the laity perverting the Scriptures, even while he should know full well, how often his own priesthood were the authors thereof; nay, were not the most eminent among themselves, the authors of what he calls chief heresies and schisms even brought forth out of the very belly of his school divinity did not Paulus Samosatenus, and the Paulitians come forth of that school? did Arius and Arianism come from thence? and thence came Pelagius, and from thence came Donatus; yea, from that school came more of the like than I can enumerate; nor need I attempt it, seeing that it is worse than beating the air, to contend with him, who, while he saw abundance of such doings (in his own cage of unclean birds) exclaims so loudly against the people who deny both his and their inventions; howbeit, even some of those they so slander, still retain a little of the old pope's rags, some more, others less, and so because they are not all in a livery, he cries out, they are all divided

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mean College learning or science, seeing that would be to condemn the Prophets and Apostles, who never set up the like; nay, but on the contrary, were they not grievously assaulted by such as sat down therein?

But Peter plainly points out the learning and stability which alone can preserve us from wresting the Scriptures; therefore take the whole passage as it stands; speaking of Paul's Epistles, in which he saith, "Are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction; ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to Him be glory both now and for ever Amen."—2 Peter iii. 16. to the end; there is the learning and knowledge which alone can preserve us; even the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all the glory of our salvation and preservation should be ascribed, and not unto the teaching and tradition of men or priests.

And that is the true order of the gospel teaching, yea, of

about the meaning of the Scripture; while (as I said before) they are only divided about splinters of the bishops' novelties and traditions; which they labour to make agree with Scripture, but never can; and then they belie and slander both the people and the Scriptures too, saying, that all their divisions are about the Bible.

And whereas he asserts, that mankind hath been always beholden to his bishops alone for preserving the purity of the Christian doctrine, I say on the contrary, have they not been the greatest corrupters of the simplicity thereof that ever yet appeared in the world? I need only instance the notorious dispute of Alexander and Arius; and may thence query, whether if Alexander had not gone out of bounds, affecting to be wise above what is written, even to pry into things not fit for poor mortals to reason upon but to adore; I say, if Alexander had kept his place, as mortal man should do, is it likely we should ever have heard of Arius? nay, but when two great Diotrephian bishops and their adherents, affected to be wise above that which is written, and so fell out about what they could never understand, and having set their dirty foot into the pure stream of gospel simplicity, and polluted it, as respected themselves, to whom then of course it would be muddy indeed; then they exclaim to their deluded votaries, we are they that protect the purity of Christian faith, &c., while of all the world, they are the veriest corrupters thereof.

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Scripture learning throughout; even pointing thereunto from *Genesis* to *Revelations*, to which teaching alone the Apostle Paul commends the believers, saying, "I commend you to God" and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, "and give you an inheritance among the sanctified."—*Acts xx.*—there we see all sufficiency ascribed to God alone, without the least reference to the comments or teaching of men; nay, but there he warned them, and warns us, to beware of men, as of wolves, and reminds them of the example he had shewn them; even that while he preached and warned them with tears night and day, his hands were employed to provide for his own necessities and that of others; shewing in the most clear and impressive manner, that a gospel minister should have his mind in Heaven, serving the Lord, who opens the book of conscience or of Scripture, even while his hands were employed in the necessary labour of the creation, not seeking qualification from the study of books or school divinity, nor repeating a breviary, nor yet strolling about idle like Heathen priests, who pretend that honest industry should defile them, because they like it not; while they say to the deluded people that uphold them, stand by yourselves, for we are holier than you.\*

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\* How comes it that a very instructive part of Scripture is quite overlooked by all his learned tribes? that is to say, the employment and manner of life, of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, which we find very minutely set forth in divers parts throughout the Bible; even that they were husbandmen, herdsmen, plowmen, fishers or mechanics, &c., I may be told that all this hath a very deep spiritual signification, and so it hath, very deep indeed, but that no ways detracts from but rather confirms the heavenly example which they have set before our face, even in the order and economy of the creation of God, wherein they shine forth as incontestible proofs of a manner of life, as friendly to virtue, light, and saving knowledge, as any mode of life that ever was devised since the confusion of Babel; though a world of unbelievers hath appeared since that day, who could not rely upon the Lord's covenant, nor perceive his bow in the cloud; and so have been erecting their towering buildings, and many inventions to raise themselves above the common deluge of error; yea, even long since they read that solemn apostrophe uttered by the holy martyr, that "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands," yet how have they magnified their handy works, even to this day.

But where is there a jot or tittle of all their works referred to by Him that is infinite in wisdom and compleat in himself, and his people compleat in him wanting nothing? I say then, how do we read of him appearing unto



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But I might fill a volume, were I to notice all the proofs set forth in Scripture, to shew that gospel learning is only of the Lord, even that "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching them," &c.—*Titus* ii. 11. 12.—mind that (all men,) teaching them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and how to live, &c., yea, more, (read the whole passage;) and the Apostles were sent to turn people to that grace, and so they recommended them to the grace or good spirit of God, as we may read, yea, as they had learned of Christ, who saith, "It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God."—*John* vi. 45. And he saith, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."—*Mat.* xi. 29. He alone can teach

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, in the field? and to Gideon at the threshing floor, and to Samuel on his bed, while a servant in the temple, even to reprove the great high priest and his house; and Elisha was called from the plow, and the Word of the Lord came to Amos while an herdsman; and David was a shepherd; and who taught him the Psalms and wonderful Prophecies? but what shall I say of the Apostles, who were of mean occupations in the world's esteem; nay, even to Paul, who, though so abundant in labour, travel, and ministry; yet wrought with his own hands to supply his necessities; not that God was a hard master, but he takes special care to mention his demeanor as an example to others; all which abundantly prove, that the Lord's work is no brain-beating stuff, conned out by poring over books, or dint of study, nay, where do we find it recorded, that the Word of the Lord came to any of them while poring over their books, or at study in their seminaries, nor yet while repeating their breviary, or their collects, or matins, &c

And surely if the work of God, is not, neither have been known or learned by man or man's device, how then can it be taught by the precepts of men? nay, if he should spend all his life to the age of Methusalem, in toiling, learning, and guessing that way, he should still be unlearned and unstable, and liable to wrest the Scriptures to his destruction; but on the other hand, he that feels the blessed effects set forth in Scripture, is soon instructed thereby, nay, if he but feels himself a sinner, and like the accursed ground that bringeth forth briars and thorns, he may look for a Redeemer, even for Him that hath instructed us in parables and similitudes of the things in creation, and then, while his hands are employed therein, he may be instructed by the lowest employment in life, yea, if he be but a weeder or tiller of the ground, or whatever is before him, he may derive blessed instruction therefrom; as it is opened in his mind, by Him that opened the most simple parables to his disciples, whom he instructively called children to the last, and so to be livingly taught, needs only to retain a child-like state, in dependence on the Father and fountain of mercies.

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and enable us to bring forth fruits of righteousness; nay, even to love our enemies, which all the priests or colleges in the world could never enable a man to do, even though he had been hearing and repeating from one end to the other of every year of his life, he might still be only the more unstable and unlearned; even ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth—see *Tim.* iii. 7.

Nay, but what shall I say if all their teaching and learning tends rather to carry men away after error, from that steadfastness, which they should have in Christ, on whom the mind should be stayed, (according to Peter's admonition,) for in him only is stability, while man with all his wisdom and commentaries, remains unstable, yea, unstable as waters, and the whore sitteth upon the waters, and upon tongues.—*Rev.* xvii. 15.—and so the wisdom that is only gotten from thence, is from beneath, and the Scripture doth not commend us to that dirty puddle; nay, but what saith it, "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace," and again, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."—*James* i. 5. 6.

Mark then, all are directed to the one never-failing source; "Let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and it shall be given him," that is, the wisdom which is from above, which is pure; but then he must ask in faith nothing wavering, but the unbeliever therein, runs to man or priest, or to the workings of his own imagination, even to the wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, devilish—*James* iii. 15.—and thus would they send him to the Devil's school-house to be learned, lest he should wrest the Scriptures, and to tell him he must be learned therein, or refrain from his Bible altogether; did ever Satan devise a way like this, to make man wavering and unstable to his purpose?

And whether this wavering man is tossed about in the strength of his own imagination, or whether he falls into the dead sea of a carnal implicit reliance upon man or priest? his case is indeed deplorable, who has so erred from the faith, as not to believe in the promise of God, that he would give to all liberally, of that wisdom that is sufficient to direct; Alas! is he not woefully car-

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ried away by the error of the wicked, who is turned from the wisdom "which cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights, (which is pure, and full of mercy and good fruits)" to seek for, or trust in the wisdom that is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, devilish?

Objection.—Doth not such reasoning tend to undervalue even the very means of knowing the Scriptures, seeing we could not so much as read without learning.

Answer.—No one need mistake me in such a manner, as I speak not against useful learning and knowledge, which is very good in its place, for the purposes whereunto it is appointed; that is man's portion, and therein his liberty may stand without rebuke; but God hath reserved unto himself a peculiar portion, over which he should preside without controul, even as special and absolute ruler and disposer of his own inheritance, that is, the heart, conscience, and allegiance of his own people, which from everlasting he determined to guide by his counsel and order by his wisdom; and that is a government which he never abdicated, nor gave over to the serpent, nor yet to Adam or his posterity, but whenever man usurped that dominion and guardianship, to guide and govern therein by man's own wisdom and prudence; God always confounded that wisdom, and so it is called Babel, or confusion.

But the true believer wants none of that wisdom, while he believeth according to Scripture; that "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true."—1 John v. 20. And they that are in Him that is true, need none of the Devil's wisdom, neither want they scribes or chief priests' notes or comments, but only desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, can ye read this, (oh! ye that labour to beguile and corrupt from the simplicity which is in Christ? I say then, can ye read the learning that Peter recommends even to the very weakest state, yea, even to babes, and that is the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby? so there is the alone way to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; even as by milk, which must be tasted and fed upon.—2 Peter ii. 2. 3.

And whoever leaves all to follow Christ, must only follow the Living God, yea, must only seek after that which can be felt,



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tasted, handled, and looked upon, of the word of life—1 *John* i. 1.—while all the curious prying of man's forebodings or attachment to human wisdom or opinion, might prove as fatal as that of bidding those farewell which he should leave behind, to whom Jesus saith, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."—*Luke* ix. 62.—and is it not a fearful looking back, to turn to that wisdom which should be left behind? by all of which we are admonished, that whether in secret meditation, or reading Scriptures, the eye or mind which turns from the fear, love and wisdom of God, (which cometh from above,) to look after any work or knowledge, or device of the creature; may thereby be drawn or beguiled into that wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Even a slight glance at what Scripture testifies, of the fulness of that Heavenly knowledge which the Father hides from the wise and prudent of this world, and reveals to babes—*Mat.* xi. 25.—yea, so plain that the wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein—*Isaiah* xxxv. 8. I say that even to glance at all those precious promises would so far exceed my limits, that I must forbear, and wind up, with a reference to the rebuke given to the captious Jews, who prided themselves on being the guardians of orthodoxy, and the only true expounders of Scripture, yet what saith Christ unto them? "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?" there we may see they could not understand the Scriptures without the life thereof, which is the life of Christ; though (He told them) Moses had given the Scripture to them; why then could they not understand them, at least, as well as others? was it not because their self-confidence had blinded them? yea, insomuch that they could not even believe the reality of the Scriptures whereof they were so confident as even to boast therein; and so Christ saith—"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" And thus, as they received honour one of another, so they likewise looked for instruction only in that way wherein it might be given or received from each other, even by the way of carnal corrupt reason, instead of seeking it from God only, whose teaching cometh home to the feeling and conviction of

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the mind and conscience, which they rejecting, they rejected or overlooked the only means whereby the Scriptures can be known to profit, and then sought it in a way wherein it never can be found, and thus commit two great evils, and teach the people to do the like; even to forsake the Lord, the fountain of true, living, and saving knowledge, and to take up with their own empty devices, as at this day.

Alas! is he not an unbeliever and infidel at heart, let him profess never so high, who saith in effect, that God will not make good his promise of revealing his will unto the sincere seeking soul, except through the medium of priests and seminaries; and still worse, to teach the like unbelief to the people; and yet overall, the Lord remains faithful and His promise sure, even with long forbearance as all the day long; for where is the rational being but must acknowledge that they have felt condemnation for doing evil, and peace for well doing and resisting temptation? and had they stood faithful to conviction, and to the reproofs of instruction, their understanding should be so opened as to know it to be the way of life indeed, according to Scripture testimony *Prov. vi. 23.*

But how have the unbeliever and the hireling taught the people not to believe therein, but to account it fallacy and delusion? yea, have they not so far prevailed, that the query of our Saviour appears applicable at this day as ever it was, even that "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?"—*Luke xviii. 8.* And now where is faith to be found, except in a hidden condition, wherein the great Rabbies of these days call it fallacy and delusion, and cause the people to think so too? and is it any marvel then, that the blessed effects thereof should be hid from their eyes?

Only look what a boast *J. M.* makes of the labour of his brother Rabbies, that they have been such famous work-masters in the vineyard of unbelief, as to have brought nations and multitudes under the dominion and influence of their mandates, (even under the commandments and doctrines of men,) so as to give no heed to the light or inspiration of God, but to esteem it a delusion or fallacy; is not that deceiving the hearts of the people with good words and fair speeches, yea, and through covetousness with feigned words, making merchaudize of them to a wit-

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ness, according to the Apostles prophesies?—see *Roms. xvi. 18.*—2 *Peter ii. 3.*—and doth not he that denies inspiration and the light, deny the Lord that bought them?

But what shall we say to his chronological table which he affixes to *letter xxx. page 164* in order to prove, that the wickedness of the country was increased according to the progress of the Bible Society, which became doubled in seven years, &c.? which he assays to prove by comparing the number of convictions and executions in London and Middlesex, in said period.

Alas! poor man, could he find no other cause for the increase of wickedness than that of the Bible? surely very shame might have restrained such an impious decision as would be a scandal to an infidel, seeing that had he then sought for a cause of the increasing wickedness of the country, he might soon have hit upon something likely, instead of laying all the blame upon the Bible; and more especially, as the period he points out, was remarkable for cruel wars and bloodshed throughout Europe, wherein England also was deeply involved; even in that which must needs produce a deplorable corruption of life, morals, and human feeling; yea, not only upon such as were concerned in the iniquity inseparable from war, but even upon those also that took no part therein; yet, by growing familiar with the woful details of the progress thereof, might even at unawares get leavened into a degree of hardness of heart, noways friendly to virtue,—but how comes it that no iniquity appears to grieve him, but that of reading the Bible?

Let us now take a slight glance at the high profession which he makes throughout, to esteem and value the Scriptures, and see if it prove not a strange contradiction in itself? even to compare therewith his belief of the origin of Scripture, according to his own assertions; seeing that he saith, Moses, and the other Prophets, had recourse to tradition in writing the Sacred Scriptures—*letter xii. page 123.*—Nay, but he saith, “Indeed the whole Sacred History was preserved by the Patriarchs in succession, from Adam down to Moses, during the space of two thousand four hundred years, by means of tradition.”—*Letter xi. page 107.*

Now what can we make of all that? if he means to say that Moses and the Prophets wrote from tradition, and not by inspiration; how then could he say that “All Scripture is given by



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“inspiration of God.”—2 *Tim.* iii. 16. Surely a man that saith the Scriptures were handed down (to the inspired writers) by tradition, doth not believe in them in any wise as the writings of holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, according to 2 *Peter* i. 21.—neither doth he believe in diviue revelation, nor comprehend the efficacy thereof; for if he believes not that former things were revealed to Moses, even that he saw the Paradise from which Adam was expelled; I say he that believes not that, how then should he believe what Moses saith of things to come, who prophesied of many wonderful thngs, and wrote of Christ?

And beside all that; look what a dark and absurd consequence must follow his assertion, that Moses and the Prophets wrote from tradition, surely that would imply, that there had been a clearer light, and a more sure revelation from God unto mankind (in the foregoing ages,) than that which was revealed to Moses, when he wrote the Scriptures; while yet we read, that death reigned from Adam to Moses—*Rom.* v. 14.—which although it hath a deep spiritual signification suited to mankind through all ages; yet will also measurably hold good in the letter, so far as to shew the fallacy of appealing to such times, for a perfect infallible standard, equal or superior to revelation; and whosoever he be that goes about to reduce Scriptures to the level of tradition, manifests to a witness, how lightly he esteems the Sacred Scriptures, and would cause others to slight them also, seeing our Saviour condemns tradition altogether, as I shall prove in its place.

And as to the way and manner whereby he sets forth the New Testament, whether he means to hold it forth as of little importance, or as a thing that need not concern us at all, I leave the reader to judge?—see *letter viii. page 49 50 51*—there, after detracting from the weight of these invaluable writings, he saith, “The ancient fathers tell us that St. Matthew wrote his gospel  
“at the particular request of the Christians of Palestine; and  
“that St. Mark composed his at the desire of those at Rome. St.  
“Luke addressed his gospel to an individual, Theophilus,  
“having written it, says the Holy Evangelist, because it seemed  
“good to him so to do. St. John wrote the last of the gospels in  
“compliance with the petition of the clergy and people of Lesser  
“Asia, to prove in particular, the divinity of Jesus Christ,

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“ which Cerinthes, Eben, and other heretics began to deny.  
 “ No doubt the Evangelists were moved by the Holy Ghost, to  
 “ listen to the requests of the faithful, in writing their re-  
 “ spective gospels; nevertheless there is nothing in these oc-  
 “ casions nor in the gospels themselves, which indicates that any  
 “ of them, or all of them together, contain an entire detailed  
 “ and clear exposition of the whole religion of Jesus Christ.  
 “ The canonical epistles in the New Testament, shew the par-  
 “ ticular occasion on which they were written, and prove, that  
 “ they are not to be considered as regular treatises of the  
 “ Christian religion.”

Now let the reader put all this together, and see if he can comprehend why any man professing Christianity, should speak so lightly and diminutively of holy writ, as to say, that the ancient prophets were beholden to tradition for to bring forth the Scriptures, and that the Evangelists wrote the New Testament, at the particular request of the clergy and people, to whose request (he saith,) they were moved of the Holy Ghost to listen? while yet all of them together, contain not a clear exposition of the religion of Jesus Christ; now what could be his design in such strange windings? could even an infidel lap up a more subtle device, to undermine, and invalidate the weight and authority of Scripture, or speak more gross, carnal, or lightly, of the power, light, and spirit from whence they did proceed?

Alas, alas! were we to contemplate the unsearchable wisdom and boundless love of God, in sending forth an indubitable declaration of his mind and will towards mankind, which peculiarly suits the spiritual warfare, state, and condition of all people in every age of the world, and yet to say, that such a stupendous design was effected, merely by men being moved to listen to the request of others on particular occasions, bespeak such gross ignorance of the eternal unutterable fountain of light, life, and knowledge, as should not proceed from any rational being; Alas! what particular occasion can be found in the Testament, which reacheth not unto us? yea, and concerns all the ends of the earth, even to the end of time, in order to gather us into his Spirit from whence the Scriptures did proceed, yea, in order that we might look unto him and be saved from sin, and the effect thereof, even from Hell, and from our vain conversation, and from the cunning craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive,

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And whereas he saith, that the New Testament doth not contain a regular treatise, or “clear exposition of the religion of Jesus Christ.”—I should answer him, that even one chapter thereof, sets forth such a clear and self-evident sense, savour, and demonstration of the religion of Jesus Christ, as cannot be found in his whole volume;\* but I readily grant, that the religion of his priests, nor any thing like it, is not to be found in the New Testament, that is to say, such a religion as he sets forth; nay, but is it not one of the strongest proofs of the divine authority and certainty of the Scriptures, that they are marvelously formed to stumble and confound all carnally minded priests or people, who slight and reject the light or spirit of Christ, and rely upon the strength of imagination, or any outward ordination, priesthood, succession, tradition, or device of man, whose breath is in his nostrils; seeing that even to own such a priesthood, is a denying of Christ, who was crucified by that self same order?

But He is risen, and hath triumphed over them, even through death; and is confounding and making a shew of them openly, with all their pomp and ordinances, though they know it not; yea, so let him reign until he hath put all under his feet, who for ever remains, after the order of Him, that was without beginning of days or end of time, the alone Heavenly high priest, over the household of faith; even the Lamb that was slain, and is alive, and lives for ever more, who alone taketh away the sins of the world; who only, and as a lion, hath prevailed to

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\* Whereas he saith, that the New Testament “Contains not an entire detailed, and clear exposition of the religion of Jesus Christ; nor yet regular treatises of the Christian religion;” I assert on the contrary, that even a few chapters of the New Testament, contain a clear exposition of the religion of Jesus Christ.

But I dare not say that the religion which *J. M.* sets forth (or any thing like it) can be found in the New Testament, seeing that therein, I find neither pope, nor mass, nor prayers to saints or angels, nor worship of relics or images, nor extreme unction, nor seven sacraments, nor transubstantiation or the host, nor auricular confession, nor indulgences or sinners forgiving others their sins, nor purgatory, nor prayers for the dead, nor yet the supremacy of the See of Rome, such like things for which he contends, I find not in Scripture,



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open the book, and loose the seven seals, which neither man nor priest on earth can do; even of the book of prophesy, and of the conscience which he cleanseth from dead works; even in his own blood, (his Heavenly life,) to whom with the Father through the Holy Spirit, be glory and power everlasting,

## SECTION XII.

*Some Reflections upon Tradition.*

**A**LTHOUGH it should not appear expedient for me to treat further of Tradition than what I had occasion to notice in the foregoing pages; yet inasmuch as *J. M.* sets it forth as a chief corner stone in the construction and establishment of his church, as may be seen throughout his volume; I need only refer to *letter x. page 83 to 92 inclusive, letter xi. from page 95 to page 116—letter xii. page 24, 27.*

I therefore deem it needful to say something on the subject apart by itself, in order that I might appear the more decided, and in so doing I must disclaim tradition altogether, seeing that it may easily be proved a most presumptuous and unchristian dependance, whereupon to stake the issues of eternity; and the more so, in that it is incongruous with the heavenly design of the gospel, which calls us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, how is that? Why it is according as God worketh in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure, and to beware of doting after the tradition of men, lest that should spoil us as saith the Scripture—*Philips. ii. 12. 13.—Col. ii. 8.—1 Tim. vi. chapter.*

But my first and chief reason for utterly disclaiming tradition, is, because my Saviour testified against it altogether, and never set it up nor owned it in any wise, as a medium of heavenly instruction, nay, but rejected it altogether; as will plainly appear by comparing *Mat. xv. 2. to 20. and Mark vii. 5. to 16.—*“The Pharisees and Scribes asked Him, why walk not thy Disciples according to the tradition of the Elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; for laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”—The whole

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passage seems too long for me to quote, which concludes—"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear"—see *Mark* vii. it contains a volume of instruction.

There we may see that tradition forms no part of the religion of Jesus Christ, whose religion is of the heart, even in the spirit and in truth—*John* iv. 23. 24.—But tradition is the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees, which stood in mouth and lip honour, and their (supposed) rectitude of outside ceremonies and observations of what others might have done or said, while yet the heart was far from God; such the Lord calls hypocrites.

And now I appeal to the experience of any truly awakened mind, whether the most punctual performance of mere rites and ceremonies, ever yet brought the soul a whit beyond the state of the hypocrite? according to *Mat.* v. 20.—*Roms.* i. 8. and x. 3. And with such testimonies before our face, can any man who regards the saying of Christ, plead for tradition, as being part of his religion? And moreover Peter saith, that it is so vain a conversation, which "They had received by traditions from their fathers," that nothing could redeem therefrom but the precious blood of Christ—1 *Peter* i. 18. 19.—And Paul saith, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"—*Cors.* ii. 8.—There we may see that tradition is not after Christ, but after philosophy and vain deceit, which are classed together, as being of the same stamp; and surely it would need a world of philosophy and vain deceit, to prove tradition to be any part of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, while it is the veriest denial thereof.

Yet *J. M.* assays to prove that Christ did not condemn all traditions, only a certain kind of tradition—*letter* xii. page 23. which yet the reader may see he did not (nor could not) prove; nay the very attempt which he made is a most barefaced presumptuous private interpretation of Scripture; and I leave the reader to judge whether it be false also? yea, as if he would have it to mean, that our Saviour spoke it only for the sake of the Scribes and Pharisees, and not for us who should come after; while yet it is simply evident, that from so slight an allusion to tradition, as that of washing of hands, he took occasion to condemn all tradition of men; yea even to warn us not to place dependance upon old customs or usages, nor to esteem them for



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the alleged antiquity thereof; nay he should know full well, that it is tradition itself which our Lord condemned without reserve, even opposing what was written thereto (see *Mark viii. 6.*) and made no distinction, no, not a tittle, but disclaimed tradition totally, even in the singular, not traditions, as if some might be retained or allowed, but no such allowance there, nay but the thing itself is rejected, even as it is evident that the Lord designed to bring the people off from all vain dependance upon idle tales, or empty forms, to that which is sure and steadfast, even to the commandment of God, and so He struck at tradition altogether, as a system of error and deception; yea as the religion of hypocrites.

Yet *J. M.* takes on to establish his system of oral tradition from *2 Thes. ii. 15.*—“therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold “the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or “our epistle;” now seeing that he sets forth the above, in order to establish his oral tradition; it seems as if he only designed to address such men as should never look into the Bible at all, but take his say so, whatever it might be; alas! might he not as truly have said, that Simon Peter, and Simon the sorcerer, is one and the same person, as to say, that that in *2 Thes.* is in any wise like what he labours to establish, of stories handed down by oral tradition, throughout a thousand years, which should yet be as certain, and as binding upon mens’ conscience, as Scripture testimony itself; yea, even to be received as of divine authority, and not to be questioned on pain of perdition?

Alas, alas! call it tradition or what ye may, is there even a shadow of similarity between the Apostle’s advice to the Thessalonians, and his oral tradition? nay surely, the Apostle only referred them to what they had witnessed in life and power; first, that through the gospel which he had preached to them, they were called to “Sanctification of the Spirit, and “belief of the truth;” and so he bids them therefore, to stand fast, and hold the things, or instructions delivered, (as in the old translation,) whether by word or epistle, so it is rendered in Purver’s translation also, (wherein the term tradition is not to be found, nor yet in the old translations in *2 Thes.*—yet let him see if they be not strictly literal according to the original; but it seems likely that our translators copied in the term tradi-

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dition from his priests,)\* howbeit, I am not objecting to the term as it stands in our translation, seeing the sense is the same in both, as it is above being affected thereby, yea, so plain that no man need to mistake it, unless he be wilfully or wickedly determined to pervert the text; I say then, call it what ye may,

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\* Is it not remarkable, that the term (tradition) is not to be found in ii. *Thessalonians* in any translation except those ordered by the states, which sets up a priesthood conformable to human policy? all of which must needs be somewhat allied to each other, because they are alike constituted and upheld, even though utterly opposed to each other; nevertheless their language must needs be allied, seeing how near akin they are in constitution.—Would it then be any marvel, if the term tradition was slipped into the British state translation in accordance with that of the Roman, even without considering the delusive consequence? nay, has not every state religion something like the mark of the beast (though they know it not?) and who would say that tradition is no mark of the beast, while it bids defiance point blank, to our Saviour's clear instruction and admonition? howbeit, though that mark be set upon our translation in that instance in ii. *Thes.*—it is but little affected thereby, seeing the text is about their mark, only so far as it may beguile the weak, and cause them to stumble; yet had not the priests some stumbling-blocks to cause the weak to stumble, their trade might soon be down; and I more wonder they have not more stumbling-blocks in the British state hierarchy; and it is still more marvellous, that their British state translation should escape their mark, even so clean as it has been preserved; yet behold what a world of delusion and confusion has followed tradition; and now for Protestants to foist the term into their translation in ii. *Thes.* out of mere compliment to the Pope, appears such a piece of supine hypocrisy, as makes them tenfold more guilty therein, than all the Pope's people together, seeing they treacherously uphold the very thing they disclaim and argue against; nay, how much more abominable is it to uphold what we deny, than being unwarily betrayed by others into a false position, maintain it on that ground? therefore, are not Protestants accountable for all the consequences of tradition in this country? and small as it may appear, is there not so much iniquity in that treacherous confederacy, as might provoke divine justice to do away their hierarchy for ever? for let them shew if they be able, how the Apostle referred to tradition in the things he delivered; nay, doth he not plainly refer them to the gospel preached among them, and his epistle, together with the example set before their face? but not a tittle of stories from former ages, or that should be handed down to futurity only by word of mouth, nay, surely, and why then not set forth the text fairly as other honest men have done, seeing (as I said,) not one of them even names tradition there in ii. *Thes.*?—nay, but it is plain, that the passage being as a drawn sword against all priestcraft, they rather let it fall to the ground altogether, seeing they have displayed such ingenuity in the whole work, as leaves no room to set it down to the account of ignorance.

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does it anyways refer to oral tradition? nay surely, except so far as to knock it down altogether, seeing they are only referred to what they had seen with their own eyes, and livingly witnessed, “of the consolation and good hope which is through grace;” and so they are reminded of the precious foretaste whereof they had been partakers; but not a tittle about any thing of old times, before them, or that should follow after; how then could it apply to oral tradition?

Yet *J. M.* appears to deal still more treacherous in his manner of quoting ii. *Thes.* iii. 6. to which he refers with great affected solemnity; dealing it out in such a mood, as to persuade the unwary reader, that the Apostle aimed at nothing further in the text, than merely to establish oral tradition, see *letter xii. page 124.* so he quotes only verse 6th, which he calls “the Apostle’s awful sentence,” viz. “now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received of us;” now with all his affected solemnity, he takes special care, to avoid touching upon the real meaning of the text, which he seems determined to pervert, well knowing that it strikes at the very root and trade of priestcraft altogether, yea, is it not directly levelled against all idle priests or people, who would not work with their own hands, but live upon the labour of the people?

Therefore in order to manifest the cheat, which (by such detached quotation) is offered, both to the reader, and to the text in question, it appears expedient to give the whole passage to the end of the chapter, which is as follows—“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received of us; for yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man’s bread for naught; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us; for even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat—for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy



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“bodies: Now them that are such, we command and exhort by  
 “our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat  
 “their own bread.—But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-  
 “doing: And if any man obey not our word in this Epistle,  
 “note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be  
 “ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy but admonish him as  
 “a brother—Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace al-  
 “ways by all means; the Lord be with you all.—The salutation  
 “of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every  
 “Epistle; so I write; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be  
 “with you all—Amen.”—ii. *Thes.* iii. 6. to the end.

Now the reader may see, that there is nothing in the above to support oral tradition; nay, nor even the shadow of any thing that could establish the like, but rather knocks it down altogether, seeing that throughout the passage, the Apostle in no wise commends the people to a dependance upon any old tale whatsoever; nay, but to the self-evident example which he had set before their faces; and moreover, let us only pause for a moment, and reflect what it cost the Apostles to set up that example, wherein they “wrought with labour and travail night  
 “and day, that they might not be chargeable to the people,” even at a time when their extraordinary spiritual labour and travail, together with their ministry, should call for bodily rest and assistance, therefore he saith, they had power, yet forbore to use it, even in times of extremity, lest advantage might be taken to establish as a rule, what they might take through necessity; so they forbore even then, as the Apostle saith, “That  
 “we might make ourselves an example unto you to follow us,” there he writes as foreseeing the desolating effects of priestcraft, that so earnest was he to establish his own example, that he there refers to it three times repeated, and likewise in divers other parts of his writings and labours, saying, “It were better  
 “die than make it void”—see 1 *Cor.* ix. 15. 18.—but he nowhere directs it to be handed down to posterity by tradition, or mere word of mouth only, nay, but as if through the spirit of prophecy he would overturn such a construction, he concludes the whole, by reminding them of his “own hand writing, as a token  
 “in every epistle.”

Therefore, doth not these things fully demonstrate this lamentable fact, even that while the priests have been teaching

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the people to rely implicitly on their traditions, and to look no further, they themselves have walked over both their own traditions and Scripture too, and over the most powerful ministry of the Apostles altogether? insomuch, that wherein soever their own gain or preeminence have been concerned, is it not plain as the paper before our face, that nothing would hold them to the truth? and so I leave the simple-hearted impartial reader to judge, whether this narrative doth not too plainly illustrate that deplorable fact? or how else (with the Apostles rebuke before their face,) could they go about idle and work not at all, but teach for hire and divine for money; yea, and look every one for gain from his quarter, while yet such ways are condemned through the ancient Prophets also, even by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah, &c.?

I have enlarged on the above beyond what I had in prospect; because I thought right to draw the reader's attention to the real subject of the text; seeing that *J. M.* sets it forth as if the Apostles design was merely to establish his oral tradition; but whether he had a double end in his detached reference to tradition, I shall leave? that is to say, whether he designed to refer to a thing which the text could not mean, and also to draw away the reader's attention from the real weight of the passage, which falls so heavily upon all idle priests, who live upon the people? I leave the reader to judge, while yet I really pity the man, that could affect such an air of solemnity, in order to make that barefaced attempt to play the fool with the Sacred Text, I forbear to say worse.

And now to conclude this undesirable topic of oral tradition, I would again ask, was there ever devised a more treacherous source of dependance whereupon to stake the issues of eternity? could any device be more fatally calculated to dissipate the mind and attention from the solemn importance testified in Scripture, of the sure word of prophecy, which agrees with the words of Scripture, even of the gospel covenant, and law written in the heart, and the spirit in the inward parts, yea, of his spirit wherein alone is forgiveness of iniquities and transgressions?—see *Heb. x.* and *1 John.* But tradition, against which our Saviour testified, is fatally formed to beguile and bewilder the mind, and to toss it about with every wind of doctrine, even in the great sea of the unregenerate world; wherein men desire to

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be in bondage to the beggarly elements and rudiments thereof; yea, even while we daily see the fashion of this world changing and passing away, and uncertainty inscribed upon all that appertains thereto, even as it is upon every child of old Adam in the fall, with all their traditions.

And moreover, he that turns to the page of history, need not look far to behold what a world of commotion, contention, and divisions have been excited throughout Christendom among the bishops in past ages; even unto blood, about their traditions and other such like things, even pope against pope, council against council, nay, but nations and kingdoms divided against each other, until the fattest or strongest gained such a victory as to cause the others to yield. And now with all this before their face, is it not marvellous that men should attach infallible certainty to what has been handed down through such a medium for 1800 years, while yet even a small defect in either the memory, the integrity, or the capacity of the men through whom their tradition have been handed down, (by such word of mouth) should make it altogether false; and what is still worse than all the rest, is to uphold a thing that our Saviour hath utterly rejected as a medium of eternal dependance; and shall frail man presume to set up that which God hath thrown down? alas! was there ever a fouler slander cast upon the Christian religion, than to assert, that the certainty thereof depends upon so delusive a medium as that of oral tradition?

Nay, but should I not go still further if they could bear it, even to assert that tradition is a great abomination, when set up as the doctrine of the Kingdom of Christ, seeing that He himself utterly condemns it? therefore, is it not like setting up the defilement of a dead body, to have recourse to that which the Lord condemned? that which was written aforetime for our instruction, comes from men who were moved to give it forth by divine inspiration for that end; but tradition sets up an imitation of supposed practices of the saints of old, which however good in them, is not for us to mimic without the same power and spirit, lest we thereby make religion to consist in our own works, to the rejecting of the work and commandments of God; for if even the manna which was overheld but one day, bred worms and stank, how then should that which is subject to wax old and change, have any part in the Kingdom of Christ, who saith,



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“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly?” so then His doctrine appertains to life, even to that which changes his heart and redeems the soul; therefore, if my limit would admit, I might fully demonstrate, that the gospel is of light, life, certainty, and salvation, but tradition tends to death, darkness, doubting, and destruction; but to the wise who do the truth, a word is sufficient; while yet he that would rely upon tradition could never be persuaded so long as he chose to be so deceived.

## SECTION XIII.

*The Sacrifice of the New Law, which J. M. saith is the Holy Mass—and of Transubstantiation—letter xl. page 70 to 79.—See also letter xx. page 55, and letter xxxvi. and xxxvii. &c.*

**I** NEED not have noticed *J. Milner's* treatise on the Sacrifice of the New Law (which he calls the Holy Mass, or Transubstantiation, having already touched upon it in treating of his means of sanctity) only that I deem it right to glance at it a little, apart by itself; just to notice the gross absurdity of calling any thing new, that should wax old and vanish away; and moreover, all that appertains to his sacrifice, being of man's device, is therefore one in its nature with the oldest and most fading things upon the face of the earth, and of course it is a most profound cheat to call it the New Law.

And seeing that he sets it forth as the law or covenant that God makes with his people through Christ; is it not therefore a blasphemous assertion, to say, that the gospel covenant amounted to nothing more than his Mass? Alas! could he possibly invent an assertion more calculated to blast the fame of that blessed and unspeakable grace, glory, and gospel fullness, which came by Jesus Christ, than to hold forth to the world, that the whole business and fullness thereof amounted to nothing further than that? Now mark, he calls it the New Law, even as the whole glory and fullness of the gospel is designated by the term (law,) when applied thereto, according to divers parts of Scripture; even as the Apostle saith, "The law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ makes free from the law of sin and death;"—*Roms. xiii. 2.*—That is the end and effect of the New Law, as I shall further prove hereafter; and now I would ask *J. M.* is his Mass able to make the retainer thereof free from the law of sin and death? and as the Scripture saith, "That love is the fulfilling of the law, and he that loveth hath fulfilled the law."—*Roms. xiii. 8. 9. 10.*—and our Saviour saith, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you," &c., "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—*John xiii.*

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34. 35.—So they are commanded to love as he loved them, how is that? Is not his love in the Spirit, to which we are called, and therein all is fulfilled?

I am aware that the renowned rabbies of the times (who make a trade of the gospel, and get great fame in the world thereby) would stare at this, as a poor pitiful fragment that should need the devices of their handy work to make it famous; and no marvel that they should think so, while they are ignorant of the height and depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; which comprehends all the fullness of God according to *Ephes.*—iii. 16. 17. 18. 19. &c. which is hid from the wise and prudent of this world, that neither the wise scribe nor the serpent can add any thing thereto, though they may spoil the people through philosophy and vain deceit, even to beguile them of their inheritance therein, but the love or spirit of Christ, which is the New Law, is above them all, and that is the law that is given forth by the mouth of the very lawgiver himself; and testified by his Apostles; I may therefore ask him, doth love constitute his whole mass? and does love fulfil the whole law thereof? or doth his mass enable men to love their enemies; nay but doth not he, by setting up a ceremony, and calling that the New Law, thereby declare that he neither believes the sayings, nor heeds the law of Christ or his Apostles, neither knows what it is? for Jesus calls it the New Commandment, whereby all men should know his people; and saith that fulfils the whole law; and so saith his Apostles, and not one jot or tittle about Mass or carnal ordinance to be tied thereto; yet *J. M.* sets up his ceremony, and calls it “the Sacrifice of the New Law;” now is not that to make the Commandment of God of nought effect by his tradition to a witness?

And yet the very reason which he assigns for the necessity of such a sacrifice, is not less absurd, wherein he saith in *letter xl. page 71.* “When the nations of the earth changed the glory  
“of the incorruptible God unto the likeness of the image of  
“corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts—*Rom.*  
“i. 23.—they continued the rite of sacrifice, and transferred it  
“to these unworthy objects of their idolatry. From the whole of  
“this I infer, that it would have been truly surprising, if under  
“the most perfect dispensation of God’s benefits to men, the



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“New Law, he had left them destitute of sacrifice; but he has  
 “not so left them; on the contrary, that prophecy of *Malachy*  
 “is evidently verified in the Catholic Church, spread as it is  
 “over the surface of the earth; from the rising of the sun, even  
 “to the going down thereof, my name is great among the Gen-  
 “tiles; and, in every place, there is sacrifice; and there is  
 “offered to my name a clean ablution.”

Alas! was ever such reasons heard of for the necessity of a legal carnal sacrifice in the Kingdom of Christ, as that, because the like had been set up and performed by all the nations of the earth, it should therefore, “Be truly surprising, if under the  
 “most perfect dispensation of God’s benefits to men, the New  
 “Law, he had left them destitute of sacrifice?”—page 71.—Nay, but is not that a striking reason why all such devices and systems should be ended and abolished? yea, and not so much as named in the Kingdom of Christ, according to *Zef. i.* chapter? Alas! has he quite forgot, that all such sacrifices were set up in the death and fall of old Adam? or doth he not believe the word of the Lord, which saith to Adam, in the day he eat of the tree of knowledge he should surely die? And doth he not believe that Christ should restore all that was lost in old Adam, and redeem lost man out of the death, darkness, and enmity, wherein all the sons of Adam in the fall were comprehended? yea, wherein there was no end of sinning and sacrificing? and did not Christ Jesus, the Lord from Heaven, the quickning spirit, come to put an end to such sinning and sacrificings, wherein men were alike held captive? yea, he ascended up on high and led captivity captive (and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel) having abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, yea, even “Blotting  
 “out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, and  
 “contrary to us”—*Col. ii. 14.*—Mark then, the very ordinances of the law (which perish all with the using), were contrary to the gospel state; seeing that Christ hath taken them out of the way and triumphed over them, and over the upholders of them all; even making a shew of them openly upon the cross, according to *ii. chapter of Ephs.* and *ii. of Col.* mark then, the enmity and the ordinances are there classed together.—See *Ephs. ii. 15.*

And yet, doth not *J. M.* say, that it would “Be truly surprising” if we should not imitate even the rudiments and ordi-

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nances which were corrupted and an abomination in the very origin, nay, he even instances Cain's mode of sacrifice along with the rest, as an example, as if he did not believe that the mediator of the new covenant, had "by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified"—*Hebs.* x. 14. and that was a heavenly offering, even the offering of boundless love, yea, the offering of himself, his precious life, whereby he giveth life unto the world; and that is the order of the sacrifice he now requires of us, (according to our measure) even that as he so loved the world, as to become obedient to the death of the cross for our sake, so should we, by a measure of the like love in return, be obedient unto him in all things, and not to please ourselves; even as he pleased not himself—see *Phil.* ii. and herein is love, and love is the fulfilling of law; and that is the new commandment, or heavenly law which he hath set up, even the law of God, for God is love; and and that is the gospel law written in the heart, even his spirit, which is love.

Hence it must follow, that whoever sets up any outward sacrifice (which perish with the using) and calls that the New Law, thereby denies the blessed end and effects of Christ's coming and sacrifice altogether; and as to his quoting *Malachi* i. 11. which he often repeats, in order to prove that the sacrifice of the mass is there confirmed; yet doth not that passage rather tend to overthrow and set at naught such a sacrifice? especially wherein the Prophet lays such weight upon that the name of the Lord should be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense should be offered to his name and a pure offering, now who could be so light, vain, and carnal, as even to suppose that all that referred to nothing further than the Mass? could any one devise a more gross private interpretation of the text? nay, is not the letter itself at variance with such a carnal notion? even wherein it saith, his name should be great, and in every place incense should be offered, &c. Now who would say that the greatness of the Lord's name consisted in that of the Mass? or that it is offered up in every place, all the day long? seeing that (even in that sense) it is only performed in particular places, at stated times or the like.

But is not the name of the Lord (in the sense of Scripture) his life, power, and virtue, which the true believer prizes above all things? yea, it is called a strong tower whereto the righteous runneth and are safe; and through this his name or power, and

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virtue, they offer unto Him continually, the aspiration of gratitude, praise, and prayer, with the resignation of the will, as sweet incense; not barely once or twice a day in particular places like Mass, (and the old sacrifices of the nations,) but in every place, their very breathing is an offering.

And that is the Sacrifice of the New Law, even the law of the spirit. as he saith, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, "when I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel," &c. "Not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers," &c. "For this is the covenant that I will make with them after these days saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," "For I will forgive their iniquities," "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin"—read *Jer.* xxxi.—*Hebrews* viii. and x. chapters, which are too long for me to quote; there ye may see the new covenant, even the new law; and the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit, and such he would not despise—*Psal.* li. 17.—and again, thus saith the Lord, "The Heaven is my throne," &c., "but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word;"—see *Isaiah* lxvi. and is not that the sacrifice foretold by *Malachi*? even the pure offering, or clean oblation, which should not be unclean or impure, seeing such could only be offered by the heart prepared of the Lord, who inclineth the offerer to put it forth, which is his own gift, who alone is the giver of every good and perfect gift; nay, it is no sacrifice only so far as it is pure; and what if many of the poorest souls who are held in bondage to *Milner's* beggarly elements, yet offer up a far more acceptable sacrifice than his mass? if under a true sense of their wretchedness and need of a Saviour, they commit their souls to the searcher of hearts? but all the sacrifices or devices which are the work of mens' hands, are abomination under the gospel; which I might abundantly prove from Scripture if my limits would allow; but that needs no proof, seeing the gospel is a perfect dispensation, wherein even the very breathing of the least child thereof should be pure, being provided by the Father of mercies, who provides the offering.

But every institution which is under the dominion of man, is imperfect, as saith the Scripture; nay, the very best of them (even though ordained by divine appointment for peculiar pur-



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poses in their season) are yet called weak and beggarly elements in comparison of the gospel.—See *Gal.* iii. iv. and v. chapters—and if the rites and ceremonies which were of divine institution in their season, are yet called “Weak and beggarly elements” and rudiments of the world;” what shall we say then to that which God never commanded, nor instructed any man in the performance? even as we may ask, who first instructed the priest in the elements of the mass? yet behold how the very sacrifice which the Lord commanded, (even as a type of the one blessed offering) was so wofully perverted as to become the greatest abomination of the times, even as we may read in *Isaiah* lvi. saying, “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines’ blood, he that burneth incense as if he blessed an idol; yea, they have chosen their own ways,” &c., “I also will chuse their delusions,” &c.—Now although I am aware that this may apply to every irreverend or presumptuous address to the Almighty, under any name, profession, or form of religion whatsoever; yet if it was such a horrible abomination, for an unrighteous priest to offer sacrifice under the law which made nothing perfect—*Hebs.* vii. 19.—how much more abominable then, would it be for such to take on to offer sacrifice for the people under the gospel? and who could say but such might take on to make masses, and thereby commit still greater abominations under a profession of the gospel than even that which was done by the apostate Jews? would it be any marvel then, if God should send them strong delusions indeed?

And furthermore, what if the very mass itself might prove an abomination, if set up and held forth as the New Law, or gospel covenant, which the Lord ordained to be set before the face of all people? seeing that both the Old and New Testament declares, that Christ should be given as a covenant to the people, even for their sanctification and redemption, and he saith, “That which goeth into the mouth defileth not a man, because it entereth not into the heart, but is cast forth into the draught;” so neither can that which is taken in at the mouth sanctify the heart, which is the seat of defilement; neither can mortal eating or drinking nourish up the immortal soul unto eternal life; but I must forbear lest I should exceed my limits, the wise in heart

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may take the hint, let it then suffice to say, that He is the living bread which cometh down from Heaven, where the new wine is drank in the Kingdom of the Father; and that is the bread and wine, that never can wax old nor corrupt or decay; but mark, the new wine must be put into new bottles; can ye read this, ye that are wise in your own eyes? nay verily, it is foolishness to all that say it can be taken in at the mouth, which must be cast forth into the draught; but David saith, “The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul; and the Law of his God is in his heart none of his steps shall slide”—*Psalms* xix. 7. and xxxvii. 31. is not that referring to the New Law, which is new every morning, which the Lord would put into the heart and mind, yea, even his Spirit in the inward parts, and so he would be their God, and they should be his people? and they need not any man to offer sacrifice for them, “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” so that they should know him from the least to the greatest of them, whose transgressions he would blot out according to *Isaiah* liv. 13.—*Jer.* xxxi. 32. 33. 34.—*John* vi. 45.—*Heb.* viii. 10. 11.—i. *John* ii. 27, &c.

There we may see the Heavenly order of the gospel, that is every one to know the Lord for themselves, and there is the true distinction; even that it is only so far as they know him that way, that they can be his people, for all the Lord's children are taught of the Lord.—*Isaiah* liv. 13.—while they that only know Him through the medium of men or books, worship an unknown God at best, and such are in danger of sacrificing to devils, and to divers lusts, but the believer, who receives his testimony, and hath the witness in himself, can set to his seal that God is true, and so worships the true and living God, by whom he is enabled to offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit, unto his great name, which are the sacrifices of God under the New Covenant, even the gospel worship, in spirit and in truth, which Christ set up over all the worships in the world—see *John* iv. 23. 24. And therein is perfection, seeing that if it be not a pure offering, it is rejected, and the deceiver will feel condemnation in himself; neither can he impose that sacrifice upon his neighbour, but must bear his own judgment; while yet the least babe that breaths after a true sense of contrition and remission of sins, hath a sacrifice presented as a pure offering,

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even by Him whose yoke is easy and his burthen light.

Yet behold how *J. M.* labours to betray his readers into a belief, that the Mass had been a sacrifice offered by Christians down from the Apostles' time "Until Satan persuaded Martin Luther to attempt to abrogate it," &c.\*—Yet we do not find

\* *J. M.* often repeats, that a "Long conference with the Devil at midnight, convinced M. L. that the worship of the Mass was idolatry;" and thus he labours to persuade people, that Luther himself avowed that the Devil was his instructor; but if any chose to take his word, I must leave him and them to go together; howbeit I may remark by the way, that whoever he be, that knows nothing of a conflict with the Devil, must needs be ignorant of the truth which the Devil is out of, and such are taken captive by him at his will.

Now, although it is not for me to advocate M. Luther, yet I may speak the more freely of him, seeing that I do not fully concur with all his measures; nevertheless I am not thereby induced the more lightly to esteem him, for although I have read but little about him, except in quotations, designed to slander his character, yet even through such a medium, his worth may be viewed beyond many who profess his principles; nay, I have sometimes deplored, that many who are called ministers of the reformed religion, do not even understand his speech, which I might prove in divers instances, wherein his language was more adapted to the state of the people he addressed, than to define religious tenets; but as I aim at brevity, I may only notice this one subject, whereby many have assayed to hold him forth as an object of ridicule; I mean that which he often repeats of his having a conflict with the Devil; from which short intimation, the tried believer may derive more instruction, than from whole volumes of brain-beating stuff, even though never such fine spun theory.

We read in Scripture, that "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation"—*James* i. 12.—Nay, do we not read, that even our Saviour "Was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—*Hebs.* iv. 15.—Is not this then the lot of every true believer (according to his measure) even to have to war against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to beware of his wiles, but above all, to beware of assaying to perform religious duties at his instigation, lest thereby we partake of the table of devils, if so be that we worship an unknown God? and how should they do otherwise, who know not what they worship? but as this would exceed the limits of a note, let me only repeat, that I have often deplored to observe how little, even of Luther's sayings, many of his successors can understand at this day, nay, even while they think that they have carried the Reformation much further than he had seen, and given it a more orderly dress, yet is it not to be feared, that many of them are still far behind him, nay, are they not even labouring to uphold that lordly order of degrees of mastership and rabbiship of bishops, to exercise dominion and lordship like the heathen, which our Saviour saith we unto, and which Luther laboured to pull down? yea, insomuch that therein



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such a sacrifice as that of the mass, even once named by the apostles, nor in the New Testament, nay I challenge him to shew if he be able, where did ever the Apostles set forth such a sacrifice, (either by example or precept) as he sets forth the mass, for the sins of the people, both the living and the dead; or let him prove if he can, that ever they took one penny for anything like it, yet doth not *J. M.* fully admit, that his priests did it for pay (like a trade) wherein he boasts that they had performed it in dungeons where no pay could be had by the priesthood *letter xl. page 78.* but I deem that to be so base a part of the subject, that I shall pass it over in this place, not finding language adequate to set forth the iniquity of such traffic; howbeit, I may have occasion to notice it hereafter, and may just remark by the way, that we find none among the Apostles who attempted to drive a money bargain on the score of religion, or to make a gain thereof, except Judas, or Simon the sorcerer.

And as to his pointing at Luther, as the chief agent under Satan, (as he saith,) "Who attempted to abrogate the Mass," how could he be ignorant, that in every age, since the Mass was named, there has been numerous bodies of professed Christians who testified against it? nay, even the Albigenses and Waldenses held "That Masses were impious," which testimony they bore in the face of persecution, torture, and death; hundreds of years before the days of Luther, and their numbers

he appears to have been made a blessing even to some of the Pope's people, though they know it not; even though he was marvellously formed to pull down that which was set up as a grievous stumbling-block of iniquity, to cause the feeble to stumble, nay, he appears to have been clad with zeal as with a garment, and through all that I have seen respecting him, there appears to run that candour and frankness, which should carry a rebuke to the subtle, sneaking, lukewarm, double-minded professor; which candour and frankness appeared so conspicuous in him, as amply to atone for many blunders; howbeit I am persuaded, that his bold honest way of expression, has caused many who were strangers to the depth of his exercise, to attribute his blunders to the effect of rashness, yet if he did make blunders, they appear rather the effect of over much caution, than of rashness; and now let the reader think of me as he please, I freely assert, that I am far from esteeming Luther as a heady rash character, nay, but I esteem him as a man of a cautious vigilant turn of mind; yet after all, whatever, he may have been, as an instrument, we should bear in mind, that no man can promote the Reformation, only so far as the Lord is pleased to make him useful.

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were considerable, even according to *Milner's* own statement, they appeared so numerous that all the Monarchs of Christendom were called together in Council, in order to exterminate them—*letter* xlix. page 168, 169—and although the numerous bodies of Dissenters, (who for ages disclaimed the Mass,) had been as a people killed all the day long, and not only their writings were carefully destroyed, but even such as should harbour them condemned to death; yet all that will not make them nobody before M. Luther; and moreover, how many even of the Pope's own bishops demurred sorely against the Mass; only look at the time of Berengarius! what an outcry they raised against their transubstantiation, even so far, that they called divers Councils before they could suppress the real sentiment of their own people, which was only borne down by the overgrown arm of ecclesiastical dominion; how comes it then that he should only point at Luther, and not notice the millions that disclaimed the Mass even ages before his time? How could he think to betray his readers into such a notion, as that Martin Luther's testimony against the Mass, was then a mere novelty?

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OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Although *J. M.* has written a treatise under the head of Transubstantiation, I shall pass that over with a very few remarks, it being only a repetition of the mass and real presence, &c., which is fully answered in what is gone before; and as to the outcry he makes against those he calls adversaries, because they charge his priesthood with idolatry, in asserting that "Christ is really and personally present in the sacrament, true God as well as man," nay, he saith—*letter* xxxvi. page 40, 42.—"They are perfectly aware, that we firmly believe, as an article of faith, that there is no bread nor wine, but Christ alone, true God, as well as man, present in it," and he calls them adversaries who opposeth that belief; but should he not rather count them his friends, who call upon him to consider the validity thereof? howbeit I have never read those authors he complains of, yet I may just remind him of the challenge he so often repeats, for those he calls new sects to prove their religion by miracles; I say then, that he himself should rather be called

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upon to prove this monstrous novelty that way, and at least to shew us that he can make a man, before he requires us to believe that he is able to make a God; and whereas he saith, "Suppose that we are mistaken in this belief, the worst we could be charged with is an error, in supposing Christ to be where he is not; and nothing but uncharitable calumny," &c., "could accuse us of the heinous crime of idolatry"—*letter xxxvi. page 40.*—Behold then how mighty cheap he can make an error on his own side, while he pretends to be shocked at the name of idolatry, als! poor man, has he quite forgot the vast numbers that his bishops condemned to death for not believing that Christ was in his sacrament? yet can see nothing uncharitable in all that, while he holds that they cannot err!!! And was it not the very root and ground of all idolatry, wherein men believed that God was in their images, while yet he was not in them.

But why should our Saviour warn his Disciples to beware of false Christs (as we read in *Matthew xxiv. 24.* and *Mark xiii. 22.*) if they themselves should be able to make Christ as often as they please? Nay, for my part, were I to conceive such a gross carnal notion of the King immortal, as that he could be created by a sinful priest; I should then be an unbeliever in the divinity of Jesus Christ, seeing there is no divinity in a thing that is made by corruptible man; and seeing there is but one Christ, one God; was I to believe in the numberless Christs which the priests doth make, should I not then be an unbeliever in Jesus of Nazareth, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write? Nay, were I to believe in other Christs besides Him, I should not then believe what the Lord saith of himself, even "That the Lord he is God, there is none else besides Him."—See *Deut. iv. 35.*—*i. Kings viii. 60.*—*Isaiah xlv. 8.* and *xlvi. 5. 6. 14. 18. 22.* and *xlvi. 9.*—*Mark xii. 29.*—And seeing we read in *Mark xii. 33.* that "To love God above all and his neighbour as himself is more than all offerings and sacrifices," who is he then that would compare the sacrifice of his Mass to the love of God? Nay, who could call a man a believer in Christ, who did not believe the commandments, seeing our Saviour refers to the commandments, and especially to the first, saying—"Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God."—*Mark xii. 29. 30.*—And doth not that commandment say, thou shalt not make unto thee any like-



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ness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, &c., and now seeing Christ is in Heaven, who is he then that dare attempt to make his likeness? as *J. M.* saith—"Christ alone, true God, as well as Man," made by his Transubstantiation.—See *letter xxxvi. page 40.*

## SECTION XIV.

*Of the Adoration of Relics and Images; and of the Invocation of Saints.—Letter xxxiv. page 24 to 33 inclusive, also letter xxxiii. page 14 to 24 inclusive.*

I SHALL in the first place advert to what *J. M.* saith of the adoration of Relics and Images, which he sets forth as a kind of religious science, yea even as an art not less curious than subtil and intricate; yet so inexplicable that I rather refer the reader to his own words to see what he can make out of it; doth he not say that they do not make Images, but they make them, &c.? I say I leave the reader to see if he can make any thing else of it, by comparing *letter xxxiv. page 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, &c.*

He complains loudly of those authors who have charged them with idolatry in the exercise of the relative honour which they pay to such things; but as I do not remember ever to have read even one of those authors he mentions, I may therefore make a few remarks on his own assertions as they stand in his book, seeing that therein I am no man's copy.

And first, as to the distinction which he affects to make between relative honour and idolatry, I would ask, where is the mind that could accurately reduce such distinction to practice, without being liable to gross error? nay, would not a poor man be far more likely to be drawn into gross error (even under the wisest of teachers) in that which he could not comprehend, or even command his own devotion, than by reading the Bible without comment, which he asserts to be so deadly dangerous? and moreover when we reflect, that even covetousness (or any thing whatsoever that engrosses the mind and affections) is idolatry, and that all nations and ages of the world have been prone to idolatry, even as the sparks fly upwards; and furthermore, might not the rise, and origin, of all the idolatry that ever was in the world, be traced to that same source of relative honour, which he labours to defend?

Is it then a light thing to throw stumbling-blocks in the way of such as are prone to stumble, while we should yet further reflect, that any thing becomes sinful so far as it ingrosses the mind, or draws it forth from the one adorable object, who is only, to

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be worshiped in spirit and in truth? and then, let that thing appear never so harmless, or suitable, in the carnal view of mortals, yet if the mind be drawn out thereby, as may be the case in even conning or measuring degrees of relative honour; doth not that then become a stumbling-block of iniquity, even to cause the sleeper to sleep the sleep of death, and the blind sinner to fall into the ditch of carnal ease and self-security? seeing how much more grateful it is to the carnal mind, to be exercised in the observance of exterior objects, then to take up his cross and deny self, so as to have every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, which should lay the axe to the corrupt root, even to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts; yea, even to crucify the deceitful affections which may be pleased with outside shew, and even say Hosannah thereto, while by dead works they crucify the precious life; can the wise scribe read this?

Alas! how much more grateful is it to the world, the flesh, and the devil, to avoid all that heart-searching work by any means; nay, even by only doating after crosses of wood, stone, silver, or gold, or any imitation or bodily exercise whatever? but how should they that doat after such things, ever know the Cross of Christ to be the power of God unto salvation? the like may be said of all Images and Image-worshippers whatsoever; they that have the love of God shed abroad in the heart by his good spirit, should be disgusted rather than edified, by seeing the likeness of an old man or a little boy, set up to represent God and our Saviour; and whereas he saith, that he "Would rather part with most of the books in his library than with his Image;" I have nothing to say to all that, further than if his books be of no more weight than the Image, they might all go together.

Yet he affects to deny that his Church would allow such pictures of God to be made, but (saith he,) "Certain painters indeed have represented him so, as in fact he was pleased to appear so to some of the Prophets Isaiah and Daniel, but the Council of Trent says nothing of that representation; which after all is not so common as a triangle among Protestants to represent the Trinity;" then he saith, that "To maintain that the divine nature resembles the human form, is anthropomorphic heretic"—*letter xxxiv. page 30.* But I must leave the reader to judge whether by such language he means to assert



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or deny Images; for my part, I could as easily prove that yes and no means the same thing, as to understand the meaning of such jargon, is it not worse than Babel, confusion?

Yet he saith, the Council of Trent says, "The Images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and the other Saints, are to be kept and retained, particularly in the Churches, and due honour and veneration is to be paid to them," &c.—and then he takes on to defend Image worship, by citing the case of Joshua falling on his face before the Ark of the Lord, which he saith was only a chest of settim wood, containing, &c. with images of cherubims, as a memorial of God's mercy—see page 27, 28.

Could any one suppose that a man who sets forth such reasons for Image worship, had ever read the New Testament? seeing that the Ark and the mercy seat, with all that appertained to the punctualities and rituals of the Old Law, were types and figures of the good things that are fulfilled in Christ, the substance, who hath fulfilled and ended them all, so far as respects their outward signification and duration, and hath set up His Heavenly Spiritual Kingdom in the room thereof; insomuch, that even to acknowledge or imitate the typical institution of them at this day, would be to deny the coming of Christ altogether, as is clearly illustrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews; only look at *Heb. ix. 8.*

And moreover I might ask him (if he thinks there can be the least analogy between his Images and the Ark;) who gave him and his brother priests the same instructions and authority to set up Images under the gospel, as was given to Moses to set up the outward tabernacle of witness in the wilderness? nay, but if he understood Moses or had unity with what he set up, he could not, nor dare not now make any likeness or imitation thereof, no more than he could make to himself any image or likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in Earth beneath, &c.—*Exod. xx. 3. 4.* And as to the Relics and Images of Saints, which he recommends, alas! who could run a doating after the like, but such as are sadly destitute of any true sense of the blessed communion of Saints in spirit?

And as to the palliation he sets forth as a justification of his Church in the business of Images, saying, the established Church doth as much as they, in kneeling to the Sacrament, and to the king and his chair, and setting up a triangle for the Trinity; and

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that now “ Common sense has regained its rights so as to see the  
 “ cross exalted at the top of its principal church Saint Paul’s,  
 “ which is also ornamented all round, with the statues of Saints;  
 “ most of the cathedrals now contain pictures, and some of them  
 “ carved Images” *page 27*, but pray how far doth all that tend  
 to justify the priest’s use of Images? nay, doth it not rather  
 condemn them? seeing how wofully they have caused others  
 also to stumble, inasmuch as the established church must have  
 got all that from the example of the popes; seeing they could  
 never find the like in the Testament, nay nor even a shadow of  
 precept or example from the Apostles, to retain such heathenish  
 fragments.

We must need set down Images and Relics to the account of  
 the popes and bishops; seeing how hard they fought to set them  
 up among their people, which they did not accomplish until the  
 seventh or eighth century, wherein they resorted to such nefari-  
 ous measures to set up Images, that it is marvellous that very  
 shame did not restrain *J. M.* from once naming Coprominus (in  
 this blood-stained history of Images,) whom yet he calls a per-  
 secutor, because he took part with the people against the popes’  
 and bishops’ rage for Images, who fought so furiously for them,  
 as even to stir up rebellion against any monarch that opposed  
 the setting up of Images, and so they upheld such kings as  
 would fight for them, as if they would go through thick and  
 thin to erect something in the room of the old pagan Roman  
 idols. Alas! could there be a greater scandal to the Christian  
 religion, than the very history of the deceit, sedition, rebellion,  
 bloodshed, and idolatry, of those times wherein Images were  
 set up in Christendom?

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### OF THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

*See Letter xxxiii. page 14 to 24 inclusive.*

Although *J. M.* strenuously asserts the worship and invocation  
 of Angels (as in *letter xxxiii.*) yet I shall not follow him therein,  
 seeing the gross absurdity thereof will easily appear, as may be  
 seen by the following texts of Scripture, with many others of like  
 import; not to mention the delusive consequence thereof, which  
 should betray into the worship of many unknown Gods, seeing  
 that to invoke and to worship is the same thing, yet he asserts

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both.—Look then at i. *Cors.* vi. 3. and xiii. 1.—and *Cols.* ii. 18.—and *Hebs.* i. 4. 5. 7.—and *Hebs.* ii. 5. 16.—and i. *Peter* i. 12. and iii. 22.—and ii. *Peter* ii. 4.—and *Jude* vi.—and *Revs.* i. ii. iii. chapters—and xxii. 18.

**I** may but slightly notice what *J. M.* calls the Invocation of Saints, as I need say little thereto; seeing that it is much of a piece with what is gone before; yet I may just advert to the advice which he gives to Saul in trouble, that laments his prayers to God are not heard; to such he saith, in addition to praying to him with fervour, “Why not engage his friends and courtiers to add the weight of their prayers” he means to invoke the Saints, as he quotes, that “The Council of Trent saith in the face of the world, the Saints reigning with Christ, offer up their prayers to God for men; that it is good and needful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, help, and assistance,” &c. and he saith, “The catechism teacheth, that God and the Saints are not to be prayed to in the same manner.”—See *letter xxxiii. page 16, 23.*

Alas! what deplorable instruction is this, to teach the people unbelief in the mercy of God, and to transfer the main part of mercy to man? is not faith and hope on man’s part, the conditions of the gospel, even faith in God? but here the thief cometh for to steal and to destroy, nay, even to rob the poor soul of the most precious dispensation of his life, yea, to beguile and rob him of that which should open his way into all the blessings of the gospel, as clearly illustrated by our Saviour in the case of the publican, “Who could not so much as lift up his eyes to Heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”—*Luke x.* (mark how significant,) “He smote on his own breast, and cried for mercy; he was convicted in his own breast that he was a sinner against God and his purity, and he thus saw his case to be desperate indeed, he cried to God alone, as none else could help his condition; and thus we may see, that man’s extremity is the Lord’s opportunity; for he saith, that poor publican was justified rather than him that made the highest profession of morality and orthodoxy, and the most approved form of prayer.”

And thus we are admonished, that there is nothing so good as to trust in the Lord alone, even in the greatest extremity, under



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a thorough sense of our wants, not as taught by man, but by the Lord's conviction in our own breast; yea, that thorough sense of sin, and want of a Saviour, is the first step of the ladder whose top reacheth unto Heaven, and happy the soul that truly avails itself of that day of visitation; but what shall we say to the priest that would beguile and rob him of that pearl of great price, by despoiling him of the hope set before him, seeing that God alone should be his hope, even against hope? and that is the state which the Lord doth justify in the end, as there is a thorough reliance upon him alone, waiting his own time, even to bear the indignation because of sinning against him; yea, until thoroughly broken to pieces, and that is the state which the Lord bindeth up, and that can live before him—see *Hosea vi.*

But the thief cometh for to steal, and to rob the poor soul of that unspeakable gift of a thorough reliance on God alone, and so teacheth him to divide his confidence between the Lord and those he calls his courtiers, or rather they know not what, and so would beguile him to slip out of the conflict before the work of repentance be accomplished, which man is naturally prone to do; and that makes the priest tenfold more guilty, seeing how prone the natural mind is to seek for ease, and turn aside from conviction, when he feels it to be quick and powerful, and so his own propensity, with the world, the flesh, and the devil, is often found to be an over match for him, to cause him to fall from faith and steadfastness, without the temptations of the priest; what shall we say then of *Milner's* Address to such as lament that their prayers to God are not heard? he saith; why not engage his friends and courtiers to add the weight of their prayers to your own, (that is to pray to the Saints,) Alas! is not that the way that God should never hear or answer our prayers, even to distrust Him, and apply to others with a blind divided sacrifice, while yet we can never be so sure that the Saints should hear our prayers, as the Lord himself, who regards and pities his creatures more than man or saint?

Where do we find precept or example in Scripture to call upon the Saints in our distress? nay, but what saith it, "Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is

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“from everlasting.” And again he saith, “The Heaven is my throue, and the Earth is my footstool;” &c. “But to this man will I look even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word”—read *Isaiah* lxiii. lxiv. lxv. lxvi. chapters throughout, there we may see that the very best of men or Saints, may overlook, or be ignorant of our condition; yea, what saith he, though a woman may forget her sucking child, so as to fall short of compassion, he saith “Yet will I not forget thee”? and to whom would he look, but “To the poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at his word?” and David saith, this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved out of all his troubles—*Psalm* xxxiv. 6.—read *Psalm* 107.

What meaneth then all this ado about Invocation of Saints, &c. which he labours to establish? is it not in order to draw the dependance of the people off from God, and to fix it upon man, even upon themselves? nay, is not the very upshot of all their prayers and adoration of Saints, to keep the people a doating after the men of his own order, which he saith are the heirs and successors of the Saints and Apostles, even in one unbroken chain of succession? witness his classing in those he calls “Bright ornaments of the latter ages in his Church,” as the Bernard’s, Xavier’s, the Terresa’s, the Sale’s, which are to be invoked alike with all such members of his Church?—see *letter* xxxii. page 23. But is not the upshot of all this, to draw forth the people to adore themselves, who pretend to be the successors of those they adore and invoke? seeing that it follows as an undeniable consequence, that if peculiar honours and homage should be paid to any king or potentate, &c. after death, for the sake of the throne or dignity which he possessed while living? surely then his heirs and successors, while alive and sitting on said throne, must needs command still greater honour and obeisance than their predecessors who are dead already.

## SECTION XV.

*Reflections on the Doctrine of Indulgences.—And of Absolution from Sin.—Letter xlii. page 94 to 104 inclusive.*

**W**ITH regard to the doctrine of Indulgences as held forth by *J. M.* whether it be science falsely so called, or juggling, or worse, I leave the reader to determine.

He saith, “Whereas the Council of Trent calls Indulgences “heavenly treasures, we hold that it would be a sacrilegious “crime, to be concerned in buying or selling them; I am far, “however, from denying that Indulgences have ever been sold, “alas! what is so sacred that the avarice of men has not put up to “sale! Christ himself was sold, and that by an Apostle, for “thirty pieces of silver.”—See *letter xliii. page 98*—now what doth all this amount to? does he mean, that some of his clergy had notoriously practised a crime comparable to that of selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver, though he saith, “The Catholic Church, has used her utmost pains, particularly in general “Councils, to prevent it.”—*Ibid?*

I would ask then, was there ever another Church upon the face of the earth, that found occasion to “Take the utmost pains “to prevent the sale of Indulgences?” and was there ever a more idle set off than that he offers as a balance for the whole amount? wherein he saith, “I do not retort upon you, the advertisements I frequently see about buying and selling benefices with the cure of souls annexed to them in your Church,” (the Church of England,) was there ever yet a more idle salvo put forth, as a palliation for the sale of Indulgences, and cure of souls? alas! doth it not rather blacken the crime yet more and more? for, from whence hath the Church of England either example or precept to make merchandize of benefices and cure of souls? surely they took all that from popes and bishops, seeing they could never find the like in the New Testament; insomuch that their driving the same trade, is so far from a justification of his priests, that it rather stands as a condemnation against them, neither has he made their case one whit the better by referring to the example of Judas, though he calls him an Apostle, for let him prove if he be able, that ever Judas was an Apostle after



*Reflections on Indulgences*

he sold his master, and had J. M. said the same of his priests or bishops, it would then be an answer easy to understand; and could he have said so, he need not play his magic, with say and unsay, that no one might know his meaning; I must say my very life abhors such language, and more especially on so solemn a subject, it reminds me of what people say of the black art, beyond any thing I ever heard.

He saith, "An Indulgence, is not, and does not include, the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, past, present, or to come, or the eternal punishment due to it, hence if the pardon of sin is mentioned in any Indulgence, this means no more, than the punishments annexed to such sin" &c.—page 96.—Does this mean that an Indulgence is some thing that amounts to nothing?

Yet he saith, "As Christ's promise to the successors of the Apostles is unlimited, the church believes, and teaches, that her jurisdiction extends to this sanctification, so as to be able to remit it wholly or partially"—page 100.—After that he saith "That no one can ever be sure that he has gained the entire benefit of an Indulgence, though he has performed all the conditions appointed for this end," &c., "and lastly, it is the received doctrine of the Church, that an Indulgence when truly granted, is not barely a relaxation of the canonical penance enjoined by the Church, but also an actual remission by God himself," &c., "the contrary opinion has been condemned by Leo X. and Pius VII.; and, indeed, without the effect here mentioned, Indulgences would not be heavenly treasures, but rather pernicious to Christians; contrary to two declarations of the last general Council."—*Letter xlii. page 101.*

Alas, alas! is it possible that more subtle or confused jargon could be uttered? to say, "That Indulgences should not be sold, yet they were sold; that they were heavenly treasures, yet an Indulgence does not include the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, &c., yet the Church had unlimited powers as successors of the Apostles, to remit it wholly or in part; and an Indulgence is the actual remission by God himself, without which they would not be heavenly treasures; yet no man can ever be sure that he has gained the entire benefit of an Indulgence, though he has performed all the conditions appointed for this

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“end ;” mark his words, *unlimited powers from Christ, yet no one can ever be sure.*

I should not have noticed so much of the subtlety lapped up in this contradictory jargon ; only in order to remind him of the awfulness of the subject whereupon he sports, as with his own deceptions ; which demonstrates this deplorable fact, that whoever say such things, must be woefully hardened, so as not even to know what sin is, nor the terrors that await it ; much less doth he know what repentance or the remission of sin meaneth ; and still less of the price of redemption therefrom ; which if he knew, even in a small measure, he could not, nor dare not play the fool therewith, and teach the people to do so too, as set forth herein to a witness ; yet he saith, “ The above explanation of an Indulgence ought to silence the objections, &c. of Protestants.”

And whereas he sets it forth as a justification, that the Protestant Churches hold the doctrine of Indulgences ; does he mean thereby, that two notorious sinners must needs make one saint ? nay, but (if they hold the like) his bishops should have the more to answer for setting up such a stumbling-block as still to cause others to stumble and fall into the ditch, seeing they could never have learned from the New Testament, that the greatest sinners of all, should derive unlimited powers from the Apostles, to sanctify and justify the lesser sinners ; and therefore, those Protestants which he saith take the Scriptures for their rule, should never have dared such presumption, had they not been emboldened therein by the example of the popes and their councils.

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### *ABSOLUTION FROM SIN.*

*See letter xli. page 79 to 93 inclusive.*

As I have had already occasion to notice what *J. M.* calls extreme unction, when treating of his means of sanctity, I shall (in this place) only advert to what he saith of confession as connected with his absolution from sin.

And whereas he asserts, that none but his church holds the true order of confession ; I would say on the contrary, that I know of no professed Christians but what hold the necessity of confession, except his own priests, who destroy the true order of Scripture confession altogether, wherein they teach, that it

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is only needful for the people to confess to the priests and not one to another, though the Scripture saith, "Confess your faults one to another"—*James* v. 16.—which clearly shews that the minister is as much bound to confess his faults to the people, as the people to him, unless they wilfully wrest or pervert the text; nay, even sound and righteous order should demand the like course; for, with what face could a preacher ask his hearers to do any thing, wherein he himself did not shew them an example? I know they may say that they also confess to other priests; but what is that to the people, from whom they extort the most trying act of man's life? I say extort, because they make the people tell them their secrets; yet the priest will not (or may not) tell them his own in return; is that confessing their faults one to another? or is it doing to all men in all things whatsoever they would have done to them according to Scripture?—*Mat.* vii. 12.

I am aware I may be told that the people love to have it so, in order to cloke up their filthiness in a covertly way.

Answer.—I know that the natural man loves deeds of darkness, and hates the light, but if the priests thus bear rule by their means, what will ye do in the end thereof? doth it not tend to a woful end indeed, wherein it destroys two of the most leading effects of the gospel day? first, to destroy that truth, honesty, and innocent candour, that should distinguish believers from infidels; and secondly, to beguile the people of their portion of religious exercise, whereby they should occupy with their talents, and the gifts given to every man, to profit withal, which according to gospel order, every individual is required to occupy with, and not fail on his peril.—And now if the priests should monopolize that very work which the people should do for themselves; is not that pretending to do a work which no man can do for another? nay, not even to save his brother, nor give to God a ransom for his soul; doth not the Scriptures bear abundant testimony to the equality of concern, and sympathy of feeling, that should exercise every member of the body, according to their respective measures? nay, is not the Apostle Paul a striking example, not only of confessing the frailty and infirmity of the flesh, but even requesting the prayers of those to whom he ministered the gospel of life and salvation, shewing that he was nothing only what he was through the spirit and grace of God?



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But how can *J. M.* reconcile his order of confession (and the power of his priests) with *Mat. xviii.* which he quotes so sternly, in order to prove his own to be the only true Church, when he put a construction upon the text which is not once mentioned therein? for there in *Mat. xviii. 15.*—our Lord saith, “If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,” (mark that, “between thee and him alone,” but not a tittle about a priest in the whole affair,) but if he do not acknowledge his fault, how shall the injured brother know that he heeded him at all? yet the priest will take quite a different course, and only require the transgressor to confess to himself, leaving the injured brother quite out of sight, except in the case of property or the like, some part may be returned in private, while all is wrapped up in utter darkness; yea, while the priest takes on to manufacture the whole business himself, and so offers a mock settlement to both parties, all in the dark, while the injured person may be mocked with a restitution from he knows not who, nor for what, nor in what proportion; while yet for divers reasons, he should rather than twenty times the amount, to be candidly informed of the whole fact, and the circumstances connected therewith; yet it cannot be so, if the priest covers up all in darkness, while yet the poor transgressor may be set at ease in his sins, even under the guilt which must lie upon him until he acknowledged his fault, which is the best restitution he can make to an injured brother, who only had a right to be told the whole truth, and then to forgive him, that trespassed against him; which should acquit the poor penitent, more than all the penance that could be heaped upon him; alas! what is it for me to injure another, and go tell the priest, nay, would my creditor be well used, were I even to tell him that I had paid his account to the priest, who might pay him or not as he chose.

But *J. M.* asserts thus, “I say that the priest, being vested by Christ with a judicial power to bind or to loose, to forgive or to retain sins, cannot exercise that power without taking cognizance of the cause on which he is to pronounce,” &c.—*letter xli. page 88*—and so he sets forth an explanation of causes to enable the priest to decide; such as regards the disposition of the sinner, &c., which he saith, “Can only be gained by the

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“penitent’s own confession.”—*Ibid.*\*

To all of which I need only answer, that it is much easier to know the disposition of a penitent, or the sins of a sinner, without ever being told them, than it would be to forgive them after the fullest confession; I say then, I deem this a clear and decided answer to his whole position; yet seeing men so mighty wise in their own eyes, and would be thought so by the world too; therefore for the sake of the simple-hearted, who desire to be in good earnest in a matter of such consequence, I shall offer a few further remarks thereupon.

Was there ever then a more delusive system (even in a case wherein the soul and our all is at stake,) than that confession and absolution from sin, set forth by *J. M.*? alas! is not that like the system of the Pharisee, who is described as having the most strict and punctual order of prayer, confession, and thanksgiving to God? even as one thankful for being so far preserved from sin; yea, there he is set forth as a masterpiece of the most perfect workmanship that ever man can effect in religion, nay, even beginning with, God, I thank thee that I am what I am, &c., even as one shewing forth the most profound humility, but what then, voluntary humility is self-exultation, seeing that all that is of man’s righteousness or unrighteousness are (alike) as filthy rags, yea, whether he confesseth, I have committed such and such sins, or saith, God, I thank thee for being so far preserved from sin; in all this the old evil nature may be saved alive, while the devil’s work-house can be kept in comely order by the help of a priest, who claims a presumptuous power to forgive sins, -wherein he has no part but what adds to his own sin, yet all that is mighty grateful to the heart of man, which is deceitful above all things; and therein man is exalted, even while he aims at profound humility, wherein we may behold, like people, like priest.

But gospel repentance and remission of sins is altogether another thing, as being the work of God, yea, even his own

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\* Even Nebuchadnezzar would not believe that the magicians could interpret his dream, but deemed their words lying and corrupt, unless they could first shew what the dream itself was; therefore, for very shame, cease to pretend that ye can forgive sins, until ye first shew that ye can reveal them to the sinner; otherwise, whoever should believe that ye could forgive sins, would be more sottish than even Nebuchadnezzar himself.

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unspeakable gift, as clearly illustrated in the case of the poor Publican, “Who would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner,”—*Luke* xviii. 13.—Thus we may see, when the soul is awakened to a thorough sense of sin, and the load thereof; it is not merely for sins he cries for mercy, but for a sinner, who feels as though his very plowing and praying were sin, yea, sees his whole nature to be sin, and a vessel of wrath *Ephs.* ii. 3.—Yea, and the heart deceitful above all things, and needs a thorough change; and that is the mercy he seeks, or he is undone for ever; yet that is the state which is justified, rather than the strictest orthodox that ever acted upon a stage of uniformity; but alas! would it not be mere mockery, for such an one (when he saw his lost condition) to run to a priest, and say, I have sinned in those divers sins, &c.? nay verily, if he be a gospel penitent, he never can tell his sins; for even that which is highly esteemed of men, will be seen to be an abomination in the sight of God; the true penitent can only say, I am a sinner in thought word and deed, yea, in every breath I draw, until God be merciful to me.

Objection.—But why may not people be true penitents, even while they go to the priest for help and absolution? doth not that rather prove them to be in good earnest?

Answer.—The conditions on man’s part, are faith and obedience to God, who saith, “trust in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not to thy own understanding;” there we may see, that faith in God is that whereby we are saved; yea, though we are saved by grace, yet it must be through faith, which is all the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast—see *Ephes.* ii. So it comes not by leaning on the understanding of man, neither our own nor that of any man, it is the gift of God, who saith, “Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils;” therefore, if there be breath in the priest’s nostrils, I must cease from him in that sense, lest he bring me into bondage to that law which is under the curse, seeing the Lord saith, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord”—read *Jer.* xvii.—and in proportion as we trust in man, or look to any arm of flesh for salvation, so far will the heart depart from the Lord, and from a



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patient bearing of his judgments because of sin, and that state can never overcome the corruptions of nature, nor endure unto the end of the heavenly race, but must assuredly fall, or turn to the right hand or to the left; nay, whether he might become the most orthodox libertine, or the most sleeked self-righteous Pharisee; his case is equally deplorable, (mark, by self-righteous, I mean any righteousness that is of man, even though he should appear never so humble,) but it is only such as keep the word of his patience, that shall be kept from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, according to *Rev. iii. 10.*

And moreover, the Apostles were sent to teach and to baptize the nations into a sense of the Lord's judgments; and so they did to purpose; insomuch that multitudes were pricked to the heart, and cried, what shall we do, and the Apostles (who knew what should be bound or loosed, remitted or retained,) warned them to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" mark then, they were directed to such repentance and baptism as should insure them the gift of the Holy Spirit; I say mark, he saith, "every one of you, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"—see *Acts ii.*—there we see, the people were not to stop short of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now ye that take on to give repentance and absolution as the Apostles' successors; can ye say to your converts as they did, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?" or will your baptism insure the gift of the Holy Ghost? if so, how comes it then that ye deride and scoff at those that profess such a gift? but I see this theme would exceed my limits in this place; I say then, the Apostles directed the people to him, who through their ministry had shewed them their sins; so in all their labours, they commended them to God and to the word of his grace—see *Acts xi. 23. and xiii. 43. and xx. 32.—Titus ii. 11.—1 Peter v. 10.*

But let *J. M.* shew if he able, where did ever the Apostles send people to a priest for absolution, and to perform a course of penance devised by man for the cure of souls? or let him shew if he can, where is there such a course prescribed for the gospel times, even with as much punctuality, or repeated so often as the rituals of the priests' office under the law of Moses, which are repeated with exquisite exactness, though they

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were but figures of the good things that should be fulfilled in Christ, the Heavenly substance of the types and figures of the law? surely then, if that which should continue only for a season, is set forth and repeated with the utmost precision, even to a tittle, how much more still should that law which must stand to the end of the world, be clearly set forth, defined, and repeated, over and over again, but where can he find the priests' office and course of penance and absolution so defined, or even commanded under the gospel? nay, but disclaimed altogether, and Christ set forth as the sanctifier and the justifier of his people; even of all that receive Him through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, to whom he is promised to be their all in all, yea, even their wisdom and righteousness, their sanctification and redemption.

And so he is set forth and described, even repeated over and over again, as in the volume of the book it is written of the heavenly spiritual dispensation of His grace and truth, and spirit in the inward parts, through which He would be merciful, and forgive transgressions and sins, as promised in the Scriptures, and asserted in divers manners of speech, not only here a little, and there a little, but here much, and there a great deal, to the same import as these following.—*John* i. 17.—*Roms.* iii. 24.—*Ephes.* ii. 8. 9.—*1 Cor.* i. 29. 30. 31.

## SECTION XVI.

*Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead.—See letter xliii. page 104 to 115 inclusive.*

I MEAN not to enter into disputation with *J. M.* on the doctrine of the existence of his Purgatory, seeing that it is not supported by Scripture testimony, and moreover, it being one of those things that infinite wisdom has seen meet to place out of the reach of finite comprehension, I therefore deem silence the best answer that can be given to any presumption that is assumed on such a subject; howbeit, I mean to glance a little at the weakness of his proofs, and the consequence of his conclusions, yet I may say upon the whole, that he has yielded much in the outset; wherein even he sets forth as ‘a parallel case,’ that though in Scripture, “We perpetually read of sanctifying the Sabbath or Saturday, but never meet with Sunday, “as a day of obligation,” &c. (as it is now esteemed,) and then he cites, that “The inspired Epistles, and the gospels also, are not regular treatises, upon the Christian religion.”—*Letter xliii. page 104, 105.* Now (although he then takes on to prove Purgatory from Scripture,) doth not even his own admission shew that he could find but little there to support his argument? nay, if proving from Scripture the first day of the week to be the Sabbath, is (as he saith,) “a parallel case,” surely then he will find little there upon that subject; yet if Christ be the Sabbath (or rest) of the true believer, they that sanctify Him in their hearts and lives, need not dispute about days and times; and whereas he asserts, “That the Scriptures are not regular “treatises upon the Christian religion,” I leave the reader to determine whether all this together doth not evidently betray the weakness of his whole argument.

But as I dare not mince a matter of such unspeakable importance, I shall not overpass what appears to me the most wonderful and horrible thing connected with the whole subject; and that is, the getting of money for prayers and masses for the dead, to relieve them in Purgatory; the very naming of which appears like uttering of daring calumny against the Majesty of Heaven; against our Redeemer, and against the gospel; yea,



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and even against the whole human race ; nay, is it not a fouler slander than ever an Infidel cast upon the Christian religion ; yet I have often heard, (and *J. Milner's* own people will freely admit,) that large sums of money have been expended that way, both by the bequest of the dead, and donations of the living ; hence we may say, that the question about the existence of a Purgatory after death, is swallowed up in amazement at men daring to drive a money bargain with Omnipotence, to bring their friends from thence, and that being the main burthen of the whole question, so far as regards the actions of the living, is it not therefore marvellous, that he should write pages on a subject, and never once name the only momentous part thereof.\*

As to that idle question which he proposes, saying, “ What place, I ask, must that be, which our Saviour calls Abraham’s bosom, where the soul of Lazarus reposed, till he by his sacred passion paid their ransom ? ” &c.—*Letter xliii.—page 106.*—Which question I would answer, by only asking him, would he give or take money for prayers or masses, to redeem souls out of Abraham’s bosom ? surely that is a state that needs none of his masses, neither would any being better than the serpent, pray for souls to be redeemed out of Abraham’s bosom.

He asks, “ Again, of what place is it that St. Peter speaks, where he says Christ died for our sins, and He preached to those spirits that were in prison ? ” then he cites *1 Cor. xv. 29.*—“ What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? why are they then baptized for the dead ? ” again he asks, “ What other sense can that passage of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians bear, than that which the Holy Fathers affix to it, where the Apostle says, the day of the Lord shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is : if any man’s work abide he shall receive a reward ; if any man’s work be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire ”—such he calls Scripture proofs of Purgatory—see

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\* Alas ! according to *Milner*, to what a woful pass should the people be brought, who at the hour of death should have naught to rely upon but through the medium of their clergy ? nay how should they be debased, who through life had only priests to look to, and after death even to pay them for admission into Heaven ?

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page 106, 107. Could any one shew forth more stupid ignorance, (not to say worse,) than to put such a gross carnal private interpretation upon Scripture, as to say the above texts could have no meaning but to prove a Purgatory after death? could he divulge a greater slander against those he calls Holy Fathers than to say they could affix no other sense to it? well is it said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch together"—and who so blind as they that will not see.

Alas! does he understand so little of Peter's speech, as to say, that the spirits in prison to which Christ preached; must needs be in Purgatory? but it is no marvel that he should know so little of the spirits in prison, while he denies the manifestation of the spirit which is given to every man to profit withal—1 Cor. xii. 7. Yet I might ask him, does he really believe that it is to Purgatory Christ alludes, when he saith, I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not? or yet does he believe that Isaiah meant Purgatory, when he foretold that Christ should open the blind eyes, and bring the prisoners and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house? and again, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound—see *Isaiah* xlii. 7, and lxi. 1—*Mat.* xxv. 43.

And whereas he mentions being baptized for the dead, and that every man's work should be tried by fire; who could be so gross and carnal as to mistake such plain and self-evident instruction, which should have even a two-fold meaning in the experience of every believer? alas! is he so dead himself, as never to have known what is meant by being dead in trespasses and sins according to Scripture—see *Ephes.* ii.—and the great need of being baptized for such a state, and doth not the Scripture speak also of a better state, even of being buried with Christ in baptism, and that we should be dead with Him from the rudiments of the world? &c.—*Col.* ii. And as to his asking "What other sense can that passage bear, than that which the Holy Fathers affix to it, where the Apostle says, the day of the Lord shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is?" &c. Alas! doth *J. M.* or his Holy Fathers know nothing of all this in their own experience? how could he call them Holy Fathers, who know of no Purgatory until after death? if a man be a stranger to that fire which

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shall try every man's work, and so knows nothing of these things in himself, is he not filthy still, and an Infidel at heart, who knows not even the first step in the Christian course? seeing that baptism is the first step, even to repent and be baptized with the baptism made without hands, which raises the dead; but if he knows nothing of such death, neither can he know the baptism whereby they are raised, who were dead in trespasses and sins; nay, doth he not proclaim the gross carnality of his mind, wherein he saith, what other sense (than a proof of Purgatory,) can the Apostles' saying bear, that "The day of the Lord shall be revealed when every man's work shall be tried by fire," &c.?

I say then, how can he be called a Christian indeed, who knows nothing of Christ's baptism, which is made without hands, even though he should be thought never so orthodox or skilful, to make images or imitations of a baptism made with hands? yea, though he should imitate what John the Baptist and others did, and teach the people to do so too; yet what should all that avail, if he knows nothing of being buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also we should be raised through the faith of the operation of God, according to *Col. ii.*? and moreover, if he knows nothing in this life, of the day of the Lord which shall be revealed by fire, whereby every man's work shall be tried, what claim then has he to the gospel day, wherof it is declared, "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven," (that is inwardly,) and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be a stubble; and the day cometh that shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch?"—*Mat. iv. 1.*—Is not this in reference to the gospel day even the day of Christ, of whom John saith, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," &c. "And he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire?"—See *Mat. iii. 11, 22.*—nay, did not the Lord give the law, even to Israel of old, speaking out of the midst of the fire?

And the true believer who fears God, and has a sense of the sound of the everlasting gospel, earnestly craves that the Lord may thus set up his judgments and mercy in his soul in this life; yea, even by his fire which is in Sion, that his sins may thus go beforehand to judgment, that the Redeemer might so thoroughly purge the floor, that nothing should remain for the fire to take



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hold of, which draws down into that direful state, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; yet alas! how doth the unbeliever and the priest, embolden poor souls to take a taste of sin as they pass along, while in this life, by persuading them that it may be purged away after death?

But is not that the doctrine of Satan and of Antichrist, like the devil's doctrine, who is a destroyer? yea, is it not for the destruction of the soul, to put off until to-morrow what should be done to-day? and doth not the Lord teach us to pray that his Kingdom should come, and his will be done on Earth, as it is done in Heaven? and how should he that feels nothing of Heaven here, be prepared to enjoy it hereafter? therefore let no man deceive us, for now is our time or never; nay, doth not our Lord compare the Kingdom of Heaven to one that made a supper and bid his guests, yet even such as made excuse of only business or family concerns to prevent their attendance; he saith of them, that they should not partake with him; there is left no appeal to a Purgatory after death, or prayers, or masses to redeem lost time, nay, but there we may see how fatal it would be to leave the great and momentous work for another to do.

And seeing that no man can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for his soul; and that there is neither work nor device, nor knowledge, or wisdom in the grave, when the decree is sealed, which saith, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."—*Rev. xxii. 11.* Oh then, why should poor souls be emboldened by the subtlety of the serpent, or any crafty money-seeking priest, to put off until after death, any part of the great work of making their peace with the Searcher of Hearts, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, that will be terrible to the slothful, even as to the worker of iniquity? and is it not fearful mockery indeed, for frail mortal man, to arrogate to himself, or take on to perform for another, any part of that redemption which he cannot purchase for himself; but which is the attribute of the Redeemer alone?

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And as to that boast which *J. M.* frequently repeats, of such as (he saith,) "Speak in raptures of the peace and security they enjoy in the communion of the Catholic Church;" to which he

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faith, great numbers of Protestants seek to be reconciled at the approach of death; and so he mentions “A list of titled or distinguished personages who embraced it on their death beds; even such as a duke, earl, prince, king, and queen, with divers bishops,” &c. “While not a single instance can be produced of a Catholic wishing to die in any other communion than his own.”—See *letter ix. page 79.*—*Letter xi. page 114, 115.*

To all which I should answer, that so far as it is true, it is a deplorable reflection; though it is no marvel if many such grandees as he names, should have so woefully mispent their precious time, as to be in great amazement at the hour of death, even so as to be induced to catch at any broken reed, that (in their extremity) might promise them never such delusive security;—Nay, I rather wonder that many more of such time-servers, as serve their lust of ambition and vanity through life, do not run to the priest to cover them, at the awful approach of eternity; seeing that other professors think it safer to commend the sinner to God, than to themselves, at such a time, even while an offended God is what he dreads, as we read in *Rev. vi. 15. 16.* when the seal of their works was opened, “The kings of the earth, and the great and rich men, and the mighty men,” &c. “hid themselves in the dens and rocks and mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

Although this may apply to every class in the world, high or low, bond or free, that should look to any creature under the sun for salvation; yet, alas! how many have sought to hide themselves under cover of the priests’ rudiments of this world? Nay, are they not the miserable dens and rocks, which many have called to, for to cover a guilty conscience? and what shall we say, if even under the two-fold iniquity of the priest, who first emboldened poor souls to leave a part of the great work of their soul’s peace unwrought until the day of doom; and secondly to promise to do for them what no mortal can do for another?—*Psalm xlix. 7.*—nay, some say they even drive a money bargain in the business, and take payment for prayers and masses for the dead, but as themselves should know how that stands, I must leave it with them.

*On Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead.*

Alas! was there ever a more delusive mountain or rock for the terrified sinner to flee to, than the height of their profession? wherein they assert, that they are built upon the rock of ages, and can grant remission of sins; while yet they themselves know whether they have been divining for money, and seeking their gain from their quarter, as in *Isaiah* lvi. 11. Surely then it would be no marvel if his assertion were true, wherein he saith, that "None of his people ever desired to die in another communion," (though I myself could prove the contrary,) yet I say, it would be no marvel if they should never see further, who were so sottish as to thirst after a sleepy dose of the quack medicine, which he so highly extols throughout his volume? nay, would it not be a miracle, if ever such should again recover to the state of a truly awakened and enlightened soul? but with the Father of Mercies all things are possible.

And as to the list of Protestant bishops which he saith, "Died catholic;" surely he need not have deferred their wavering to so late a period, as he might well know, that such were often known to change sides as their interest or promotion led the way; witness their shifting in the days of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, &c., and who knows whether the bishops he names had any religion at all? and if they had been deceiving the people, why should we marvel at seeing themselves deceived likewise? and if they were sensual not having the spirit, but sat upon the waters where the whore sitteth, which are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, *Rev.* xvii. 15. must they not then be unstable indeed, who sat upon the nations, if so be that they taught the nations to rely upon any thing the tongue of man could utter (for salvation or redemption,) beside the redemption which comes by Jesus Christ? nay, is it not a crying sin, to turn a poor soul to any thing short of the mercy of God? "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God."—*Ephes.* ii. 8.—there we may see that salvation is by grace alone, not of ourselves, nor of priests' selves, "It is the gift of God," yea, even his free gift, without money or price.

But alas! how deplorable must his case be, who have no surer stake to rely upon (at the approach of death,) than what he could derive through the medium of priests or Church authority? and still more deplorable, that they should bolster up the



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poor soul in a false delusive security, even as he saith, they “ Speak in raptures of the peace and security they enjoy in the “ communion of his Church, compared with their doubts and “ fears before they embraced it ;” but doth not he that heals a man’s doubts and fears (before God gives him true faith and courage,) rob him of his soul, even by causing him to climb up another way than by Christ, who is the way and the door ? alas ! are not those doubts and fears the very high road to the footstool of his mercy, who delights to be gracious to every poor soul that is so thoroughly reduced thereby, as to see that unless he grants faith, they cannot believe to the saving of the soul, and so without Him they are undone for ever ; such are they that mourn in Sion, (whether for themselves or others,) and the Lord doth comfort all such, and gives them the oil of joy for mourning, &c.—*Isaiah* lxi. 2. 3.—and their earnest fervent prayer avails much, because they come rightly through the great tribulation, being washed in the blood (the life) of the lamb ; such would have all to abide the conflict until their iniquity be pardoned, and the warfare accomplished ; but woe be to the deceiver that would allure the poor soul out of that tribulation before the work is effected or even well begun ; and has it not been the work of the priest and of the serpent, to heal the hurt of the people falsely, and to cry peace ! peace ! when there is no peace ? seeing there can be no true peace to the poor soul that is beguiled from a thorough reliance upon the Searcher of Hearts, and drawn away to a dependance upon the hireling, who bear rule by their means ; and though the people love to have it so, while the priest may rejoice over the prey, yet what will ye do in the end thereof ?

## SECTION XVII.

*On J. Milner's Treatise of Antichrist and the Pope's Supremacy.—Letter xlv. xlvi.*

**A**LTHOUGH *J. M.* has set forth a treatise on both these heads, I shall not follow him thereon; and while he complains of many authors who assert that the pope is Antichrist, the beast, &c., he takes on to refute them in a very unmeaning manner; but I have nothing to do to call any man Antichrist, beast, or whore, or heretic, or Catholic, or any universal term; I judge no man, neither is it men that I have been combatting, nay, but the evils which abound amongst men and priests; yea, even high priests and high places, and if Antichristian marks or fruits be found upon them, how can I help that? but let them see to themselves, and beware lest their works be found to be the fruits of Antichrist in the sight of Him, who is the judge of quick and dead, who is no respecter of persons, but renders to every man according to the fruit of his doings; and that is the great and momentous concern for every one of us, to see how the matter stands between God and the never-dying soul; but it is a small matter to be judged with man's judgment; therefore (as I said) I judge no man; but seeing that while he holds forth to the world such a vaunting challenge, as to call upon all people to prove their church by the fruits thereof, he asserts, that his own is the only true one on earth; I may therefore remind him of only a few marks, in order that he may weigh and consider whether they be of Christ, or against him? seeing that all that is against Christ is of Antichrist; and all that uphold Antichrist is as truly of him as the thing they uphold, therefore be not mockers, but deeply consider whether that which is highly esteemed of men, be not nearly allied to the kingdom of Antichrist.

And first, doth not *J. M.* exult in that his priesthood alone are esteemed the Church which must keep and rule the conscience of all men, from which there is no appeal, even to the exclusion of the people themselves, from any voice in a matter wherein their soul and their all is at stake?—see *letter xi. page 114.*—Now is not that against Christ, who requires that every one should be accountable to Him alone, and every one to be fully persuaded in his own mind?—*Roms. xiv. 5.*—and so to see that his fruit should be to the glory of the Heavenly husbandman, who gives not his glory to any of the sons of earth, but the government should be on his shoulders alone, whose name is called

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wonderful, counsellor, &c.—*Isaiah* ix. 6. And now if any should presumptuously arrogate that power and government unto themselves, should they not then be of Antichrist? nay, do we not find, that even in the day wherein the effusion of the Holy Spirit was preeminently poured forth upon the Apostles, they did not even then lord over their brethren? nay, but in matters of Church government, the multitude of believers had liberty to take their part with the elders and brethren—see *Acts* xv. 12.

But as to the title of Supremacy which he labours to defend, let him weightily consider whether the very term itself is not of Antichrist, even as his own favourite Pope, (whom he calls St. Gregory the Great,) asserted before he was made pope? when another took the title of universal bishop; did he not then assert, “That whoever assumed this blasphemous and infernal title, was the follower of Satan, and the forerunner of Antichrist?”—*Clarke's History, Vol. II. page 61.*—There he may see the judgment of one he calls a “Holy pope and saint;” and moreover, he might look beyond that, even into the New Testament, and there see what a monstrous thing the name of a pope, Supremacy, or Universal head would appear; is not the very naming thereof, a fearful setting at naught our Saviour's injunction, wherein, (to such as thought who would be greatest,) He saith, “Ye know that they that are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you?” &c.—*Mat.* xx. 25. 26.—*Mark* x. 42. 43.—*Luke* xxii. 25.—There we may see what an abomination the very name of Supremacy would be among the disciples of a meek and lowly Saviour; nay, is it not even of Heathenish origin?

The beloved disciple John saith, “That Antichrist was already come, even in his own time;” and so he reminded the believers of the spirit, even the unction wherein they should abide, which should teach them all things, (needful) so as that they need not that any man teach them but as the same anointing teacheth, &c.—1 *John* ii. 27. There the Scripture saith, that the spirit, the anointing should teach, even those that are called little children, so that they need not that any man teach them, but doth not *J. M.* deny the spirit, calling it a fallacious rule, and that it is only given to the pope's priesthood, who must teach all others, both old and young, great and small,



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that all need to be taught by them or perish eternally? even though divers parts of Scripture saith, that believers under the gospel need not that any man teach them, but as the Spirit teacheth; now is not that the Spirit of Antichrist, which denies the Spirit of Christ, and denies the efficacy and universality of his gospel message, which proclaims, that "All the children of the Lord should be taught of the Lord," and should "Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils?" I say then, is he not of Antichrist who thus denies Christ (the anointed) and sets up man whose breath is in his nostrils, saying they must teach and rule the Lord's people, and that for money too? yea every one looking for his gain from his quarter like the old false prophets; and a goodly price have they made of it for ages, not only of gain, but of great renown in the world, each seeking who should be greatest, and appear most excellent in breaking the Lord's commandment; and who could get most money for telling where Christ is to be found, even to betray him to the chief priests as did Judas; now is not all that of Antichrist or the son of perdition, who still sitteth in the temple of God, even shewing himself that he is God, and can forgive sins and grant indulgences as Gods upon earth? John saith that, he that loveth to have the pre-eminence receiveth not the Apostles; while yet he appeared a high professor, and where is the difference between pre-eminence and supremacy?

But I must leave the reader to see what he can make of his assertion, wherein he saith, that "The pope had no civil or temporal supremacy over persons, princes, or property," but that "The kings and princes themselves frequently applied to him, to make use of his indirect temporal power," &c.—*Letter* xlv. page 130, 131.—I say, I must leave the reader to see if he could tell what all this means, wherein he saith, "The popes had no direct temporal power, but used their indirect power when kings and princes applied to them;" now is it possible that he could lap up a grosser falsehood, seeing that he knew full well, that they often stretched their power over states, nations, and people, even at their own will, and sorely against the will of the lawful princes and owners thereof? and if, as he saith, the popes had no such temporal power; would not that go to condemn them altogether, and prove them the most horrible usurpers that ever was, to sway a sceptre which never did

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belong to them? as he knew full well, that they had ruled over civil and temporal states, even in divers ways, nay, even like King of kings, and Lord of lords, as if their temporal sway should keep pace with their spiritual despotism and usurpation, which may be seen in large measure without looking far into the page of history?

Objection.—I may be asked what is it to me, or to any man, if they did exercise that power over states, nations, and people, if the people chose to submit to their dominion, what is that to others?

Answer.—With regard to kingly or temporal government, I have nothing to do with that; but there is quite another matter at issue, which involves a question of inexpressible weight, wherein they assert, that a succession of great and grand viziers, who had presided over states and nations, should yet be the vicars or representatives of Jesus Christ; even to rule over the conscience of men in all points, wherein the issues of eternity are at stake; is not that monstrous beyond expression, what could surpass it in comparison? Nay, let us even suppose for a moment, that his statement had been true, that the popes only acted as arbitrators to kings and princes; or as chief ministers of state policy. yet how should even that besit such a station, as the vicar, or representative of Him, who saith, my kingdom is not of this world, and who, (among all the ways of men) had not where to lay his head? Nay, mark the answer he gave to the man that said, “Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me;” He said unto him, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you.”—And is not the very name of Supremacy (or Supreme Head of the Church) a daring setting at naught His injunction, who saith, “Call no man your Father, upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in Heaven; and be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren, neither be ye called masters?” &c.—Read *Mat.* xxiii. 8. 9. 10.—*Luke* ix. 58.—and xii. 13. 4.—*John* xviii. 36.

There is gospel instruction and admonition for all that hath an ear to hear it; but I have nothing to do to judge any man; neither should I call any man by such names as Antichrist, Catholic, Heretic, Saint, Angel, or Devil, nor any universal term; but as our Saviour saith, “That a man’s foes are they of his own

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“household, even so, his enemies are they that profess to know him while by their works they deny him.”—*Titus* i. 16. Hence it appears, that Antichrist is not wholly comprehended in one person or order of men, even though such may go far to make up a part thereof; seeing that Antichrist is a spirit of falsehood or deceit, varnished over with the semblance of truth and of the righteousness of Christ, and his spouse, yet opposed to the righteousness of faith and love, (which should purify the heart to bring forth good fruits;) had ever Christ an enemy like this counterfeit one? nay, not even among the Heathen, seeing that Antichrist is one with the beast, and the great whore described in *Revelations*, which bewitched the nations with her sorceries, and holds in her hand a golden cup full of the wine of her fornication, whereby she maketh the nations drunk, even with her sensual wisdom, and the abundance of her institutions, orders, ordinances, and traditions; covered over and adorned with a shew of beauty and counterfeit holiness, will worship, and self-mortification and self-denial, together with the honours, dignities, pleasures, and delicacies of this world, &c., all of which concur to make up this system of hypocrisy and falsehood, and all to bewitch poor souls to rest in the lap of carnal security; being also fortified therein by the example of multitudes, and the duration of antiquity, wherein she boasts of having long sat as a Queen, over peoples, nations, and languages, nay, she sat upon the beast, whose number is the number of a man; so then, is not all that is of man's work or device in religion, proved to be of Antichrist, the beast, or whore, let them be under what name or profession soever, yea, though some are more gross, and others more refined, yet all that profess Christ, while strangers to the operation of His good spirit, are comprehended therein, but why should I attempt to describe Antichrist, or this religious Babylon, seeing that the deceit and filthiness thereof never can be told? suffice it to say, that all their works they do to be seen of men, hence she is fitly called the mother of harlots; but all this cannot be confined to any one society exclusively, as it may apply to any, of what profession soever, that partake of the nature, and bring forth the fruits thereof, and therefore, seeing that all the evil, or all the good that ever was, is not confined to one man or one sect; who then could give any man or Church, the title of Antichrist or Catholic, or any universal title exclusively.



## SECTION XVIII.

*Reflections on J. Milner's Treatise of Persecution.—See Letter xlix. page 165 to 190 inclusive.*

**T**O attempt any discussion of the revolting subject of persecution, is a task at which I am ready to recoil; especially to follow *J. Milner*, which yet appears unavoidable; seeing that he hath dealt so treacherously as could not be passed over unnoticed; yet I am aware that I shall not meet him with that plainness of speech which is due to the unfeeling brutality, and unparalleled subtilty, whereby he pours forth his foul slanders upon injured innocence, especially in the case of the Albigenes and other deeply injured people; I say I shall not do it justice, seeing that this age could not bear the plainness of speech which should be the portion of such meditated calumny, neither am I capable of following his curious windings and shiftings, assertions, and contradictions, so as to unmask that sickly mess of sophistry which he has lapt up, in order to make himself and his reader believe what both knew to be utterly false; yet I may notice a few specimens thereof; but although divers parts of his volume revives the sound of prisons, chains, racks, tortures, fires, and faggots, &c. as if he took delight in such like cheer, yet I only mean to offer a few remarks upon his 25 pages on persecution, beginning at *letter lxix. page 165, 166, &c.* in the first leaf whereof he expressly denies that his “church ever claimed a power of persecuting heretics, with penalties, tortures, and death,” and in the last leaf, he saith, “If Catholic states and princes have enforced submission to their Church by persecution, they were fully persuaded, that there is a divine authority in this Church to decide all controversies of religion, and that those who refuse to hear her voice, when she pronounces upon them, are obstinate heretics.”—*Letter xlix. page 190.\**

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\* Can that Church which claims for herself exclusively, such right and authority, to pronounce upon all people, be any other than Cain's religion? as we read that Cain talked with his brother, and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.—*Gen. iv. 8.* What field was that? was it not the field of converse in the

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What shall we say to a man that asserts in the face of the world, that his "Church disclaims the power of persecuting heretics?" and while he asserts it with such earnestness, yet behold how he goes about to prove his assertion, even as in the first place, he sets it forth as a proof thereof, that "When two bishops interfered in the capital punishment of certain Priscilian heretics, St. Ambrose and St. Martin refused to hold communion with them;" mark, he had but just "expressly denied" the charge of persecution, and then in a few lines after he admits that the bishops were murdering certain heretics, (and he might have added that the Synod of Bordeaux had condemned said heretics,) even so early as the days of Ambrose and Martin; and yet to prove that they did not do so, he saith, two men refused communion with them, (two men,) alas! is that all; I think I might have said more myself, as I hope there were (even then) thousands grieved at such work, and any honest man should disclaim communion with all that promoted it; yet were not those murdering bishops still esteemed bishops in full church unity nevertheless? and now would he have his readers to believe for the sake of conveniency, that the two men were the whole Church, and that the bishops or the Synod did not belong to the Church, while they passed without a censure, nay, it

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world? and of what they talked about, we are only informed of their offerings unto the Lord, so that we must admit their disagreement was about religion; and Cain might claim priority and seniority, as being the oldest, as many do even to this day; but what then, did his eldership in any wise give a preference to his offering, nay, but we read that the Lord had not respect unto him nor to his offering, therefore he was wroth with his brother; which enmity appears the chief crime charged upon him, when he was told that if he did not well, sin should lie at the door, and he should rule over him (his brother,) and was not that sad ruling indeed? though he went and builded, and called his building after his own name; yet doth not *J. M.* now glory in the self-same rule and authority, saying, because of the seniority of our Church, she had a right to rise up against "All who refuse to hear her voice, and pronounce them obstinate heretics"—*letter xlix. page 190.* But let him and his priesthood remember, that of all, whosoever rose up against their brethren about religion since the days of Abel, that it was because their own works were evil, and their offerings not accepted? as we read in *1 John iii. 12*—nay, their own offering being accepted, should so abundantly satisfy them, that they could not do aught against others, but rather pray for and exhort them for edification, but could not, nor dare not rise up and pronounce against them for their destruction.

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seems quite enough for his purpose, that two men refused communion with them.

And so he proceeds in like manner to prove that his Church never sanctioned persecution, but always disclaimed it, quoting, that "Tertullian saith, it does not belong to religion to force religion." And after such like assertions, he gives an example to prove that the Church always acted conformable to the like brotherly kindness and forbearance, saying, that "When an ecclesiastical judge or tribunal, has, after due examination, pronounced that any person, accused of obstinate heresy, is actually guilty of it," &c. "The judge is required to pray for his pardon;" and now behold the example to which he refers is the case of John Huss, as if that should amply suffice to demonstrate the clemency and innocency of his priesthood; yet do we not read, that "When the Council of Constance condemned J. Huss, seven bishops were commissioned to degrade him, who arrayed him in a large cap, on which various forms of devils were painted, the bishops saying, hereby we commit thy soul to the devil?"

Behold then the example which he sets forth, to prove the innocence and clemency of the Church, and to clear the Council of Constance and all the bishops, of the murder of John Huss, who was forthwith burned alive at a stake, even by their own people, as if he would have us to believe they did not belong to the Church, but took and burned him while the Church and Council prayed for his pardon; alas! was ever greater hypocrisy? did they deliver him over to Jews or Heathens? nay, surely, (for they knew full well that such would not murder him,) but to men of their own profession, even such as they knew, to please them, would fulfil their desire upon him, and execute their sentence, though against their inclination, and now he slanders the executioners of their sentence; alas! does he mean to assert, that the bishops and Council is clear of his blood, and because the civil authorities would not hear their prayers, they should therefore answer for it?

Is it not marvellous that very shame did not restrain him from setting forth such an example, to prove the innocence and purity of his priesthood? but the unjust know no shame—must he not deem his readers sottish indeed beyond measure, or how else could he deal out a story as if designed to address apes or mag-



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pies or the like? or should I not rather compare it to intercourse with the old chief priests and scribes? for wherein does his council stand more clear of the blood of John Huss, and Jerome Prague, (of whom they were the betrayers and murderers,) than the high priest and council of the Jews were, of the blood of him whom they condemned? would it not be vile perversion to take on to clear that Council by throwing all the blame on the soldiers and officers? nay, we do not find the charge laid so heavy, even against them, as against the priests and the Council that condemned him, for even some of the soldiers felt conviction and testified of his innocency, while the priests and scribes grew hardened in their guilt.

I should not have referred to this solemn comparison, were it not that I am very earnest on this point, as it is but due to ourselves, (to the world,) and even to *J. M.*, to refute such barefaced hypocrisy, as would take on to prove, that the Judge or Council which condemns people for the exercise of their conscience towards God, is not concerned in such murder, while yet they knew full well, that the death of their culprits should inevitably follow their condemnation.

Take notice that I call it murder, because I mean to use sound words without deceit, and no expression short of murder could do it justice, but I spare the term (infernal,) I say then, it must be deemed the worst sort of murder, for divers reasons, too much for me to notice; let it suffice to say, that our Saviour calls them the children of him that was a murderer from the beginning, who took on to justify such deeds, nay, even *J. Milner's* own assertion proves it to be murder, wherein he saith, "The Church disclaims the power of punishing heretics, with penalties, tortures, or death," and in order to illustrate his assertion, he sets forth the example of the Council of Constance, in the case of John Huss—see *letter* xlix. page 166 167—there he saith, they disclaimed the power, and yet the Council of Constance, (to which he refers,) condemned John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, who were both burned forthwith at Constance, yea, even by that Church which he saith disclaimed the power so to do, and of course it was unlawful in them, and therefore it was (even literally) murder, yet he would have them thought quite innocent, because the Council betrayed and condemned them, and the civil authority executed them according to their

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sentence, who were yet all of the self-same Church or profession.

Now what can all this amount to, unless he means to say, that with his bishops, killing is no murder, or that murder is no persecution? still it seems marvellous that he should refer to the Council of Constance, to prove that his Church never persecuted, especially seeing the horrible treatment of John Huss and Jerome, who appear to have been men of such unblameable conversation, that even their enemies could find nothing wherewith to accuse them, only touching the law of their God, for whose sake they gave up all things in this world, and sealed their testimony in the flames. And moreover, the case of Jerome is so peculiarly striking, that even *J. M.* himself, might have taken such a lesson from it, as should at least have restrained him from dealing so proudly.

But he proceeds to insist "That the Church itself actually disclaims the power of persecution," while yet he knew full well that she always claimed that power, and acted upon it too, even from the day that Constantine proclaimed Christianity to be the religion of the state and of the Empire, nay, when he sat upon the throne of the old Pagan Cæsars, did he not soon begin under the tuition of the bishops, (even while he sat at the feet of their Councils,) to persecute such as they pronounced heretics or schismatics? nay, even enjoining all to bow down to their creeds or to their caprice, with a precision far beyond what had ever been acted upon by the old Pagan Cæsars, as if vengeance should belong to them alone; witness the decree of Constantine, which saith, "This I enjoin, that if any one shall be found to have concealed any writing composed by Arius, and shall not immediately bring it and consume it in the fire, death shall be his punishment; for as soon as he is taken in this crime he shall suffer a capital punishment."—*Clarke's History, Vol. I. page 298 299.*

I do not instance the above as a specimen of persecution, but in order to shew the unbounded license and caprice of the Constitution, even in the very first formation of an imperial state hierarchy; seeing that the same Constantine, who had banished Arius, recalled him home again, though he made a decree to kill all that should be found to have a sheet of his writings: so that persecution appear to have been shuffled about as free and familiar as though it had been children's play, (while even some

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of their own people bewailed the tide of iniquity that flowed in amongst such as were stiff in the letter, and conformable to all their ceremonies.) And *J. M.* knew full well, that the Emperors, Popes, and Bishops, successively claimed, or used the like power to punish and persecute all that they called heretics, even as the old Pagan Cæsars did to persecute the Apostles and their successors; nay, it may yet be questioned, whether there had been more blood spilt by all the old Pagan Cæsars, during the ten persecutions, (merely on the score of uniformity,) than what was spilt even by the orthodox Arian and Donatist parties: all of which originated, and was sanctioned and stirred up by great Councils of bishops, calling each other heretics in turn, and whichever were the most guilty, it is clear (as I have instanced) that those that called themselves orthodox or Catholic, were the first to begin the work of persecution, while yet the most glaring fault amongst them all, is that wherein they so nearly resembled each other.

Alas! where shall we find such a specimen of desperation and human depravity, as that whereof they accuse the Donatists, or Circoncillions? can such meditated horrors be paralleled in the history of the universe? but whether they were driven to that state of desperation, (ascribed to them) by the dint of persecution, or whether their persecutors have belied and slandered them, in order to cloak up or palliate the iniquity of their persecution, I must leave every body to judge as they please!! would it not appear that both these causes must needs concur, to exhibit the unnatural fury attributed to that people? especially when we reflect, that their whole history comes to us through the medium of their adversaries, who claimed an empire over the world, both temporal and spiritual, and had sorely harrassed those Donatists with persecuting edicts, in order to enforce submission to the See of Rome, while they on their part, appear to have chosen death rather than such submission.—See *Clarke's History, Vol. I. page 424 to 434 inclusive.*

And moreover we need not look far into history, to observe how the reputed orthodox popes and bishops, did not fail to stir up the rulers to persecute many societies that could not conform to their orders and traditions, at divers times, to more than a thousand years, even to the days of the Albigenes; nay, the impartial reader may see it fully demonstrated, even throughout



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*J. Milner's* volume, wherein he echoes the intolerant language of his reputed saints and fathers, in as high a tone as though it had been the delight of his heart; but is it not remarkable, that while he takes on to prove the forbearance and liberality of his Church, he expressly asserts, that heretics of the fourth century, (who believed exactly the same as Protestants,) were denied the "use of places of worship, and were forced to perform it in "forests and caverns," which he also alleges was the fate of the early Christians, when they were persecuted by the Pagan Roman Emperors.—Compare *letter* xlvi. *page* 163—with *letter* xxxv. *page* 36.

And yet after all, he seems determined to clear the Church, even at the cost of truth and honest reasoning, and so to make short and sure of his work, he sets it all down to the state in one lump, (somewhat like a man pursued with stolen goods, that should drop them on other men's premises,) he saith, "Whereas "heretics are subversive of established governments," &c. "It "does not belong to the Church to prevent princes and states "from exercising their just authority in repressing and punishing "them," &c. "Nor would it be irregular for a clergyman to "exhort them to provide for the safety of the Church itself, by "repressing its disturbers; provided he did not concur to the "death or mutilation of any particular disturber."—*Letter* xlix. *page* 176. There we may see how mighty cheap he makes persecution, wherein he laps it up as if his readers should believe for the sake of conveniency, that it was all nothing more than a mere matter of legislation.

Yet while he resorted to that deep fetch, did he not know full well, that the popes and bishops had so far prevailed with princes and rulers, as to have it enacted, that whatsoever they called heresy, should be deemed rebellion against the state, while yet he should know right well, that persecution rather tended to disturb the public peace? but was there ever greater iniquity, than to ordain, that whoever the priest chose to call heretics should forthwith be deemed or adjudged rebels against the state? alas! is not that Jezebel's religion, who made the affront of the King, and blaspheming God to be the same crime? is not that the accursed woman, that always called true allegiance to God and the King blasphemy—see 1 *Kings* xxi. chapter— which mystical woman hath also taught among professed Chris-

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tians, as in *Rev. ii.* And so haughty were the bishops, that they could not bear a syllable to be uttered against the decision of their order; nay, but have not even a syllable been made a pretext for the effusion of rivers of blood, as I have noticed of Arians, Donatists, and those who call themselves Catholic? all appearing so very like each other, that none but themselves could perceive the difference; for each seemed true to their chief ruling principle, which was to strive who should be greatest.

Was there ever a more foul slander invented, than to throw all the blame of persecution upon the rulers and people, in order to clear the popes and their hierarchy; did not *J. M.* know to a certainty, that if the bishops in council had only given a nod against persecution, that then their rulers and people should rejoice, and gladly comply therewith? yea, had they only pronounced persecution to be a greater sin, than it would be to transgress their traditions or ceremonies, which are not to be found in the New Testament, and of course belong not to the Kingdom of Christ; nay, let us for instance suppose, that they had only decreed, that it should be a greater sin to torture and murder people for the exercise of their conscience, than it would be to keep Easter in Autumn, would not their rulers then have been relieved from a piece of base drudgery under which they had truckled for ages?

Objection.—Seeing that people are no ways inclined to persecution in these days, what have we then to do with the crimes of former ages, while even *J. M.* himself disclaims the power of persecution.

Answer.—Far be it from me to upbraid any people with persecution in these days; nay, but it is such as *J. M.* that is holding the whole responsibility thereof upon his own people (even while he affects to disclaim it altogether) seeing he would not allow a tittle of blame to be attached to all the cruelties that ever his forefathers committed, but justifies all their deeds: and surely what ever was right and good at any period since the gospel was first preached, cannot be evil in aftertimes, and had he frankly acknowledged that they did evil in Persecution, I should then have no more to say thereto, but while he justifies wicked works, shall I not warn his admirers to beware of such men, and to know them by their fruits, seeing that it is a small matter to be judged with man's judgment, but God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.

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But far be it from me to desire to impute the guilt of persecution to any nation or people at this day, nay, for my part, I rather aim at clearing away the filth and guilt thereof from my fellow-countrymen, in calling upon them frankly to confess the iniquity of their forefathers, so far as they were concerned therein; and so fully to condemn persecution altogether, with the aiders or abettors thereof, that no part of their guilt may be entailed upon them or their children, seeing that to deny, to cloak up, or to justify the iniquity of others, might tend to draw down and entail their guilt upon ourselves and our country, and even to aggravate the crimes of former ages; and was there ever guilt more heavy than that of persecution, seeing how opposed it is to the great command of all, even to that of doing to others in all things as we would have them do unto us? and was it not a dreadful challenge, for the Jews, to say, "His blood be upon us and on our children?"—*Mat. xxvii. 25.*—and doth not our Lord say, (in allusion to the great and final judgment,) "inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these little ones, ye did it unto me?" and now, were we to endeavour to cloak up, or justify the Jews' conduct, should we not so far be partakers in their guilt? but I desire with my whole heart, that the like may never be entailed upon my fellow-countrymen.

But doth not such as *J. M.* labour with might and main, to entail the whole guilt and responsibility of persecution, not only upon themselves but upon all that concur in their double-minded evasions? yea, even while they plead not guilty, yet palliate the measures thereof, even to cloak it up or deny the fact, and labour to justify the promoters thereof, all of which proves the wickedness of the mind, that has unity with persecution, and the father thereof, who was a murderer from the beginning, who is likewise the father of lies, and so lying or denying the truth, is another leading character of the Devil, and these are his inseparable traits or marks, insomuch, that none ever yet persecuted but such as are found liars at the same time, and such are all that justify their deeds, which I shall further demonstrate in the following Section.



## SECTION XIX.

*Some further Reflections on Persecution, and the lying spirit that labours to justify the promoters thereof; also a vindication of the Albigenses against some of the slanders which J. M. heaps upon them, &c.*

**I**N proceeding to prove that his Church disclaimed the power of Persecution, J. M. complains that “Dr. Porteus and others, chargeth them with claiming that power by the tenor of the fourth Lateran Council;” but as I never remember to have read a page of Dr. Porteus, nor even of the Lateran Council, until I saw it in *J. Milner’s* book, I shall therefore treat of the subject simply as he sets it forth therein, which appears so foul and glaring as not to be passed by unnoticed.—See *letter xlix. page 168 169 170.*

He saith, “It must first be observed, who were present at this Council, and by whose authority these decrees, of a temporal nature, were passed. There were then present, besides the pope and bishops, either in person or by their Ambassadors, the Greek and the Latin Emperors, the King of England, France, Hungary, and the Sicilies, Arragon, Cyprus, and Jerusalem; and the representatives of a vast many other principalities and states; so that, in fact, this Council, was a congress of Christendom, temporal as well as spiritual. We must next remark the principal business which drew them together. It was the common cause of Christianity and human nature; namely, the extirpation of the Manichean heresy; which taught,” &c. &c., setting forth a catalogue of crimes too base to be quoted, even some that never had been professed by any people on the face of the earth, (no doubt to justify or cloak up the iniquity of the Lateran Council) and thus he proceeds “This detestable heresy which caused so much wickedness and bloodshed in the preceding centuries, broke out with fresh fury, in the twelfth century” &c. &c. “Where they were supported by the powerful Counts of Thoulouse, Comminges, Foix, and other feudatory princes,” &c. and so he magnifies their carrying fire and sword, waging open war, casting the Bibles into the Jakes, and profaning the altar plate,” &c.—and conti-

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names, "It was to put an end to these horrors, that the great Lateran Council was held, in the year 1215, when the heresy itself was condemned by the proper authority of the Church," and proceeds "The decree of the Council regarded only the prevailing heretics of that time, who, though wearing different faces, being indifferently called Albigenses, Cathari, Beguni, Boguardi, and brethren of free spirit, &c. were all tied together by the tails, as the Council expresses it, like Sampson's foxes, in the same band of Manicheanism. Nor was this exterminating canon ever put in force against any other heretics, except the Albigenses."—*Letter xlix. page 169 170.*

Now I leave the reader to judge whether a more horrid lying slander than the above ever blackened a sheet of paper? is it not quite of a piece with the old slanders which the persecuting bishops were wont to rise against the poor Albigenses, or Waldenses, in order to justify their nefarious proceedings, in burning, burying them alive, torturing and hunting them with their crusades, and blood hounds; and so to justify their iniquity, loaded them with the foulest of lying slanders that could be invented; insomuch that we need not look far into the history of their times, to observe an hundred fold too much of the cruelties inflicted on the poor deeply injured Albigenses, or Waldenses, as they were alternately called, on whose case I shall attempt a few observations, under a sense of my utter inability to do them justice.

In taking even a slight glance at the curious windings of *J. M.* it will be needful to state the subject in order, first, to notice his quaint description of the Lateran Council, second, his laboured caricature of the Albigenses, third, to compare even the lowest scale of their true character with the hideous slanders which he heaps upon them, and fourth, to glance at their unparalleled sufferings, patience, and fortitude, &c.

First, take notice then how he would lead his reader to believe, that the Council of Lateran was but a mere congress of Monarchs, assembled for the safety and protection of their various nations and empires; so he saith, "In fact this Council was a congress of Christendom," that is, what (here in Ireland,) we term a Parliament; and he mentions the King of England first of the Kings, as if to persuade the reader, that England took a leading part in the business, while yet he knew full well, that that Council was called and managed by the pope (Innocent

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III.) who had dethroned king John, who at that time only held the crown of England as vassal to the pope, who also was stretching his power over other Monarchs, on which my limits do not allow me to enlarge, nor should I desire to blacken a page with the subject, neither should I labour in vain, to alter the opinion of any reader, who chose to take his word, that all the Monarchs or Powers in Christendom, were so terrified, as to come together for fear of the three Counts, and two petty Princes, (and their adherents,) who thought well to protect and defend their subjects against papal persecution, crusades, and inquisitions, and whoever chose to take his word, that the pope or the bishops had no hand in that persecution, while he even asserts that they issued an "exterminating canon by the proper authority of the Church;" so it appears that he accounts extermination to be no manner of persecution; I say then, if there be some who should think that righteousness doth as much consist in believing lies, as others doth in writing them, I must leave them go together, and proceed to the next consideration.

Secondly, what appears still more revolting, and which I read with horror, is that roundabout way which he takes to caricature and blacken the Albigenses beyond measure; and that he might do the business to purpose, we find him wheeling round and roundabout them, until he loaded them with all the infamy that ever had been heaped upon the Manicheans, as he knew that the cheat should appear at first blush, if he told his story straight forward; so he came round with it like the serpent, to dazzle his reader as in the mazes of a labyrinth; while yet he should know full well, that the Manicheans agree much nearer with his own profession (in divers points) than with the Albigenses; for the Manicheans are said, even to have taken on to define the degrees of purgatory, and forbid marriages to their priests, &c.\* And whereas he saith, they taught that "Perjury was permitted to them," the Albigenses denied all manner of swearing, as doth evidently appear, even by the decree which pope Lucius III. issued against them, above thirty years before the Council

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\* Jones shews that "It is even, very questionable whether the sect of the Manicheans had then any existence, at least in Europe;" and Dr. Allix saith—"I defy the impudence of the devil himself, to find in their writings the least shadow of Manicheanism."—*Vol. II. page 27.*



*with reference to the Albigenes, &c.*

of Lateran, wherein he assigns their refusing to swear, as a conclusive mark of their heresy, saying, "If any of them, by a damnable superstition shall refuse to swear, that alone shall suffice to convict them of being heretics," see *Jones's History Vol. II. page 25.* this brings me to the third consideration.

Thirdly, by taking even a slight glance at the genuine character of the Albigenes, and Waldenses, &c. according to history, we may soon perceive how basely they have been belied and slandered; for although it would appear that they wrote but little, (as their professed principle, was, rather to live well, than to say much, and scrupulously to confine their views of religion and morality to the precepts and examples of Scripture; especially the New Testament, without adding even a tittle thereunto;) and moreover we are informed, that the little they did write, was carefully sought out and destroyed, being frequently burned together with themselves, even during hundreds of years, insomuch, that their being raised up and preserved for such a space of time, to hold forth the purity and simplicity of the gospel to the surrounding nations, is peculiarly marked with a signal display of the Power and Providence of Almighty God; seeing also, that they were the poorest and meanest part of the creation, in the view of men, even such as the Apostle calls the *off-scouring of all things*; and so much the more did the excellency of the Power (which upheld and sustained them) appear, as in *1 Cor. i. and iv. chapters.*

And although little of their own writings have been preserved, yet even through the calumny of their adversaries (who say all manner of evil against them) a sufficient ray of light doth break forth, even through them, to manifest whose servants they were, which also is a signal demonstration of the Providence of God; yea, as a monument of his superintendence, shewing that he can make his truth manifest, even through the medium of the very enemies thereof, yea, even while they labour to defame it; howbeit, they mean not so; and whatever excuse might be made for the crimes of such as were hurried on by the fervour of misguided zeal; there remains no excuse at all for such as persist in judging and condemning people indiscriminately, on the bare assertion of their avowed adversaries, without regard to what the accused say in their own defence; which accursed scale of judgment, being condemned by our Saviour, and throughout Scrip-

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ture, is also disclaimed by all nations, except such as were called sons of Belial.

And as he brands those Albigenses with as infamous a character as malice could devise, I shall therefore notice two or three descriptions given of them by their avowed adversaries, and I shall begin with Bernard, seeing that *J. M.* saith, he “Detected those heretics by miracles.”—*Letter xxiii. page 80.*—“Bernard was extremely offended with them for deriding the Catholics, because they baptized infants, prayed for the dead, and asserted purgatory, &c. And he condemns their superstitious refusal to swear, &c., and blames their practice of dwelling with women without being married,” (as he saith,) “because they would not solemnize their marriages according to the ceremonies of his church; yet his testimony in favour of their general conduct, seems to over balance all his invectives, wherein he saith, if you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian; if you observe their conversation nothing can be more blameless; and what they speak they prove by deeds, &c., &c., what more like a Christian? as to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, and does violence to no man; he fasts much, and eats not the bread of idleness, but works with his hands for his support; the whole body, indeed, are rustic and illiterate,” &c.—See *Jones's History, Vol. I. page 507.*—Such is the account which Bernard gave of the Albigenses in the twelfth century, about the time the Council of Lateran issued that exterminating canon as *J. Milner* saith.

Now let us observe what other of their adversaries acknowledged respecting them, even in the fifteenth century, near 300 years after, while with incredible durance, they had been harassed, killed, banished, and hunted throughout most nations of Christendom; and even death denounced against any that should let them into their houses; yet hear Claudius, archbishop of Turin, “He saith, their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians; they fulfil their promises with punctuality; and, living for the most part in poverty, they profess to preserve the Apostolic life and doctrine; they also profess it to be their desire to overcome only by the simplicity of their faith, by purity of conversation, and integrity of life, and not by philosophical niceties, and theolo-

*with reference to the Albigenses, &c.*

“gical subtleties. And he very candidly admits, that in their lives and morals they are perfect, irreprehensible, and without reproach among men, addicting themselves with all their might to observe the commands of God.” So for Claudius of Turin, who wrote against them.—*Ibid Vol. II. page 79.*

“Another adversary (Lielanstenius) speaking of the Waldenses of Bohemia says; I say that in morals and life they are good; true in words, unanimous in brotherly love; but their faith is incorrigible and vile, as I have shown in my treatise.” Another speaking of them “Expressly owns in what respect their faith was incorrigible and vile, when he says that all their errors consisted in this, that they denied the Church of Rome to be the holy mother Church, and would not obey her traditions.”—*Ibid.*

The inquisitor Reineirus who betrayed them, and wrote against them saith, “These heretics are known by their manners and conversation; they avoid commerce, that they may be free from deceit and falsehood; they get their livelihood by manual industry, as day labourers and mechanics; and their teachers are weavers or taylors; they are not anxious about amassing riches, but content themselves with the necessaries of life; they are chaste, temperate, and sober; they abstain from anger.—Even when they work, they either learn or teach, in like manner also their women are very modest, avoiding back-biting, foolish jesting, and levity of speech, especially abstaining from lies or swearing, not so much as making use of the common asseverations, in truth, for certain, or the like, because they regard them as oaths;—contenting themselves with simply answering, yes, or no.—See *Jones's History, Vol. II. page 78, 79, 80, &c.*

Thus we see that even their adversaries (who say all manner of evil against them) were at times constrained through force of truth, to bear testimony to their innocence.—And what else but the purity of their lives, could have given them such favour in the eyes of their neighbours, and even of their rulers, as that they not only sheltered them oftentimes from Persecution, for hundreds of years, but even fought to protect them from fury of an hierarchy to which they avowed the strongest attachment? yea even while those very Albigenses or Waldenses, whom they so sheltered, bore a clear and undisguised testimony against



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the whole order of their hierarchy, and their traditions, nay, even while they asserted, that the pope hath not primacy. “Over all the churches of Christ; and that Masses are impious; and it is madness to say masses for the dead; that purgatory is the invention of men, as they who believe go into eternal life, they who believe not into eternal damnation.—They hold also, that vows of celibacy are the inventions of men, and productive of uncleanness; that monkery is a filthy case; so many orders of the clergy, say they, so many marks of the beast; and moreover, we have ever regarded all the inventions of men (in the affairs of religion,) as an unspeakable abomination before God; such as the festival days and vigils of saints, and what is called holy water, &c., holding in abhorrence all human inventions, as proceeding from Antichrist, which produces distress, and are prejudicial to the liberty of the mind; they hold that tythes or priests’ orders belong not to the gospel; so they hold it a duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the mind of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creatures.”—See *Jones’s History of the Christian Church, Vol. II. page 54 to 60*—to which I must refer as my limits would only allow a short extract.

But as I have touched upon what they deny, or speak against, I should also hint at what they profess to believe and teach; for which I must likewise refer to *Jones’s History*; yet may just notice by the way, that they assert, “We believe there is but one God, who is a Spirit, the Creator of all things, the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, who is to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, upon whom we are continually dependant, &c. &c. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and Image of the Father; that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that by Him alone we know the Father; He is our Mediator and Advocate, nor is there any other name under Heaven by which we can be saved, &c.”

“We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray, being by him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.”—*Jones’s History, Vol. II. page 58.*

*with reference to the Albigenses, &c.*

Such were the people against whom *J. M.* saith the Lateran Council sent forth "That exterminating canon," which he instanced by the way to prove that his Church always disclaimed the power of persecution, saying—"This exterminating canon was never put in force against any heretics except the Albigenses:"\* I was about to glance at their unparalleled sufferings, fortitude, and resignation, but *J. M.* has in part done the business before; and by the way of disapproving Persecution altogether, has he not proved as much in five words as I could in a whole volume; which brings me to the fourth observation.

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\* I should make some remark upon his saying, that "This exterminating canon was never put in force against any other heretics except the Albigenses;" seeing he knew full well, that the people which were followed by that Persecution (even for centuries after) were called, or rather stigmatized by divers names, such as poor of Lyons, or of the mountains, woods, or valleys, &c., according to the place of their dispersion; and some were denominated by their occupations, whether labourers or mechanics, &c., but their most leading appellation appears to be that of Waldenses, after the time of Peter Waldo; and so, if he meant that all these were as fragments of the scattered Albigenses, his statement might (in that sense) be correct, which otherwise would be very false; but for my part, I had no way to find them out, but by following whoever was persecuted, according to history; which appears to identify the dispersed Albigenses throughout; even by the testimony of the inquisitor Reinerius; when he calls them Waldenses, saying, "Of all the sects that have risen up against the Church of Rome, the Waldenses have been the most prejudicial and pernicious, inasmuch as their opposition has been of very long continuance: add to which, that this sect is become very general," &c. "And because, while all other sects begot in people a dread and horror of them, on account of their blasphemies against God, this, on the contrary, hath a great appearance of Godliness; for they live righteously before men, believe rightly concerning God in every particular, &c., but hating and reviling the Church of Rome," &c. All which may account for them being the only objects of "extermination;" but is it not marvellous and remarkable, that by a people so weak and contemptible in the world's esteem, the Lord should overthrow the great Imperial Roman hierarchy? as Claudius saith, "All sorts of people have endeavoured, but in vain, to root them out, for, contrary to the opinion of all men, they still remain conquerors, or at least wholly invincible," and still more remarkable, that it should be chiefly effected by the very means which they used in order to crush them, that is, by their dispersion? so the wise were confounded by their own craftiness, even as Reinerius saith, "There is scarcely a country to be found where this heresy is not planted;" so that they conquered through suffering, and multiplied through death; inasmuch that we cannot refer to a circumstance <sup>since</sup> the days of the Apostles,

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Fourthly, I say then, whoever cannot understand the force of such sophistry, as that an exterminating canon was enforced against the Albigenses by the way of no Persecution; it would be in vain for me to add a word to such as cannot understand it with horror; and seeing that their sufferings were beyond what I could set forth, I shall pass on to notice the subtilty of his shifting, to throw the whole weight thereof upon the rulers and people, in order to clear the Church of the imputation of Persecution, while yet he should know full well, that both the rulers and people which he so slanders, were averse to Persecution, insomuch, that the popes, bishops, and cardinals, had much ado to stir them up to the work of extermination; witness how they wrought by divers strange stratagems and devices, too notorious to need reciting? I may only instance the decree of Pope Lucius III. against heretics, A. D. 1181 (above thirty years before that Council of Lateran) it fills above four pages, particularly against those Paterines, and Poor of Lyons, &c., with his "Perpetual Anathema."

After defining the punishment assigned to different orders and ranks, he saith—"As for a layman who shall be found guilty, either publicly or privately, of any of the aforesaid crimes, unless by abjuring his heresy and making satisfaction, he immediately return to the orthodox faith, we decree him to be left to the sentence of the secular judge to receive condign punishment," &c., and so he proceeds—"Those who after having abjured their errors," &c., "If they be found to have relapsed," &c., "We denounce that without any further hearing they be delivered up to the secular power, and their goods confiscated to the use of the Church"—and so, after divers instructions how to prove and find out heretics, among other marks he saith—"If any of them, by a damnable superstition, shall refuse to swear, that alone shall suffice to convict them of being heretics, and liable to the punishment before mentioned.—

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which more clearly confirms and evidences the divine power and reality of the Christian religion, than that which is exemplified in their patience, perseverance, and inflexible constancy; which even literally agree with the trials which our Saviour saith, should await his devoted followers, who should have all manner of evil spoken against them; and being persecuted in one city, they should flee into another, as in *Mat. x.* which is pre-eminently verified in the Albigenses and Waldenses in no common measure.



*with reference to the Albigenses, &c.*

“ We ordain further, that all Earls, Barons, Governors, and  
 “ Councils of Cities and other places,” &c. “ Shall promise upon  
 “ oath, that in all these particulars, whenever they are re-  
 “ quired so to do, they will powerfully and effectually assist the  
 “ Church against heretics and their accomplices.”—And so he  
 goes on, adding—“ If any city shall refuse to yield obedience to  
 “ these decretal constitutions,” &c. “ Neglect to punish op-  
 “ posers, we ordain the same to be excluded from all commerce  
 “ with other cities,” &c.—*Jones's History, Vol. II. page 22.*

This is but a slight specimen of that which popes, monks, and bishops, have promulgated from age to age, which I merely instance to remind *J. M.* and his admirers, how grossly he has belied the rulers and people of his own profession, in order to clear the popes and their creatures, but his whole argument carries its own refutation to a witness, yea, the very first blush confounds the whole, wherein he admits that the counts and princes defended said heretic subjects, even to the hazard and loss of their own dominions (while yet they professed the pope's religion) which they never would have done, if those they called heretics had been such horrid monsters as described by him, neither need the popes have had recourse to such an expedient as the Lateran Council, &c., in order to sanction, strengthen, and establish the work of extermination, if their people had been hearty and unanimous in the measures thereof, and forward to obey their mandates.

And moreover, the very process or execution of the decrees of their popes and councils, prove to a demonstration how much the people disliked persecution; or why else need they have resorted to such nefarious novel inventions, as had not been heard of since the creation of the world, even such as the Inquisition and Crusades against heretics; proceeding to such infamous devices, as to inflame the giddy multitude by promising absolution from sin, to such as ranged themselves under the banners of the cross, for the extirpation of heretics; and thus stirring up the people to murder and plunder their innocent neighbours, which, even as he himself admits, had existed and increased for centuries before; of which people it should be remarked, that while they gave themselves up in full confidence to trust in the Lord alone, (without even essaying to defend themselves;) that as long as they so kept their testimony and integrity, nothing could over-

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come them, nay, but even "The squabbles of the clergy often caused them to be overlooked," though persecution increased with their increase.

And yet however great the sin of some of their successors may appear in the sight of God ; in that wherein they became skaken from an entire reliance upon Him, who had so marvellously sustained their ancestors, and enabled them to rejoice in suffering ; as after all that, to have recourse to the arm of flesh for protection, and even in divers instances to join in with their neighbours and rulers, who fought in their defence ; which also betrayed them to baulk, or compromise their principles in many instances ; yet I say, how much soever the anger of the Lord may have been kindled against such of these poor people, as thus distrusted his protection in the time of their calamity, so as to fear them that could only kill the body ; yet that will in no wise justify the arrogance of proud rabbies, who tremble not to meditate exterminating canons against whomsoever they will in the creation of God, because it was in the power of their hand ; and now, that their successors may add sin to sin with all their might, they yet take on to acquit them outright (of even the imputation of persecution,) by throwing the whole responsibility upon their rulers and people, whose aversion to persecution, (as I have said,) is strikingly marked, not only by the process of inquisitions and crusades, devised and promoted by popes and monks, &c., but also by the various promises and threats, which, from age to age, they thundered forth, in order to stir up and inflame the powers of the earth with ardour, in what they called "The pious work of exterminating heresy," which they might have been spared the pains of repeating so often, had the people been forward of their own accord to promote the measures of extirpation.

Yet horrible as all this must appear, and however men may labour to justify iniquity, still their efforts therein receive a tenfold deeper dye, when they take on to set it all down to the account of infinite purity and perfection : yea, even to assert, that such rabbies and their councils were infallible, and being built upon the rock, as the offspring of God, could never err nor change, but that the true Church of Christ must have unity and fellowship with all that ever they did or decreed, since the days of our Saviour and his Apostles ; who, they say, can have no

*with reference to the Albigenses, &c.*

other successors beside themselves, who "Have gotten the title "deeds and the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven;" could a more horrible slander be invented, or cast upon the glorious gospel of our Redeemer, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them? did ever an infidel devise such a slander as this, alas! how doth it verify the saying of our Saviour, "That a man's foes are they of his own house?" was there ever greater enemies than the professors of Christ, who betray the truth, and cause the way thereof to be evil spoken of?

Was there ever more cruel persecutors than such as *J. M.*? seeing that although the Albigenses were slain with the sword, imprisoned, tortured, and banished, to wander in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, (and even death denounced against any that took them in;) being destroyed in all manner of ways, even burned and buried alive, and driven out with their mothers and infants, until frozen to death on mountains, and often pursued and smothered in caves, &c., and yet what is even all this, when compared to what *J. M.* would do to them, seeing their sufferings were soon over, which were inflicted by men that could only kill the body? but now, hath he not devised a mode of persecution to follow them to the world's end? that is, by a course of the most barefaced slanders, to which his consequence gives no small degree of currency, and so he propagates the foulest of slanders that ever the old murderers invented (to justify and cover their wickedness,) while he should know full well, that there never was a persecutor but what belied and slandered whomsoever they murdered, in order to justify their iniquity, which I might demonstrate in divers instances; suffice it to notice the deeds of the old chief priests and scribes, as an epitome of the whole, when they condemned our Saviour, and accused him of blasphemy and sedition; even while with all their evidence and false witnesses, the keenest eye of an impartial Pagan governor, (though most concerned in the major part of the accusation,) could see in him no fault at all; mark that, Pilate saith (after three examinations,) "I find "in him no fault at all," even while the multitude, inflamed by the priests and elders, accusing him of blasphemy and sedition, &c., cry, crucify him, rather than a robber and murderer; yea, while Pilate, (notwithstanding his base compliance,) washed his hands before them all, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of



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“this just person!!! yet the multitude prevailed, crying out, “If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar’s friend.”—There is an incontrovertible proof, that whoever is condemned through prejudice or malice, must be inevitably belied and slandered, insomuch that whoever could not be convinced thereof, by the Jews’ treatment of the Prince of Life, must be deplorably void of reason or conscience; and more especially wherein He saith, that his devoted followers should be treated as he was himself—see *Mat. x. 25.*—*John xv. 20.*

Is not *J. M.* inexcusable, who professes to regard the Scriptures, while yet he proceeds upon a scale of judgment which is utterly condemned thereby, that is, to judge people without hearing them in their own defence, yea, to take the bare word of their avowed adversaries, while even the Jews saith, “Doth our law judge any man before it hear him,” &c. And so our Saviour convicted them saying, “Did not Moses give you a law, and none of you keepeth that law, why do ye not hear my words,” &c.? Moses’ law said, that a man should be heard before he was judged, but they would not hear Christ, to judge of him according to his speech, but condemned him according to their own prejudices, and so transgressed the very law of Moses itself.—See *John vii. and viii. chapters.*

Nay, but he is worse than the Heathen in his process of judgment, for even Lycias, Festus, Felix, or Agrippa, would not condemn Paul upon the testimony of the whole Jewish nation, but strictly adhered to the issue of Paul’s own defence—see *Acts xxiii. xxiv. xxv. chapters.* Yet how doth *J. M.* deal out slander and calumny against multitudes of people; on the bare testimony of their avowed adversaries, even while he knew, that the writings, books, and testimonies, of the cruelly injured sufferers, had been consumed in the flames along with themselves, and especially at an age before printing was found out, they had little left but what might be gleaned from the writings of such as sided with their adversaries.\*

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\* When I saw this statement put forth by *J. M.*, I then betook myself to try if I could find out any probable thing like what he heaped upon the Albigenes (as I had known but little of history) and may acknowledge my fault, in that I was so ignorant of the sufferings of those people, who had given up all things in this world for the testimony of a good conscience, and cheerfully endured all manner of reproach and revilings, with cruel suffer-

*with reference to the Albigenes, &c.*

Let no man deceive himself, what I assert must either be true or false; though it is none of my business to say who is right or who is wrong; yet shall I not say, that false and deceitful weights and measures are an abomination, and condemned in Scripture? and doth not our Saviour upbraid the Jews who justified the deeds of their forefathers? even while they cried against persecution, (like *J. M.*, who saith, “I detest it,”) saying, “Who goeth about to kill thee;” but he saith, “Ye are of your father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning,” and again, “Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers,” &c.—compare *Mat.* xxiii. 30.

ings, even to banishment, torture, and death, for his sake in whom they believed, and who enabled them to rejoice in that it was given them to bear manifold afflictions for their testimony to the truth, and against deceit: All which I could evidently observe without looking far into history.

And moreover, while I observed such a volume of doleful tidings, of the things which befel the Christian world in those cloudy and dark days; I could also yet clearly perceive (amidst all) one circumstance which affords a gleam of satisfaction, even that many who adhered to the pope's authority, were utterly averse to Persecution; seeing they not only sheltered and protected the Albigenes; but often even fought in their defence against their relentless adversaries; which while I attribute all to the overruling Providence of Almighty God, yet I would by no means rob their neighbours (amongst whom they sojourned) of the credit due to them for their kindness toward these poor people, which doth largely appear in *Jones's History of the Christian Church*.

And another fact which may be traced to a demonstration is this, that such a people as the Albigenes have existed ever since the days of the Apostles, though variously denominated; as Novatians, Puritans, Paulitians, Albigenes, and Waldenses, &c., with divers reproachful names given them by their adversaries, while yet they appear to have been sometimes more hidden, (like that of the Church fleeing into the wilderness from the fury of the dragon as in *Rev.* xii.) yet throughout all; even in those days, they may be viewed as a city set upon a hill that could not be hid (for their very sufferings and patience made them conspicuous) even shining forth over and above all the empires and powers of the earth, which could not prevail against them, (so long as they were kept undefiled thereby) though they sorely afflicted them.

And moreover, it is well worthy of notice throughout ages yet to come, that while they stood true to their testimony against all wars, oaths, and idle ceremonies, &c., they were signally preserved for hundreds of years, even in the midst of persecution.—And although it was then that their testimony run strong, loud, and undisguised, against the superstitions and corruptions of the Imperial Church of Rome, and of the world at large, yet they were not only spared, but grew and multiplied exceedingly “Being often overlooked through the intestine squabbles of the clergy”—yea, and found such favour

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(to the end) with *Luke* xi. 47. (to the end) with *John* vii. viii. chapters, &c. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord."—*Provs.* xvii. 15.

Could any thing more loudly bespeak a state of desperate depravity, than for a man to take on to justify the iniquity of

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in the eyes of their neighbours, that both rulers and people not only sheltered them, but even took up arms to defend them against such as the popes had stirred up to cut them off; until in process of time, their successors in after ages, joined with their neighbours who had fought for them, and so took up arms in their own defence, to help such as sided with them in that way; which became such a woful snare to them, that it is remarkable, how when they took up arms to defend themselves, they became so shattered, as even in many instances, to baulk or compromise their testimony, so as not to remain a distinct separate people, but shifted into other various societies about the days of Huss, Luther, and Calvin.

Should any yet query, to what purpose then was all their sufferings, constancy, and perseverance, seeing it came to nothing in the end? I should answer, that while in man's view, it seems to come to nothing, (and though the chaff was driven away) yet all that was weighty therein, is safely gathered into the garner of God, and tends to manifold great and glorious purposes indeed, yea, such as may be called a blessing to the nations; and even to their adversaries, who must needs have been struck with the force of their example, and the constancy of their sufferings, as a continual admonition; yea, as a testimony of the Lord's hand stretched out all the day long; and now more especially, unto to such as boast of superior reformation, that they may see whether they retain even the simplicity of the gospel, in that power and efficacy wherein those then maintained it, to the praise of Him that gave them the hundred fold in the midst of their sufferings.

And yet after all, many are still so sottish, (perhaps wilfully so) as to say, where was the Reformation before the days of Luther? even many Protestants and Dissenters, seem to place the period of the Reformation to his days; who might with as good reason, place the period of Christianity to the days of Constantine; and while I should be very far from detracting from Luther or his fellow-labourers (but rather lament that their successors should fall so short of their spirit, zeal, and integrity,) yet what if it should be found, that the Reformation has rather suffered violence since their days, while yet it may assume a more orderly or national complexion; but if it be ascending the chair of university degrees, in whatsoever garb it may be, surely that should bear no comparison with the light, life, and gospel simplicity, through which the Albigenses, Waldenses, and others, bore the burthen and heat of the day; howbeit, all that must appear foolishness (or worse than folly) to our great scribes and doctors, and all the wise men in old Adam; yea, it may remain among the glorious secrets which God hides from such, until his book be opened in the Eternal World.



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others, because they were highly esteemed of men? alas, alas! how very unlike the honest frankness of the ancient prophets and penmen of Scripture, is such base dissembling? they would not write to cloak up their own sins, nor that of others; nay, but rather to confess them, even though as highly favoured as Aaron, David, or Solomon: they honestly proclaimed the evil and infirmity of human nature, and thereby, clearly shewed how much they needed the Mediator of a better covenant; that when I saw the base shifting and juggling resorted to by *J. M.*, in order to clear his Church of the imputation of persecution; I read it with horror; considering him far more inexcusable, than the persecutors whom he took on to justify, who might often have done it ignorantly, nay, even thinking they did God service, when blinded by the smoke of an inflamed zeal; but now, to see him coolly and deliberately, marching through the pool of their blood, wagging the head and crying aha, and calling on others to rejoice with him therein, bespeaks him to be eager to partake of the iniquity of their forefathers.

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And furthermore, if the foregoing sophistry should seem to fall short of convincing his readers of the innocency of his popes and bishops, so as to prove them as harmless as lambs; he then commences another course of reasoning, and that is, to set forth great torrents of persecution, which he saith, had been carried on by Protestants and Dissenters; arguing as if that should fully demonstate the innocency of his Church; even as though two wrongs must certainly make one right; and although he has managed that argument, as if he would hurry his reader into such a whirlpool, as not to distinguish day from night, yet I shall take a slight glance at his ways and means, to see if he has succeeded any better thereby, than when he took on to prove extermination to be no persecution.

He commences his last course of argument by saying, that "They are chiefly the Smithfield fires of Queen Mary's reign, which furnish matter for Protestant prejudice and declamation against the Catholic religion; as breathing the very spirit of cruelty and murder," &c.—See page 170. Thus he appears to speak of the "Smithfield fires," with as much indifference as we speak of lighting a candle, and seems highly offended that

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orators should have objected to the heat of those fires, so far as they were blown up by the bishops, which we need not wonder at, while he saith, they cannot err, and so he asserts, that “Mary, Bonner, or Gardner, did not persecute in virtue of the tenets of their religion, but from motives of state policy, against violence and rebellion,” &c.

But he saith, “That in the instructions which the pope sent Mary for her conduct on the throne, there is not a word to recommend persecution; nor is there in the Synod, which the pope’s legate held at that time,” &c. “He opposed persecution with all his influence, as did King Philip’s chaplain also, who even preached against it, and defied the advocates of it to produce an authority from Scripture in its favour.”—*Letter xlix. page 171.* Alas! was ever such odious juggling slapped in the face of any reader? he saith, “The pope sent her instructions for her conduct on the throne,” did the pope instruct Mary to commit the execution of her state affairs to the bishops, who might punish delinquents at their pleasure, with new invented tortures, and even roast them alive, which became as a proverb in those days? now even suppose he could establish his far-fetched subterfuge, of defaming the sufferers indiscriminately with the imputation of sedition, &c., yet what would he gain even by that? would not the work of those bishops still remain the most horrible that ever appeared upon the face of the earth? yea, even surpassing that of savage cannibals; for how would it mend the matter to say, that the bishops only took the civil power out of the hands of the magistrates, in order to roast rebels?

Yet with all his sophistry, he cannot prove his slander of sedition and murder against the sufferers indiscriminately, though he labours to betray his reader into that sentiment, even calling them assassins and robbers, &c.—See *Letter xxii. page 67.*—while he himself knew full well, that the main question those bishops were wont to put unto such as they designed to condemn, was, “What sayest thou to the Sacrament of the Altar,” &c., but doth not his saying that such persecution was quite against the mind of the pope and cardinals, savour still more of vile hypocrisy, either in them or *Milner*, or both together? for the pope to see the flame of persecution kindled to his liking, but knowing the people’s aversion thereto, he would cry against it, and pretend

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to abhor it (like Pilate) while yet he takes great care not to quench one spark of that persecution against which he exclaims, nay, *J. M.* knew full well, that if his priesthood disclaimed persecution as he asserts, that then the pope might as easily have stopt it, as he could have blown out a candle.

All which being put together, even a child may easily perceive how mighty cheap persecution rates with him and the pope, seeing that neither Bonner nor Gardner, were ever disturbed by his authority on account of burning people alive: and yet he knew full well, that if those bishops had but transgressed one of their traditions, they should soon be roughly handled; nay, had they only compelled their flocks to taste meat on the day they call Good Friday, they might then be excommunicated and expelled from office, even though our Saviour saith—"Nothing from without which goeth into the mouth can defile a man; but those things which come from within out of the heart, they defile the man: for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders," &c.—Read *Mat.* xv. and *Mark* vii.—And Jesus sheweth that persecution is murder, and of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; and while we need not look far to observe too much of the censures and curses which the popes thundered forth from age to age; even against people and nations, that dare to question their mandates, tho' of things merely appertaining to the commandments, doctrines, and traditions of men, and often on state affairs; and as he himself instances, even on account of some informality in the keeping of Easter.—See *letter* xlvi. page 168.—Yet when, or where can we find them excommunicating men that burned and tortured such as they chose to call heretics? which proves to a demonstration how mighty cheap they esteemed persecution, even while they raise a hypocritical howling against it.

But for him to set forth King Philip's chaplain as a preacher against persecution, seems still more revolting, seeing that he should know, how the said Philip had proved himself such a monster of cruelty, as well might be compared to Nero, yea, even "Sitting in state (as we read) with part of his family, to feast their eyes with the procession of an Auto-da-fe"—as if delighted to behold the burning of numbers of his subjects at a time; what shall we say to all this? is it so that he should deem the subject so light as only fit to make a jest thereof? (far worse than jesting) to esteem burning no persecution at all, but mere



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harmless fires? Are these the fruits of his "Apostolical Tree," whereby he promised to prove his Church to be the only "Spotless spouse of Christ?" but to him that glories in such fruits all reasoning must prove of no avail.

And as for the conclusion, whereby he essays to clear his popes, monks, and bishops, from the imputation of persecution, by insisting, that Protestants and Dissenters surpassed them therein; what doth he gain thereby, except to turn the whole mess into his own dish? yet it seems marvellous that very shame did not restrain him from once naming the French Huguenots, seeing that his own people had done as much to them as might have satiated the most cruel desires of a Galerius, only to say, that in the massacre of 1572, they butchered, abused, and destroyed above 30,000 unsuspecting Huguenots so called, men, women, and children, even according to Thuanus, their own historian; while yet the Huguenots themselves, state the number at above 70,000: and we read, that "When the news thereof reached the pope and cardinals, they proclaimed a general thanksgiving for that blessing conferred on the see of Rome, and the Christian world, by the extirpation of those Huguenots;" which was followed by lighting up of bonfires, and other Heathenish marks of rejoicing, and though it should appear, that nothing could equal the circumstances of horror which marked that massacre, yet was it not far surpassed by that under Lewis XIV., above 100 years after; and although I should be very far from attempting to justify any people that had recourse to the arm of flesh for defence or protection, even in times of greatest calamity, yet surely the case of those Huguenots is such, as should have restrained him from setting it forth as a mark of their infamy, or of the gentleness and brotherly kindness of his own people, for how could he have hit upon a theme that comprehends more unparalleled infamy on the part of his Church.

He then proceeds to set forth all he could scrape together, wherein (he saith) the Protestants and Dissenters had persecuted both his own people and each other, shewing moreover, how all such persecutions, had been promoted by apostate monks, friars, and bishops; even by such as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c. on the Continent, and the Low Countries, and by such as Knox, Craumer, and Ridley, &c. in Scotland and England, but above all, in the reign of Elizabeth: and so he seems, to let nothing of

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the kind escape ; as if he thought the more of such stuff he could scrape together, the better he could cover his own filthiness, while he seems to forget, that all this work had been taught in his own school, where all the racks, whips, gibbets, fires, and faggots, &c. (which he so often repeats) had been devised, and copiously employed at the nod of his own popes and bishops.— And how could he hit upon a more convincing mode, to demonstrate, that wherever his monks and bishops went, persecution went with them? and that whatever might be made of them, they should be persecutors still? I say, is it possible that he could have found out a clearer method to turn the whole mess of persecution upon his own order, than what he has done by magnifying the Protestant persecutions, wherein he saith, “ It was set on and conducted by apostate monks, priests, and bishops ;” such as had been bred and brought up in his own school? and moreover he labours to prove throughout his volume, that a deal of popery still exists among Protestants and Dissenters even to this day, and sorry I am that I cannot deny the assertion.

As to the outcry he makes against the persecution in the reign of Elizabeth, (though I would not make light of it by any means) yet doth not a portion of the guilt thereof lie at the door of his own popes and cardinals, who had laboured for many ages, to instruct their monarchs in the way they would have them to deal with such as they styled heretics? and would it not be quite likely, that the daughter of Henry (on whom the pope had conferred the title of Defender of the Faith) should be able to take a leaf out of their tuition, though she should hardly have thought of the like, if the popes had not instructed the world therein; and seeing that the pope had cursed Elizabeth, and discharged her subjects from their allegiance to her, she might therefore revenge it on her people near home (who were obedient to his mandates) while the pope himself was too far off; and thus were the poor people ground between the crown and the mitre, as between the upper and the nether mill-stone, even as had been the case for many ages, that the poor flocks have been sorely torn and worried, as from mountain to hill, and from hill to mountain, even by the insatiable cravings, and cruel howlings, of self-interested kings, priests, popes, and bishops, and all the potentates of the earth, who, however they may lay claim to, or boast of heavenly or kingly dominion, are yet slaves to their own lust

*Postscript.*

of honour and preeminence, to which also they tend to keep the people in bondage, even to this day; howbeit, the Lord is signally rescuing them out of their jaws as relates to temporal tyranny and dominion; oh! then, that the nations may yet demonstrate their gratitude for such unspeakable mercy, so as to be found worthy of Him, who alone can set them free from sin, and spiritual tyranny, which is the most deplorable and grievous bondage of all; but whomsoever the Son makes free, shall be free indeed.

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## **POSTSCRIPT.**

Should any apprehend from what I have written, that I seem disposed to pass lightly over the persecutions which had been carried on by Protestants and Dissenters; I would say, far be it from me to make light thereof in anywise; nay, but were they to attempt to defend, cloak up, or justify the persecutions promoted by their ancestors; I should then fall still heavier on them, than on that which was set on under the popes; but seeing I know of no Protestant or Dissenter, that would go about to defend or justify the persecutions caused by their ancestors, of course I have none of them to upbraid therewith; howbeit, they need to look well, whether they are (even to this day,) placing confidence in Church establishments, which had been in some degree erected by hands polluted with persecution in former ages; and if that be in anywise their case, can they then expect the Lord to continue the light of his glorious gospel to shine upon them, though he winked at the times of ignorance, and even accepted the integrity of some amongst them? yet let all remember, that every foundation must be tried, that nothing should stand but that which the hand of the Lord erected.

And while I have been combating the works of *J. Milner*, I had rather know nothing of him, nor regard I his book; nay, but seeing it held forth to the nations, as an incontrovertible oracle, induced me to call upon his admirers, to consider the consequence of maintaining such a menacing attitude at this day, lest that should beguile them into a reliance upon high Church, and high profession, while in the vanity of that mind, they overlook their sure mercies; even by being emboldened to



*A Remark on Grier's Reply.*

conclude that they want nothing, but (as he boasts) abound in channels of means of sanctity and salvation, while they know not that such coverings are like filthy rags, which should leave them poor, blind, miserable, and naked, even in want of all things.

And now in conclusion, I leave the simple-hearted reader to see, how far I have clearly demonstrated, that the one true religion, is, to love God above all, and his neighbour as himself; and that, if ever they find **THE TRUE RULE OF FAITH**, they must have all their ways and wares turned upside down, even to the casting out of that wherein they glory; and embracing that which they have despised; yea, even to leave all their ready-made rules, with their carnal wisdom, which cannot save the soul; and receive with meekness the ingrafted word (or spirit,) which they now call fallacy; which alone can bring to the right **END OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY**, even to beat their weapons into plowshares, so as to learn war no more in that wise, but become doers of the word—*James i. 22*. Oh! saith my soul, that they may yet be so redeemed out of their many inventions, as to yield obedience, (even to revere) that gracious invitation, which saith, “Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord—cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?”—*Isaiah ii. 5* 22—that none may ascribe the favours and mercies they receive, unto man, or to his works, but unto the Lord alone, to whom only it belongs for evermore.

*A Remark upon Richard Grier's Reply, page 352.*

There is a paragraph in *Grier's Reply*, which I cannot let pass unnoticed, though to me it is somewhat unintelligible, wherein he saith—“Over the disgusting subject which relates to their times” (Mary and Elizabeth, &c.) “I willingly draw a veil, while I ardently wish, that so much of this narrative of human infirmity and wickedness, as Doctor *Milner* has detailed, was struck out of the page of history; or, at least, that it should never re-appear in print.—As we have escaped the storm of persecution, and have not witnessed the tremendous trials to which those, who went before us, were exposed; we should rather cultivate feelings of mutual charity and forbearance, than exasperate each other by charge and

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“recrimination.” I say, to me, this is an ambiguous paragraph; for, if *R. Grier* only means to express a wish, that the manner wherein *J. M.* treats the subject, should never re-appear in print? I have nothing to say against that; but if he means, that no faithful and true record of the martyrs’ trials, perseverance, and sufferings, should be handed down to posterity, but should be “Struck out of the page of history?” which seems (to me) the obvious meaning of his words, and as such I shall make remarks upon them, (especially as I have noticed divers others of that mind,) I say then, if the latter be his meaning, I abhor it, even as bordering on vile blasphemy against the overruling Providence of Almighty God

Alas, alas!! did our Saviour forewarn his faithful followers, of the trials, sufferings, and persecutions, they should partake of from the rulers and powers of the earth? with His promise of the hundred fold, even in this life? and that such should be peculiarly noticed at the day of Judgment? and did the prophets and apostles prophecy largely thereof? and now, after the marvellous fulfilment of their predictions, to have all struck out of the page of history, in compliment to those great rabbies, lest they should again snarl about the old bone, (which was the very root and ground of persecution;) and because they now partake of that ease and fullness, which was purchased by the blood and sufferings of millions, they would not have their sufferings and faithfulness recorded, lest it should disturb their false repose, or expose their illgotten degrees, of orders, tithes, and great benefices, &c., which they hold by the example of the popes, and not of the Apostles; and while they are fierce against the popes and their priesthood, for the sake of the old bone, they scruple not to cling to the worst part of popery themselves, for such is the blotting out the sufferings of the faithful out of the book or page of history, which may be classed with the worst species of persecution; and he that would blot out a little, should never know where to stop, nor could he ever be satisfied, nay, but wax worse, and fret still more and more; and moreover, the very object of charity and forbearance (which he assigns as a motive) might be quite frustrated, by blotting out those things which God would have recorded; who in his just wrath, could in a moment confound their unrighteous mutual confederacy, even though they should be made as good friends as ever Herod

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and Pilate were.—And as to the page of history whereof he speaks, only strike out that which appertains to the welfare and tribulations of the gospel, and then, alas! what should remain better than mere froth, while they would rob the world of a peculiar excitement to praise the Lord, even for deliverance from that scourge, under which mankind had bled and groaned for ages.

Was it not charged as a crying evil against Israel of old, that they should forget their cruel servitude and deliverance from Egyptian bondage? which although it points to a more deep and spiritual signification, yet that don't hinder it from holding good outwardly in the letter also; but bad as they were, and prone to forget and turn aside, yet we do not read that ever they meditated such an accursed device, as to have the record of their forefathers' suffering and deliverance “Struck out of the page of history;” howbeit, if they had grown so conformable and delicate toward the feelings of an evil genius; as not to repeat the event, lest it should offend the Egyptians, or stand in the way of mutual harmony? would not that prove such a deceitful and unrighteous confederacy, as could only be worthy of Cain's generation, who would like to have his brother's blood covered up and hid, and the record of his acceptable sacrifice and suffering “Struck out of the page of history?” surely they must be in an evil mind indeed, and in unity with the works of darkness, who cannot “Cultivate feelings of mutual charity and forbearance,” unless men forbear to speak out the truth; and to concur, to compromise and evade truth-speaking on such a principle, is equally base and an abomination.

Alas! let us but look for a moment to what such mock charity and forbearance would lead, would it not lead to rank infidelity, hypocrisy, and even to the worst species of persecution, somewhat like him that would not smite his patient, only spread a wet cloth over his face, in order to smother him?—Pray what kind of mutual charity and forbearance is that, which cannot be cultivated without striking out the sufferings and constancy of saints and martyrs out of the page of history, lest it might exasperate the devil's nature in some of our neighbours, &c.? but would not that go to condemn all the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, that ever had been persecuted; seeing that had they only held their peace, and stood mute, as he would have his page



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of history, they should never have been persecuted? Alas! what sort of charity is that, which would nurse up such a principle in his neighbour, as should be exasperated at the record of truth? nay, but might not such a mind break out again, and even the very justice of an offended God, cause it to pour forth fury upon the head that nursed it up, under a deceitful guise of forbearance and charity, while it was rather in deceit and cruelty?—for after all, there is nothing worth pleasing or saving alive, in me or my neighbour, but what would prefer plain honest candour and frankness, (even though opposed to our views) rather than sleeked hypocrisy, though never so fawning upon us, nay, is not the very character of a true Christian; that of a good soldier and confessor? but the infidel cares for none of those things, nor looks he beyond ease or worldly advantage, and there lies his reward; for surely, did he but care for truth and righteousness, he should soon perceive a still greater woe entailed on such an unrighteous confederacy, than even “The tremendous storm of persecution itself;” if so be that the deceiver might thereby prevail to accomplish what he never could effect by means of persecution; even by a guise of fawning flattery, to overthrow genuine simplicity, and godly sincerity, and on the ruins thereof, to re-edify priestcraft, superstition, and hypocrisy; howbeit, the wolf or the hireling could never bemoan such a state of desolation, until the vengeance of Heaven cause fearfulness to surprise the hypocrite.

If the Author to the reply meant differently, I would by no means apply this to him; even though he should have been more explicit, seeing that others may understand it as I do; I therefore took occasion thereby, to offer this plain remark on what I deem a matter of the highest importance.

## SECTION XX.

*An Appeal to Protestants and Dissenters.*

**A**ND now for us who profess the Reformation, it is high time to look what we have been doing with those peculiar talents committed to our trust, and withal, even the precious gift of time; if haply we may see how deplorably we have fallen short, before it be too late, even before the things that belong to our peace be for ever hid from our eyes; surely we have had a long day given us, even a long time of trial; let us therefore consider, first, whether our spirit and manner of life, have been such as should further the cause of the Reformation, or whether it be not rather an obstruction, and even as a stumbling-block of iniquity in the way of the weak.

I say then, if while we profess the Scriptures (which testify of the brightest manifestation of light and truth that ever dawned upon the world) we should yet shew forth by our pursuits and manner of life, that we have been giving the preference to the things of time and of sense, even to the treasures, delights, and friendship of this world, while the things that are eternal and make for everlasting peace, claim scarcely a secondary portion of our attention; I say, if we be found in such a case, how great will be our condemnation, if even while we extol the Scriptures, which warn us to redeem the time—to lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven, (and having food and raiment to be therewith content,) we have been rather surfeited with divers lusts, and coveting of riches, which is the root of all evil, whereby men err from the faith, and fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown them in perdition, &c., according to 1 *Tim.* vi. 8. 9. 10.

Alas! if we be found in such a condition, how could we lay any claim to that of standing for the truth, and against deceit, if we be only deceiving our own souls, and even worse than trifling with Omnipotence? Alas! if such be our condition, is there not cause to fear lest we be found cumberers of his ground, which he would not always endure, even though He is merciful and of long forbearance, yet surely He is just and righteous too, and will have a people to stand for his truth upon earth, and He can even raise up children unto Abraham, as from the very stones of the street; and the Reformation will yet go forward,

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even though we should be cast out through unfaithfulness, or how should his blessed purpose be effected, which is so clearly and powerfully testified in *Revelations* and divers other parts of Scripture, concerning the latter days, wherein the Church should be brought forth out of her wilderness or captive state? but alas! how have many, who are called Protestants and Dissenters, rather obstructed than promoted the coming of that glorious day, at least, so far as respected themselves?

And although my limits will not allow me to descend into particulars, yet I may slightly advert to a few cases, which nearly concern the very fundamental principle and first step of the Reformation; and first of all I would query, whether we have even fully acknowledged and confessed to the sufferings and constancy of those that are gone before us, who had, throughout many ages, borne testimony to the purity, power, and simplicity of the Redeemer's Kingdom, even at the expense of life and liberty, and all that was dear to them in this world, with all manner of evil spoken against them falsely, for his sake, for whom they suffered? and yet after all, have not some of our avowed Protestants, even run with the multitude, to publish the most wicked lies and slanders that ever had been cast upon the deeply injured and persecuted Albigenes, who, throughout many ages, had suffered all that could be inflicted upon mortals, for their testimony to the power and simplicity of the gospel, and against the ceremonies and corruptions of an imperial state hierarchy? yet after all, behold how they are still vilely slandered, even as by John Giffard a noted historian, who also wrote the biography of William Pitt, as noticed in *Jones's History*, how J. Giffard in his *History of France*, sets forth the Albigenes as believing in two Gods, and two Christs, &c. to whom they ascribe such blasphemous and horrible actions, as I deem too filthy and wicked to insert, as may be seen in *Jones's History*, who apologises for quoting such an infamous slander, as being not fit for insertion, and only gave it as a specimen of many such like slanders, published by divers authors, see preface to *Jones's History Vol. I. 4th Edition*, wherein he stiles such slanders, "The blackest calumnies the devil could ever invent to overbear oppressed innocence."

And now what shall we say, to behold the like held forth, even by highly esteemed Protestants, and lodged in their libra-



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ries, as hidden vulcanoes of iniquity, without even exciting the censure or indignation of those they call their divines, who yet appear exceedingly tenacious of their own favourite rites and ceremonies, and would even be thought the very guardians of truth and righteousness?

What shall we say to these things? will not the Lord be avenged on such a people as this? even a people professing great zeal for Scripture and the concerns thereof; yet doth not our Saviour identify the cause of such as had, or should in aftertimes, suffer for the sake of righteousness, as most precious in his sight? yea, doth he not set it forth as a main feature of decision in the final judgment, the treatment of such as were sick or in prison, &c.? and therefore, what shall we say to high professors, who not only care not to visit such, but even vomit out a flood of reproach after them, in order to amuse a sinful generation?

Alas! how can such complain of Popish persecution or intolerance? was ever greater inconsistency even in the popes themselves? nay, but doth not such listless and pretended reformers, rather justify the popes and their councils, who, as *J. M.* saith, issued exterminating canons against these poor Albigenes? and therefore, of course, might think it as right to scandalize as to exterminate them, and even think thereby they did God service; but how great is the crime of those that wantonly and wickedly deal out such slanders against those that never offended them, (even when dead, and of course cannot defend themselves,) while yet such learned slanderers should know full well, that there never was yet a people persecuted, but was also slandered and grossly belied; and that, not only because persecution blindeth the promoters thereof, but that it likewise becomes a theme of jesting for their giddy multitude, even of the baser sort, who should think it no crime to ridicule all that their teachers should condemn, among whom, even a ludicrous jest of the drunkard, might be repeated so often, as at last to be deemed an undeniable fact; even as David himself said, he was made the song of drunkards.—*Psalm* lxi. 12.

But these Protestants who slander and belie the Albigenes, seem less excusable than even their very persecutors, seeing that they should know, that even their very avowed adversaries, were often constrained to give testimony to the purity and integrity of their profession and conduct; saving only, in that wherein they

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disclaimed and condemned all the ceremonies and conduct of the Church of Rome, alleging, that they were “Armed with words of Scripture wherewith they defend their errors, and oppose the Catholic truth;” (see the last Section for further account of them.) And Evervines writing to Bernard, (to implore his aid against them,) saith, “What is most astonishing, they come to the stake and endure the torment of the flames, not only with patience but even with joy,” &c.—and the said Bernard their avowed adversary, (of whom *J. M.* saith, that “He discovered their heresy by miracles,”) saith, “If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian; if you observe their conversation nothing can be more blameless, and what they speak they prove by deeds,” &c. “What more like a Christian? as to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, does violence to no man, he fasts much, and eats not the bread of idleness, but works with his hands for his support. The whole body, indeed, are rustic and illiterate,” &c. “Such was the testimony of Bernard in their behalf.”—See *Jones’s History, Vol. I. page 507*—all which is similar to what may be gathered, even from others of their adversaries and accusers, who wrote against them.\*

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\* Now with such testimonies before them, as even that of him they call Saint Bernard and others of their avowed adversaries; is it not marvellous, that such pretended Protestant authors as Mosheim, and Giffard, &c. could have the face to sport themselves and their readers, with believing and slandering such deeply injured sufferers as the Albigenses; alas! what a wicked race of mortals must they deem their readers, who could be amused with such lying cheer!!!

Hence we must conclude, seeing that *J. M.* accuses the martyrs of Queen Mary’s days, to have been guilty of notorious crimes, even such as assassins and robbers, &c.—See *letter xxii. page 67.*—Therefore, our Protestant authors should of course echo the same language, had not their friends who outlived them, deemed them to be somewhat ranged on the side of their own hierarchy.

While Giffard saith the Albigenses had two Gods and two Christs, one of which kept a concubine and the other two wives, &c. &c. surely then, he hath full as good authority in *J. M.*, to call the martyrs of Queen Mary’s days assassins and robbers, as ever he had to slander the Albigenses; which parallel will hold good in all cases whatsoever, wherein people have been persecuted and stigmatized as heretics: But, alas! what infamous mockers should they be, who could feed upon such stuff, while they make a talk of

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But peradventure this modern historian as well as Mosheim and others, had something of the same gall against the poor Albigenses, as that which stirred up the popes and their councils to exterminate them, if so be that their simplicity, even struck at the very root and pomp of his own hierarchy, and therefore might think to oblige his priesthood, by dealing out a ludicrous tale against them, because they called the worldly pompous Church, "The whore of Babylon;" I only mention this, as the most probable cause, seeing there must needs be some prominent inducement, to excite an author to sport so wickedly with deeply injured innocence; howbeit, I am far from offering these hints merely for the sake of the Albigenses, (or Waldenses,) who have been rather honoured by the appellation of heretic, believing as I do, that their record is on high, even safe with Him, whose spirit is a true recorder, who saith, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake," &c. Nay, but I am concerned for our own sake, lest this iniquity should lie at our own door, even as a heavy load of guilt upon the very nation.

And moreover, I do not glance at this case as being the only one to be concerned for, but rather that by hinting at the above, I may point at too much of the like tendency, nay, what shall I say, when even many bishops and teachers, who profess the reformed religion, have in their writings, gone hand in hand with Mother Church, in condemning all that ever she condemned, (as if they still held, that the gospel stood more in mere uniformity of sentiment, than in truth and righteousness,) wherein some have gone so far, as to call all heretics, that she have stiled heretics; and all saints and fathers, that she so calls, as if on purpose to tally with her orthodoxy, and justify her measures, even to condemn all that ever withdrew from her for conscience

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reading the Bible; will they concur with the priests, who called Paul a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition?

Nay, but seeing the old Pagan rulers accused the early Christians (whom they persecuted) of being Atheists, who eat human flesh, and even murdered and eat their own children; surely then, our historians have the same right to echo their language, seeing the same invariable rule comprehends the whole, which is, that whoever persecutes and kills another, could think no slander too bad for him; and may I not add, that whoever deals out their slanders are persecutors still.



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sake, except such as tally with their own cloth : but such might be asked, with what colour of consistency could they dissent from that Church or priesthood, while they so far acknowledge their endless genealogies ? but above all, why should they stand aloof from her communion, while they so far unite in the decision of her popes and councils, as to stifle all heretics that they have condemned, even though neither Christ nor his apostles never called any people heretics, yet now our modern Protestants and Dissenters call people heretics, (in mere compliment to the old Mother,) even while they declare in some of these very histories, that the writings of such as they stifle heretics, were burned together with themselves, and no authentic document of their faith or practice to be found, but through their avowed adversaries !!!

Alas ! is that hearing a man before he was condemned, nay, surely, but far worse than either Jews or Heathens, who would say, "Doth our law judge any man before he is heard ?"—see *John* vii. 51.—*Acts* xxv. 16.—and yet have not those pretended reformed divines and others, called divers societies heretics, without even a possibility of knowing what they were, only by the mere say so of their accusers and avowed enemies, who often contradicted each other and themselves too, as will plainly appear without looking far into history ?

Is that doing to all men as they would have others do unto them, according to our Lord's commandment ? nay, surely, for who would be so done by themselves, as to be belied and held forth as a scandal before all faces, even on the bare assertion of their adversaries and accusers, without ever being allowed to explain their own cause ? alas ! how can such be called Christians, who thus break our Saviour's commandment, and sin therein with both hands lustily ? and how much less still can they lay claim to the Reformation, while their scale of judgment falls below that of the Jews, or even Heathens, or all that ever went before them, except those called sons of Belial, (as I have already noticed ?) and shall not they that publish, and they that delight to read such unauthenticated slanders, be equally guilty ? nay, many and various lying slanders cast forth upon such as from age to age, (even at the cost of all that was dear in this world,) bore testimony against the ceremonies, pomp, and corruption, of an imperial court hierarchy.

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And now if any say that I dwell too long on this subject, I would answer, only let them look into the New Testament, if they yet regard it, and there they may read that it was the blessed portion of Christ's little flock, to have all manner of evil spoken against them; and that he even sets forth as the main feature of direful decision in the final judgment, even that of, "I was a stranger, sick, and in prison, &c., and ye visited me not!!!" did ever voice or language utter a thing more awful? whence comes it then that it is set so lightly by in these days, even by Protestants and Dissenters, (that instead of a disposition to visit such, they vomit out reproach against them,) is it not because the god of this world hath so blinded the mind, that their main bent and pursuits, are after things that are temporal, even to the passing over those things which are eternal?

And is not the main cause of all this, the love of money, which I noticed in the forepart of this address, even as the text thereof? the Scripture saith, "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith," &c. So there we may see the main root of error and delusion, nay, is not that a main bait, whereby the devil (in all ages,) bewitched and beguiled people from the straight and narrow way of truth and righteousness? and have not many high professors of the reformed religion, been taken by the self-same bait? even so as to run greedily after the friendship, gain, and promotion of this world, being so beguiled thereby, as to labour to corrupt others from the simplicity which is in Christ, whereby many inventions were sought, even to bring up some of the popes and Jewish ceremonies, in order to make a fair shew, to draw the attention of the people towards themselves, and thus beguile them from the spirit and grace of God, which alone could give victory over sin, and over the lusts and vanities of the world, and enable to fulfil his whole law in one word, even love, which should qualify for every good word and work.

But they that make a gain of the gospel, holds it forth as an abstruse science, that none could comprehend but through the medium of their school divinity, even by that wisdom which is from beneath, whereby the spiritual atmosphere becomes darkened, and the carnal mind (which is enmity with God) pleased and nourished up, instead of labouring for that living spiritual

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bread which cometh down from Heaven, which nourisheth up the soul unto eternal life, nay, but instead thereof, they labour (as I said before,) to promote the interest of self-seeking men: and all this under a specious semblance of zeal and sanctity; and thus, turning the very name and profession of our Lord and Saviour, into a pick-lock to gain and promotion in the world; and now, is not even a part of their great Universities employed therein, from whence titles and degrees of promotion and honour is conferred, instead of reward, in order that gain and promotion may be sure to follow at the tail end thereof? even as Martin Luther complains; a short extract whereof is as follows, as he saith, “The more choice youth of Christian people are  
 “ here prostituted, and cast into the open throat of hell; that  
 “ I verily think this destruction was figured by the idol Moloch,  
 “ to whom they made their choice children to pass through the  
 “ fire; afterwards Aristotle being read to them, &c., the wits  
 “ of the Christian youths are exercised with heathenish and  
 “ human learning; yea, are quite blinded and oppressed with  
 “ it, and instead of the word of God, the doctrine of Antichrist  
 “ is delivered; that it may seem, the devil himself, could not  
 “ bring forth a more subtle and effectual invention and engine,  
 “ utterly to extinguish the gospel, than to set up Universities;  
 “ wherein, under the pretence of Christian doctrine, nothing  
 “ should be taught but that which is most contrary to Christian  
 “ faith; and if at any time it seem good, to call forth the  
 “ choicest to the government of the Churches, they call them out  
 “ of the stews and dens.

“ And truly to me, this last face of Antichrist seems to be  
 “ the most hurtful of all, because this hath the pretence of the  
 “ word, when all the rest have only the colour of example; for  
 “ it is incomparably the greatest prejudice, under the colour of  
 “ the word, to teach things contrary to the word; seeing the  
 “ face of examples is formed and strengthened by the face of  
 “ the word, which otherwise would soon come to nothing, if  
 “ the word should reign in its genuine sense; and also, seeing  
 “ the pretence of examples doth only deceive the manners; but  
 “ the pretence of the word overthrows the word,” &c.—so far  
 Luther, verbatim.

And now, how comes it that divers who profess the reformed religion, even of different persuasions, while they pretend to



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respect Luther, and say, they have carried the Reformation still further than he saw into? yet I say, how comes it that they should fall so lamentably short of the view he attained to, of the ground and spring of pure evangelical ministry, as still to hold it in anywise beholden to university titles for their degrees of qualification?

I am aware that they would say, that Luther only alluded to the universities set up by the popes, &c. but that will be found a vain subterfuge, when we reflect, that the main thing against which he testified, is still upheld by those called reformed universities, even as fully as ever it was by the popes themselves; witness their titles and degrees of lordship and mastership, which is clean contrary to our Lord's express injunction.—See *Mat.* xxiii. 8. &c.—And moreover, by such kind of mastership, a human carnal order is set up, even such as our Saviour never owned, while the unspeakable gift of God that should qualify for every good word and work is overlooked and overruled, and such as should be qualified thereby set at naught; yet is not that the gift that Luther contended for? even as may be seen in his book to the nobility of Germany, wherein he saith, “No man can  
“ make himself a doctor of the holy Scriptures but the holy spirit  
“ alone; and no man can rightly understand God, or the word  
“ of God, unles he immediately receive it from the holy spirit;  
“ neither can any receive it from the holy spirit, except he find  
“ it by experience in himself, and in that experience the Holy  
“ Ghost teacheth, as in his proper school; out of which school  
“ nothing is taught but mere talk.”\*

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\* How comes it that scarcely any of Luther's works are now to be found? as I asked one of their Ministers, who said, that he knew not of more than three or four sets of them in existence; and I have rarely met any of them, except quotations, chiefly put forth by such as meant to ridicule him; yet even through such a medium, I have been led to value them; why then are they grown so very scarce? is it because the honest frankness thereof, might stand as an unanswerable rebuke, even against many Protestants and others, who desire to make a gain of the gospel? some of whom appear so carnal and legal, that they cannot even comprehend the depth of his language, and of course would be somewhat ashamed of it, deeming it too coarse and unsophistical for their more refined taste; as for Luther, his zeal and candour should fully atone for any blunder that might appear about him, for he was marvellously formed to pull down that which was opposed to the Redeemer's Kingdom; that was his province, and no marvel if he should make blunders,

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There is a clear, sound, and evangelical description, of the only school ever set up by the Prophets or Apostles of our Saviour, who Himself saith, that no man knoweth the Father or the Son but by his own Revelation, *Mat. xi. 27.—Luke x. 22.*—How comes it then that there should be such a deplorable turning aside from this sure foundation of the Prophets and Apos-

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if he attempted to build with the dust of their old fabrics about his eyes, before the rubbish was cleared away; nay, but such blunders should rather admonish us, to beware how we attempted to lay a stone in that tabernacle which God alone should pitch and not man, for if such as Luther missed it, let us then beware; howbeit, I am so far from imputing blunders to him, that I believe his trumpet gave a most certain sound, suited to his own times, (rather than a nice disquisition of nonessential religious tenets,) and therein he seems to strike home against the very life of the sneaking double-mindedness of that day.

But as to those that now deem his language too coarse and unsophistical for their more refined taste, let them reflect, whether any part of their refinement proceeds from the golden cup of Mystery Babylon, which sits upon the beast? as we read that the beast which had only a little horn like a lamb, proved as formidable as that which had the seven heads and ten horns; there we may see, that with all his lamb-like appearance of innocency, he proves as cruel an enemy to the precious life, as any that went before; can ye read this (either in the mystery or the history?) oh! ye that are ever learning, and desire to make a trade of explaining the gospel, even after the example of the popes and their councils, or rather exceeding them in that of a monopoly of tythes, stipends, and great revenues, seeing they say, they gave part thereof to the poor; howbeit, I am aware ye would say, that that only made them tenfold the more guilty, wherein the poor to whom they assigned it, were such as made themselves poor by violating the precepts of Scripture, not working with their own hands, but running into cloisters and monasteries, alleging they were too holy to labour abroad like honest people; and so ye would now say, that it was rather a public evil to encourage such a life; well, be it so, even though it be all of a piece; yet that will in no wise justify your grasping all for your own order, nay, but they that gave away a part in anywise, had a more plausible pretext than such as grasped all that the state would allow them.

And sorry I am, that they have taken up such a grievous burthen, as that of their great benefices, seeing that if they lay them not down, it must needs do them out in the end, inasmuch as they cannot hold with the purity of the gospel dispensation, (no more than iron and clay could be joined together,) as I could clearly demonstrate, but that I have already exceeded the bounds of a note, therefore I can only say, I am heartily sorry that such a canker should lie at the root of their establishment, as hath even proved a snare to divers Dissenters, which I lament the more, because I respect and value them for their work sake, and that degree of honest frankness, wherein they have

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bles, whereof Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone; alas, alas! is not the love of money the main cause thereof, or the friendship of this world, which is the same thing, called the root of all evil, and the enmity with God?—1 *Tim.* vi. 10.—*James* iii. 4.—There is the cause why many inventions have been sought out (even by universities essaying to reveal what none can do but God alone,) that so they might make a gain of the gospel, and of the people too, and thereby somewhat tally with those that went before them, in order the better to please the world, (to

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borne honourable testimony (even under adversity) against many abuses that greatly needed to be redressed, both in church and state; yea, may I not go still further, and say, that they have proved a blessing even to surrounding nations, in holding forth laws and regulations more congenial to the rights of the poor, than ever was established in former ages? therefore, how lamentable it is, that they should so stop short, while scarcely well begun, even like Gideon, whose former achievements were all eclipsed, by setting up a golden Ephod, which thing became a snare, and Israel went a whoring after it.—*Judges* viii. 27.

And now the very greatness and wealth, which they might have thought needful to sustain and uphold the Church, may prove the very destruction thereof; seeing the gospel thrives most, as it did in the beginning, even through poverty and great durance, wherein the soul is replenished more than an hundred fold, even with that treasure which is in Heaven while the heart is there also; and such know what is meant by living of the gospel in that life which is hid with Christ in God, and labouring with their hands, having food and raiment are therewith content, even while the greatness and splendour of this world, should rather murder than replenish them.

But, alas! is it not mockery to protest against the pope, while they still retain the most favourite livery of all his legions, even in that of their arch and lordly titles and stations, together with their stipends, tithes, and great benefices, &c.? If their gospel must be obtained through science and great university orders, how then can they say they receive it freely, as did the Apostles? how can that be the same gospel which comes in another way? Paul saith, the gospel was not after man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.—*Gal.* i. 12.—And seeing that to be converted and become as little children, is the main qualification to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.—*Mat.* xviii. 3. 4.—How can such attainment be acquired through the medium of universities, which might rather disqualify men to shew forth the genuine simplicity thereof in life and doctrine; if so be that they are thereby formed according to the pomps and vanities of the world, even to need such vast revenues, as holds them up in that pomp and state, which cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of? which might rather prove as a stumbling-block of iniquity, than for the adorning of the gospel of God our Saviour.



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increase proselytes,) and secure the friendship thereof, because the people love to have it so; and all this by pretended reformed Dissenters, even while (at the same time) they assert, that such were the means whereby the popes and their councils spread gross error and thick darkness over Christendom, even while they themselves still uphold the self-same thing, for the sake of gain and worldly consequence; but are they not more guilty therein than even the popes themselves, wherein they saw the evil of their example, and should have taken warning thereby? yet while they cried out against it, run greedily into the same themselves, and in the pomps and vanities of the world, rather taking the lead.

But God will not be mocked, who hath long forbore with us, and gave us a full time of trial, with many and divers admonitions and warnings, even these many years, and if we will not speedily lay it to heart, to give him the glory, we know not how soon our day may be over, and the opportunity taken out of our hand, when even those of the pope's profession may rise in condemnation against us, and condemn us, seeing they are found more zealous, even of their traditions and commandments of men, than we are for those testimonies wherewith we have been entrusted; and therefore, I rather look for a still further Reformation to arise even from amongst such as now follow the popes, than those that have long made a specious profession of Reformation, while they betray the cause thereof, and so be rejected as unprofitable servants.

Alas! what would avail all our profession of reformed religion, if so be that while some run into the Church for filthy lucre sake, others again run out of it in order to pursue the world with redoubled avidity? is not the religion of all such a lie, and abomination? whose god Mammon is, even that of the treasures, pleasures, pomps, vanities, grandeur, and friendship of this perishing world, and I might have added the deceit thereof, which is the root and ground of delusion and witchery, even of the golden cup of Mystery Babylon, with all their inventions, whereby the kingdom of Antichrist may be upheld, even by the carnal professors of the Reformation, as sure as ever it was by the popes, under pretence of primitive Christianity; but the Lamb is risen, who will rule them, as with a rod of iron, and dash their vain confidence to pieces like a potter's vessel, (wherein there is no

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strength;) nay, the feet of the poor shall tread it down, even the steps of the poor and needy, in the day wherein the everlasting gospel is "Preached to every nation, saying, fear God and give glory unto Him."—*Revs. 14.*—even unto Him that accepteth all that fear Him and work righteousness, through the Son of his love, to whom through the Holy Spirit be glory and power everlasting, so let it be.

END.

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