

**A HISTORY  
OF THE PROTESTANT  
REFORMATION**

**LETTER THREE**



**By William Cobbett**

**1825**

**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROTESTANT "REFORMATION"  
IN  
ENGLAND AND IRELAND**

**Showing how that event has impoverished and degraded  
the main  
body of the People in those Countries**

**IN A SERIES OF LETTERS**

**Addressed to all sensible and just Englishmen**

**BY WILLIAM COBBETT.**

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**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROTESTANT REFORMATION  
LETTER III**

**Resistance to the King's Measures.  
Effects of abolishing the Pope's Supremacy.  
Death of Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher.  
HORRIFIC MURDERS OF CATHOLICS.  
Luther and the New Religion.  
Burning of Catholics and Protestants at the same Fire.  
Execrable conduct of Cranmer.  
Title of Defender of the Faith.**

**By William Cobbett**

**Kensington, 31st January, 1825**

My Friends,

**79.** No Englishman, worthy of that name, worthy of a name which carries along with it sincerity and a love of justice; no real Englishman can have contemplated the foul deeds, the base hypocrisy, the flagrant injustice, exposed in the foregoing Letter, without blushing for his country. What man, with an honourable sentiment in his mind, is there, who does not almost wish to be a foreigner, rather than be the countryman of Cranmer and of Henry VIII?

If, then, such be our feelings already, what are they to be by the time, that we have got through those scenes of tyranny, blood and robbery, to which the deeds, which we have already witnessed, were merely a prelude? SO. Sunk, however, as the country was by the members of the parliament hoping to share, as they finally did, in the plunder of the Church and the poor; selfish and servile as was the conduct of the courtiers, the king's councillors, and the people's representatives; still there were some men to raise their voices against the illegality and cruelty of the divorce of Catherine, as well as against that great preparatory measure of plunder, the taking of the spiritual supremacy from the Pope, and giving it to the king. The Bishops, all but one, which one we shall presently see dying on the scaffold, rather than abandon his integrity, were terrified into acquiescence, or, at least, into silence. But, there were many of the parochial clergy, and a large part, of the monks and friars, who were not thus acquiesce, or silent. These, by their sermons, and by their conversations as made the truth pretty generally known to the people at large; and, though they did not succeed in preventing the calamities which they saw approaching, they rescued the character of their country from the infamy of silent submission.

**81.** Of all the duties of the historian, the most sacred is that of recording the conduct of those, who have stood forward to defend helpless innocence against the attacks of powerful guilt. This duty calls on me to make particular mention of the conduct of the two friars, Petto and Elstow. The former, preaching before the king, at Greenwich, just previous to his marriage with Anne, and, taking for his text the passage in the first book of Kings, where Micah prophesies against Ahab, who was surrounded with flatterers and lying prophets, said, I am that Micaiah Whom you will hate, because I must tell you truly that this marriage is unlawful; and I know, that I shall eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow; yet, because our Lord hath put it in my mouth, I must speak it. Your flatterers are the four hundred prophets, who, in the spirit of lying, seek to deceive you. But, take good heed, lest you, being seduced, find Ahab's punishment, which was to have his blood licked up by dogs. It is one of the greatest miseries in princes to be daily abused by flatterers. The king took this reproof in silence but, the next Sunday, a Dr. Curwin marched in the same place before the king, and, having called Petto dog, slanderer, base beggarly friar, rebel, and traitor and having said that he had fled for fear and shame; Elstow, who was present, and who was a fellow friar of Petto, called out aloud to Curwin, and said: Good Sir, you know that Father Petto is now gone to a provincial council at Canterbury, and not fled for fear of you for, to-morrow, he will return. In the meanwhile I am here, as another Micaiah, and will lay down my life to prove all those things true, which he hath taught out of Holy Scripture; and to this combat I challenge thee before God and all equal judges; even unto thee, Curwin, I say, which art one of the four hundred false prophets, into whom the spirit of lying is entered, and seekest by adultery to establish a succession, betraying the king into endless perdition.

**82** Stowe, who relates this in his Chronicle, says, that Elstow waxed hot, so that they could not make him cease his speech, until the king himself bade him hold his peace. The two friars were brought the next day before the king's council, who rebuked them, and told them, that they deserved to be put into a sack, and thrown into the Thames. Whereupon, Elstow said, smiling: Threaten these things to rich and dainty persons who are clothed in purple, fare, deliciously, and have their chiefest hope in this world; for we esteem them not, but are joyful, that, for the discharge of our duty, we are driven hence: and, with thanks to God, we know the way to heaven to be as ready by water as by land.

**83.** It is impossible to speak with sufficient admiration of the conduct of these men. Ten thousand victories by land or sea would not bespeak so much heroism in the winners of those victories as was shown by these friars. If the bishops, or only a fourth part of them, had shown equal courage, the tyrant would have stopped in that career which was now on the eve of producing so many horrors.

The stand made against him by these two poor friars was the only instance of hold and open resistance, until he had actually got into his murders and robberies; and that there never was yet found even a Protestant pen, except the vile pen of Burnet, to offer so much as an apology for the deeds of this tyrant, one would think that the heroic virtue of Petto and Elstow ought to be sufficient to make us hesitate before we talk of "monkish ignorance, and superstition." Recollect, that there was no wild fanaticism in the conduct of those men; that they could not be actuated by any selfish motive; that they stood forward in the cause of morality, and in defence of a person whom they had never personally known, and that, too, with the certainty of incurring the most severe punishments, if not death itself. Before their conduct how the heroism of the Hampdens and the Russels sinks from our sight!

**84.** We now come to the consideration of that copious source of blood, the suppression of the Pope's Supremacy. To deny the king's supremacy, was made high treason, and, to refuse to take an oath, acknowledging that supremacy, was deemed a denial of it. Sir Thomas More, who was the Lord Chancellor, and John Fisher, who was Bishop of Rochester, were put to death for refusing to take this oath. Of all the men in England, these were the two most famed for learning, for integrity, for piety, and for long and faithful services to the king and his father. It is no weak

presumption in favour of the Pope's supremacy, that these two men, who had exerted their talents to prevent its suppression, laid their heads on the block rather than sanction suppression. But, knowing as we do, that it is the refusal of our Catholic fellow subjects to take this same oath, rather than take which More and Fisher did; knowing that this, is the cause of all that cruel treatment which the Irish people have so long endured, and to put an end to which ill treatment they are now so arduously struggling; knowing that it is on this very point that the fate of England herself may rest in case of another war; knowing these things, it becomes us to inquire with care what is the nature and what are the effects of this papal supremacy, in order to ascertain, whether it be favourable, or otherwise, to true religion and to civil liberty.

**85.** The scripture tells us that Christ's Church was to be ONE, We, in repeating the Apostle's Creed, say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." Catholic, as we have seen in paragraph 3 means universal. And how can we believe in an universal church, without believing that that Church is ONE, and under the direction of one head? In the gospel of Saint John, chap. 10, v. 16, Christ says, that he is the good shepherd, and that there shall be one fold and one shepherd. He afterwards deposes Peter to be the shepherd in his stead. In the same gospel, chap. 17 v. 10 and 11, Christ says, And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are, Saint Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, says, Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of **ONE MIND**. The same Apostle, in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. 4, v. 3, says, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one lord, **ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM**, one God and Father of all. Again, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 1, v. 10, Now; I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same is "judgment".

**86.** But, besides these evidences of scripture, besides our own creed, which we say we have from the Apostles, there is the reasonableness of the thing. It is perfectly monstrous to suppose that there can be **TWO** true faiths. It cannot be: one of the two must be false. And will any man say, that we ought to applaud a measure which, of necessity, must produce an indefinite number of faiths? If our eternal, salvation depend upon our believing the truths can it be good to place people in a state of necessity to have different beliefs? And does not that, which takes away the head of the Church, inevitably produce such a state of necessity? How is the faith of all nations .to continue to be **ONE**, if there be, in every nation, a head of the Church, who is to be appealed to, in the last resort, as to all questions, as to all points of dispute, which may arise? How, if this be the case, is there to be one fold and one shepherd? How is there to be one faith and one baptism? How are the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace to be preserved? We shall presently see what unity and what peace there were in England, the moment that the King became the head of the Church.

**87.** To give this supremacy to a King is, in our case, to give it occasionally to a woman; and still more frequently to a child, even to a baby. We shall very soon see it devolve on a boy, nine years of age, and we shall see the monstrous effects that it produced. But if his present Majesty and all his royal brothers were to die to-morrow (and they are all mortal), we should see it devolve on a little girl only about five years old. She would be the one shepherd; she, according to our own creed, which we repeat every Sunday, would be head of the "Holy Catholic Church"! She would have a council of regency. Oh! then there would be a whole troop of shepherds. There must then be pretty "unity of spirit" and a pretty "bond of peace".

**89.** As to the Pope's interference with the authority of the King or state, the sham plea set up was, and is, that he divided the government with the King, to whom belonged like sole supremacy with regard to every thing within his realm. This doctrine, pushed home, would shut out Jesus Christ himself, and make the King an object of adoration.

Spiritual and temporal authority are perfectly distinct in their nature, and ought so to be kept in their exercise; and that, too, only for the sake of religion, but also for the sake of civil liberty. It is curious enough that the Protestant sectarians, while they most cordially unite with the established Clergy in crying out against the Pope for usurping the King's authority, and against the Catholics for countenancing that usurpation, take special care to deny, that this same King has any spiritual supremacy over themselves! The Presbyterians have their synod, the Methodists their conference, and all the other motley mongrels some head or other of their own. Even the meek and money-making followers of George Fox have their Elders and Yearly Meeting. All these heads exercise an absolute power over their members. They give or refuse their sanction to the appointment of the bawlers; they remove them, or break them at pleasure. We have recently seen the Synod in Scotland ordering a preacher of the name of Fletcher to cease preaching in London. He appears not to have obeyed; but the whole congregation has, it seems, been thrown into confusion in consequence of this disobedience.

Strange enough, or, rather, impudent enough, is it, in these sects, to refuse to acknowledge any spiritual supremacy in the King, while they declaim against the Catholics, because they will not take an oath acknowledging that supremacy: and is it not, then, monstrous, that persons belonging to these sects can sit in Parliament, can sit in the King's council, can to generals or admirals or judges, while from all these and many others, the Catholics are excluded, and that, too? only because their consciences, their honourable adherence to the religion of their fathers, will not allow them to acknowledge this supremacy; but bids them to belong to the one fold and the one shepherd and to know none other, than one Lord, one faith, and one baptism"?

**89.** But the Pope was a foreigner, exercising spiritual power in England; and this the hypocrites pretended was a degradation to the King and country. This was something to tickle John Bull, who has, and I dare say, always has had, an instinctive dislike to foreigners. But, in the first place, the Pope might be an Englishman, and we have in paragraph 42, seen one instance of this. Then, how could it be a thing degrading to this nation, when the same thing existed with regard to all other nations? Was King Alfred, and were all the long line of kings, for 900 years, degraded beings? Did those who really conquered France, not by subsidies and bribes, but by arms; did they not understand what was degrading, and what was not? Does not the present King of France, and do not the present French people, understand this matter? Are the sovereignty of the former and the freedom of the latter less perfect because the papal supremacy is distinctly acknowledged and has full effect in France? And if the Synod in Scotland can exercise its supremacy in England, and the Conference in England exercise its supremacy in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the Colonies; if this can be without any degradation of king or people, why are we to look upon the exercise of the papal supremacy as degrading to either?

**90.** Aye; but there was the money. The money of England went to the Pope. Popes cannot live, and keep courts and ambassadors, and maintain great state without money, any more than other people. A part of the money of England went to the Pope; but a part also of that of every other Christian nation took the same direction. This money was not, however, thrown away. It was so much given for the preservation of unity of faith, peace, good will and charity, and morality. We shall, in the broils that ensued, and in the consequent subsidies and bribes to foreigners, soon see that the money, which went to the Pope, was extremely well laid out. But, how we Protestants strain at a gnat, while we swallow camels by whole caravans! Mr. Perceval gave more to foreigners in one single year than the Popes ever received from our ancestors in four centuries. We have bowed, for years, to a Dutchman, who was no heir to the crown any more than one of our workhouse paupers, and who had not one drop of English blood in his veins; and we now send annually to Hanoverians and other foreigners, under the name of half-pay, more money than was ever sent to the Pope in twenty years. From the time of the "Glorious Revolution," we have been paying two thousand pounds a year to the heirs of "Marshal Schomberg," who came over to help the Dutchman; and this is, mind, to be paid as long as there are such heirs of Marshal Schomberg, which, to use the elegant and logical and philosophical phrase of our great "Reformation". Poet, will, I dare say, be for ever and a day. And have we forgotten the Bentincks

and all the rest of the Dutch tribe, who had estates of the Crown heaped upon them: and do we talk, then, of the degradation and the loss of money occasioned by the supremacy of the Pope! It is a notorious fact, that not a German soldier would have been wanted in this kingdom, during the last war, had it not been for the disturbed and dangerous state of Ireland, in which the German troops were very much employed. We have long been paying, and have now to pay, and shall long have to pay, upwards of a hundred thousand pounds a year to the half pay officers of these troops, one single penny of which we now should not have had to pay, if we had dispensed with the oath of supremacy from the Catholics. Every one to his taste; but, for my part, if I must pay foreigners for keeping me in order, I would rather pay "pence of Peter" than pounds to Hessian Grenadiers. Alien Priories, the establishment of which was for the purpose of inducing learned persons to come and live in England, have been a copious source of declamatory complaint. But, leaving their utility out of the question, I, for my particular part, prefer Alien Priories to Alien Armies, from which latter this country has never been, except for very short intervals, wholly free, from the day that the former were suppressed. I wish not to set myself up as a dictator in matters of taste; but, I must take leave to say, that I prefer the cloister to the barrack; the chanting of matins to the reveille by the drum; the cowl to the brass-fronted hairy cap; the shaven crown to the mustachio, though the latter be stiffened with black-ball; the rosary, with the cross appendant, to the belt with its box of bullets; and, beyond all measure, I prefer the penance to the point of the bayonet. One or the other of these sets of things, It would seem, we must have before the "Reformation," England never knew, and never dreamed, of such a thing as a standing soldier; since that event she has never, in reality, known what it was to be without such soldiers till, at last, a thundering standing army, even in time of profound peace, is openly avowed to be necessary to the "preservation of our happy constitution in Church and State!"

**91.** However, this money part of the affair is now over, with regard to the Pope. No one proposes to give him any money at all, in any shape whatever. The Catholics believe, that the unity of their church would be destroyed, that they would, in short, cease to be Catholics, if they were to abjure his supremacy; and, therefore, they will not abjure it: they insist that their teachers shall receive their authority from him: and what do they, with regard to the Pope, insist upon more than if insisted upon and acted upon by the Presbyterian, with regard to their synod?

**92.** Lastly, as to this supremacy of the Pope, what was its effect with regard to civil liberty; that is to say, with regard to the security, the rightful enjoyment of men's prosperity and lives. We shall, by and by, see, that civil liberty fell by the same tyrannical hands that suppressed the Popes supremacy. But, whence came our civil liberty? Whence came those laws of England, which Lord Coke calls "the birth-right" of Englishmen, and which each of the States of America, declares, in its constitution, to be "the birth-right of the people thereof?" Whence came these laws? Are they of protestant origin? The bare question ought to make the revilers of the Catholics hang their heads for shame. Did Protestants establish the three courts and the twelve Judges, to which establishment, though, like all other human institutions, it has sometimes worked evil, England owes so large a portion of her fame and her greatness? Oh, no! This institution arose when the Pope's supremacy was in full vigour. It was not a gift from Scotchmen nor Dutchmen nor Hessians; from Lutherans, Calvinists, nor Hugonots; but was the work of our own brave and wise English Catholic ancestors; and Chief Justice Abbott is the heir, in an unbroken line of succession, to that Bench, which was erected by Alfred, who was, at the very same time, most zealously engaged in the founding of churches and of monasteries.

**93.** If, however, we still insist, that the Pope's supremacy and its accompanying circumstances, produced ignorance, superstition and slavery, let us act the part of sincere, consistent and honest men. Let us knock down, or blow up, the cathedrals and colleges and old churches; let us sweep away the three courts, the twelve judges, the circuits and the jury-boxes; let us demolish all that we inherited from those whose religion we so relentlessly persecute, and whose memory we affect so heartily to despise: let us demolish all this, and we shall have left, all our own, the capacious jails and penitentiaries; the stock-exchange; the hot and ankle and knee swelling and lung destroying cotton-factories; the whiskered standing army and its splendid barracks; the

parson-captains, parson-lieutenants, parson-ensigns and parson-justices; the poor-rates and the pauper-houses; and, by no means forgetting, that blessing which is peculiarly and doubly and gloriously protestant, the **NATIONAL DEBT**. Ah! people of England, how have you been deceived!

**94.** But, for argument's sake, counting the experience of antiquity for nothing, let us ask ourselves what a chance civil liberty can stand, if all power, spiritual and lay, be lodged in the hands of the same man. That man must be a despot, or his power must be undermined by an Oligarchy or by something. If the President, or the Congress, of the United States, had a spiritual supremacy; if they appointed the Bishops and Ministers, though they have no benefices to give, and would have no tithes and first fruit to receive, their government would be a tyranny in a very short time. Montesquieu observes, that the people of Spain and Portugal would have been absolute slaves, without the power of the Church, which is, in such a case, the only check to arbitrary sway. Yet, how long have we had papal usurpation and tyranny dinned in our ears! This charge against the Pope surpasseth all understanding. How was the Pope to be an usurper, or tyrant, in England? He had no fleet, no army, no judge, no sheriff, no justice of the peace, not even a single constable or beadle at his commands. We have been told of the thunders of the Vatican till we have almost believed, that the Pope's residence was in the skies; and, if we had believed quite, the belief would not have passed in folly our belief in numerous other stories, hatched by the gentry of the "Reformation" the truth is, that the Pope had no power but that which he derived from the free will of the people. The people were frequently on his side, in his contests with kings; and, by this means, they, in numerous instances, preserved their rights against the attempts of tyrants. If the Pope had had no power, there must have sprang up an Oligarchy, or a something else, to check the power of the king; or, every king might have been a Nero, if he would. We shall soon see a worse than Nero in Henry VIII; we shall soon see him laying all law prostrate at his feet; and plundering his people down even to the patrimony of the poor. But, reason says that it must be so; and, though this spiritual power be now nominally lodged in the hands of the king; to how many tricks and contrivances have we resorted, and some of them most disgraceful and fatal ones, in order to prevent him from possessing the reality of this power! We are obliged to effect by influence and by faction; that is to say, by means indirect, disguised, and frequently flagitiously immoral, not to say almost seditious into the bargain, that which was effected, by means direct, avowed, frank, honest, and loyal. It is curious enough, that while all Protestant ministers are everlastingly talking about papal usurpation and tyranny all of them, except those who profit from the establishment, talk not less incessantly about what they have no scruple to call, that two-headed monster, Church and State. What a monster would it have been, then, if the Catholics had submitted to the "Veto;" that is to say, to give the king a rejecting voice in the appointment of Catholic Bishops; and thus to make him, who is already the Defender of the Faith" against which he protest, an associate with the Sovereign Pontiff, in carrying on the affairs of that church, to which the law strictly forbids him to belong!

**95.** Thus, then, this so much abused papal supremacy was a most salutary thing: it was the only check, then existing, on despotic power, besides it being absolutely necessary to that unity of faith, without which there could be nothing worthy of the name of a Catholic Church. To abjure this supremacy was an act of apostasy, and also an act of hate abandonment of the rights of the people. To require it of any man was to violate Magna Charta and all the laws of the land; and to put men to death for refusing to comply with the request, was to commit unqualified murder. Yet, without such murder, without shedding innocent blood, it was impossible to effect the object. Blood must flow. Amongst the victims to this act of outrageous tyranny, were Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher. The former had been the Lord High Chancellor for many years. The character given of him by his contemporaries, and by every one to the present day, is that of as great a perfection for learning, integrity and piety, as it is possible for a human being to possess. He was the greatest lawyer of his age, a long tried and most faithful servant of the king and his father, and was, besides, so highly distinguished beyond men in general for his gentleness and humility of manners, as well as for his talents and abilities, that his murder gave a shock to all Europe. Fisher was equally eminent in point of learning, piety, and integrity. He was the only surviving

privy-councillor of the late king, whose mother (the grandmother of Henry VIII.) having outlived her son and daughter, besought, with her dying breath, the young king to listen particularly to the advice of this learned pious and venerable prelate; and, until that advice thwarted his brutal passions, he was in the habit of saying, that no other prince could boast of a subject to be compared with Fisher. He used at the council-board, to take him by the hand and call him his father; marks of favour and affection which the Bishop repaid by zeal and devotion which knew no bounds other than those prescribed by his duty to God, his king and his country. But, that sacred duty bade him object to the divorce and to the king's supremacy; and then the tyrant forgetting at once all his services, all his devotion, all bit unparalleled attachment, sent him to the block, after fifteen months of imprisonment, during which he lay, worse than a common felon, buried in filth and almost destitute of food; sent him, who had been his boast and whom he had called his father, to perish under the axe; dragged him forth, with limbs tottering under him, his venerable face and hoary locks begrimed, and his nakedness scarcely covered with the rags left on his body; dragged him thus forth to the scaffold, and, even when the life was gone, left him to lie on that scaffold like a dead dog! Savage monster! Rage stems the torrent of our tears, hurries us back to the horrid scene, and bids us look about us for a dagger to plunge into the heart of the tyrant.

**96.** And yet; the calculating, cold-blooded and brazen Burnet has the audacity to say, that such a man as Henry VIII. was necessary to bring about the reformation. He means, of course, that such measures as those of Henry were necessary; and, if they were necessary, what must be the nature and tendency of that "Reformation?"

**97.** The work of blood was now begun, and it proceeded with steady pace. All who refused to take the oath of supremacy; that is to say, all who refused to become apostates, were considered and treated as traitors, and made to suffer death accompanied with every possible cruelty and dignity. As a specimen of the works of **BURNET'S** necessary reformer, and to spare the reader repetition on the subject, let us take the treatment of John Houghton, prior of the Charter-house in London, which was then a convent of Carthusian monks. This prior, for having refused to take the oath, which, observe, he could not take without committing perjury, was dragged to Tyburn. He was scarcely suspended, when the rope was cut, and he fell alive on the ground. His clothes were then stripped off; his bowels were ripped up; his heart and entrails were torn from his body and flung into a fire his head was cut from his body; which was divided into quarters and par-boiled; the quarters were then subdivided and hung up in different parts of city; and one arm was nailed to the wall over the entrance into the monastery!

**98.** Such were the means, which Burnet says were necessary to introduce the protestant religion into England! How different, alas! from the means by which this Catholic religion had been introduced by Pope Gregory and Saint Austin! These horrid butcheries were perpetrated, mind, under the primacy of Fox's great Martyr, Cranmer, and with the active agency of another ruffian named Thomas Cromwell, whom we shall soon see sharing with Cranmer the work of plunder, and finally sharing, too, in his disgraceful end.

**99.** Before we enter on the grand subject of plunder, which was the mainspring of the "Reformation," we most follow the king and his primate through their murders of protestants as well as Catholics. But, first, we must see how the Protestant religion arose, and how it stood at this juncture. Whence the term Protestant came, we have seen in paragraph 3. It was a name given to those, who declared, or protested, against the Catholic, or universal, church. This work of protesting was begun in Germany, in the year 1517, by a friar, whose name was Martin Luther, and who belonged to a convent of Augustine friars, in the electorate of Saxony. At this time the Pope had authorized the preaching of certain indulgences, and this business having been entrusted to the order of Dominicans, and not to the order to which Luther belonged, and to which it had been usual to commit such trust, here was one of the motives from which Luther's opposition to the Pope proceeded. He found a protector in his sovereign, the Elector of Saxony, who appears

to have had as strong a relish for plunder as that with which our English tyrant and his courtiers and parliament were seized a few years afterwards.

**100.** All accounts agree that Luther was a most proliferate man. To change his religion, he might have thought himself called by his conscience; but, conscience could not call upon him to be guilty of all the abominable deeds, of which he stands convicted even by his own confessions, of which I shall speak more fully when I come to the proper place for giving an account of the numerous sects into which the Protestants were soon divided; and of the fatal change which was, by his innovation in religion, produced, even according to the declaration of the Protestant leaders themselves, in the morals of the people and the state of society. But, just observing that the Protestant sects had, at the time we are speaking of, spread themselves over a part of Germany, and had got into Switzerland and some other states of the Continent, we must now, before we state more particulars relating to Luther and the sects that he gave rise to, see how the king of England dealt with those of his subjects who had adopted the heresy.

**101.** The Protestants immediately began to disagree amongst themselves; but, they all maintained, that faith alone was sufficient to secure salvation; which the Catholics maintained, that good works were also necessary. The most profligate of men, the most brutal and bloody of tyrants, may be a staunch believer for the devils themselves believe; and, therefore, we naturally, at first thought, think it strange, that Henry VIII. did not instantly become a zealous Protestant, did not become one of the most devoted disciples of Luther. He would, certainly; but Luther began his "Reformation" a few years too soon for the king. In 1517, when Luther began his works, the king had been married to his first wife only eight years, and he had not then conceived any project of divorce. If Luther had begun twelve years later, the king would have been a Protestant at once, especially after seeing, that this new religion allowed Luther and seven other of his brother leaders in the "Reformation" to grant, under their hands, a license to the Landgrave, of Hesse to have **TWO WIVES** at one and the same time! So complaisant a religion would have been and doubtless was, at the time of the divorce, precisely to the king's taste; but, as I have just observed, it came twelve years too soon for him; for, not only had he adopted this religion, but had opposed it, as a sovereign; and, which was a still more serious affair, had opposed it as an **AUTHOR!** He had, in 1521, written a **BOOK** against it. His vanity, his pride, were engaged in the contest to which may be added, that Luther, in answering his book, had called him a pig, a n ass, a dunghill, the spawn of an adder, a basilisk, a lying buffoon dressed in a king's robes, a mad fool with a frothy mouth and a whorish face; and had afterwards said to him, you lie, you stupid and sacrilegious king.

**102.** Therefore, though the tyrant was bent on destroying the Catholic Church, he was not less bent on the extirpation of the followers of Luther and his tribe of new sects. Always under the influence of some selfish and base motive or other, he was, with regard to the Protestants set to work by revenge, as, in the case of the Catholics, he had been set to work by lust, if not by lust to be gratified by incest. To follow him, step by step, and in minute detail, through all his butcheries and all his burnings, would be to familiarize ones mind to a human slaughterhouse and a cookery of cannibals. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a general view of; his works in this way.

**103.** His book against Luther had acquired him the title of "Defender of the Faith" of which we shall see more by and by. He could not, therefore, without recantation, be a Protestant; and, indeed, his pride would not suffer him to become the proselyte of a man, who had, in print too, proclaimed him to be a pig, an ass, a fool, and a liar. Yet he could not pretend to be a Catholic. He was, therefore, compelled to make a religion of his own. This was doing nothing, unless he enforced its adoption by what he called law, Laws were made by him and by his servile and plus ordering parliament, making it heresy in, and condemning to the flames, all who did not expressly conform, by acts as by declarations, to the faith and worship, which, as of the Church, he invented and ordained. Amongst his tenets there were such as neither Catholics nor Protestants and inconsistently with their creeds, adopt. He, therefore, sent both to the stake, and sometimes, in

order to add mental pangs to those of the body, he dragged them to the fire on the same hurdle, tied together in pairs, back to back, each pair containing a Catholic and a Protestant. Was this the way that Saint Austin and Saint Patrick propagated their religion! Yet, such is the malignity of Burnet, and of many, many others, called Protestant or divines? that they apologize for, if they do not absolutely applaud, this execrable tyrant, at the very moment that they are compelled to confess that he soaked the earth with Protestant blood and filled the air with the fumes of their Roasting flesh.

**104.** Throughout the whole of this bloody work, Cranmer, who was the primate of the king's religion, was consenting to, sanctioning, and aiding and abetting in, the murdering of Protestants as well as of Catholics; though, and I pray you to mark it well, Hume, Tillotson, Burket, and all his long list of eulogists, say, and make it a matter of merit in him, that, all this while, he was himself a sincere Protestant in his heart. And, indeed, we shall, by and by, see him openly avowing those very tenets, for the holding of which he had been instrumental in sending, without regard to age or sex, others to perish in the flames. The progress of this man in the paths of infamy, needed incontestable proof to reconcile the human mind to a belief in it. Before he became a priest he had married: after he became a priest, and had taken the oath of celibacy, he, being then in Germany, and having become a Protestant married another wife, while the first was still alive. Being the primate of Henry's Church, which still forbade the clergy to have wives, and which held them to their oath celibacy, he had his wife brought to England in a chest with holes bored in it to give her air! As she was destined for Canterbury, it was landed at Gravesend, where the sailors, not apprised of the contents, the chest, set it up on one end, and the wrong downwards, and had nearly broken the neck of the "Frau"! Here was a pretty scene! A German frau, wife a litter of half German half English young ones, kept, it huggar-muggar, on that spot, which had been the cradle of English Christianity; that spot, where **ST. AUSTIN** had inhabited, and where **THOMAS A BECKET** had sealed with, his blood his opposition to a tyrant, who aimed at the destruction of. the Church and at the pillage of the people. Here is quite enough to fill us with disgust; but, when we reflect, that this same "primate", while he had under his roof, his frau and her litter, was engaged in assisting to send Protestants to the flames, because they dissented from a system that forbade the clergy to have wives, we swell with indignation, not against Cranmer, for, though there are so many of his atrocious deeds yet to come, he has exhausted our store; not against Hume, for he professed no regard for any religion at all; but against those who are called "divines" and who are the eulogists of Cranmer; against Burnet, who says that Cranmer did all with a good conscience; and against Dr. Sturges, or, rather, the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, who clubbed their "talents" in getting up the "Reflections on Popery," who talk of the "respectable Cranmer" and who have the audacity to put him, in point of integrity, upon a level with Sir, Thomas More! As Dr. Milner, in his answer to Sturges, observes, they resembled each other in that the name of both was Thomas; but, in all other things, the dissimilarity was as great as that which the most vivid imagination can ascribe to the dissimilarity between hell and heaven.

**105.** The infamy of Cranmer in assisting in sending people to the flames for entertaining opinions, which he afterwards confessed that he himself entertained at the time that he was so sending them, can be surpassed by nothing of which human depravity is capable; and it can be equalled by nothing but that of the king, who, while he was, as he hoped and thought, laying the axe to the root of the Catholic faith, still styled himself its defender! He was not, let it be borne in mind, defender of what he might, as others have, since his day, and in his day, called the Christian Faith. He received the title from the Pope, as a reward for his written defence of the Catholic faith against Luther. The Pope conferred on him this title, which was to descend to his posterity. The title was given by Pope Leo X. in a bull, or edict, beginning with these words: "Leo, servant of the servants of the Lord, to his most dear son, Henry, King of England, Defender of the Faith, all health and happiness." The bull then goes on to say, that the king, having, in defence of the faith of the Catholic Church, written a book against Martin Luther, the Pope and his council had determined to confer on him and his successors the title of Defender of the Faith, "We," says the bull, "sitting in this Holy See, having, with mature deliberation, considered the business with our brethren, do, with their unanimous council and consent, grant unto your Majesty, your heirs

and successors, the title of Defender of the Faith; which we do, by these presents, confirm unto you; commanding all the Faithful to give your Majesty this title."

**106.** What are we to think then, of the man who could continue to wear this title, while he was causing to be acted before him a farce, in which the Pope and his Council were exposed to derision, and was burning, and ripping up the bowels, of people, by scores, only because they remained firm in that faith of which he had still the odious effrontery to call himself the defender? All justice, everything like law, every moral thought, must have been banished before such monstrous enormity could have been suffered to exist. They were all banished from the seat of power. An iron despotism had, as we shall see in the next Number, come to supply the place of the papal supremacy. Civil liberty was wholly gone: no man had any thing that he could call property; and no one could look upon his life as safe for twenty-four hours.

**107.** But, there is a little more to be said about this title, of Defender of the Faith, which, for some reason or other that one can hardly discover, seems to have been, down to our time, a singularly great favourite. Edward VI., though his two Protectors, who succeeded each other in that office, and whose guilty heads we shall gladly see succeeding each other on the block, abolished the Catholic faith by law; though the Protestant faith was, with the help of Foreign troops, established in its stead, and though the greedy ruffians of his time, robbed the very altars under the pretext of extirpating that very faith of which his title called him the Defender, continued to wear this title throughout his reign. Elizabeth continued to wear this title during her long reign of "mischief and of misery," as Wtaker justly calls it, though, during the whole of that Reign, she was busily engaged in persecuting, in ruining, in ripping up the bowels of those who entertained that faith, of which she styled herself the Defender, in which she herself had been born, in which she had lived for many years, and to which she adhered, openly and privately, till her self interest called upon her to abandon it. She continued to wear this title while she was tearing the bowels out of her subjects for hearing mass; while she was refusing the last comforts of the Catholic religion to her cousin, Mary Queen of Scotland, whom she put to death by a mockery of law and justice, after, as Wtaker has fully proved, having long endeavoured in vain to find amongst her subjects, a man base and bloody enough to take her victim off by assassination. This title was worn by that mean creature, **JAMES I**, took as his chief councillor the right worthy son of father who had been the chief contriver of the murder of his innocent mother, and whose reign was one of an unbroken series of base plots and cruel persecutions of all who professed the Catholic faith. But, not to anticipate farther matter which will, hereafter, find a more suitable place, we today observe, that, amongst all our sovereigns, the only real Defenders of the Faith, since the reign of Mary, have been the late King and his Son, our present sovereign: the former, by assenting to a repeal of a part of the penal code, and by his appointing a special commission to try, condemn, and execute the leaders of the ferocious mob who set fire to, and who wished to sack, London, in 1780, with the cry of "**NO POPERY**" in their mouths, and from pretended zeal for the Protestant religion: and the latter, by his sending, in 1814, a body of English troops to assist, as a guard of honour, at the re-instalment of the Pope. Let us hope, that his defence of the faith is not to stop here; but that unto him is reserved the real glory of being the Defender of the Faith of all his subjects, and of healing for ever those " deep and festering wounds, which, for more than two centuries, have been inflicted on so large and so loyal a part of his people.

**108.** From the sectarian host no man can say, what ought to be expected! but, from the "divines" of the established Church, even supposing them dead to the voice of justice, one would think, that, when they reflect on the origin of this title of their sovereign, common decency would restrain their reviling. It is beyond all dispute, that the king holds this title from the Pope, and from nobody else. His divine right to the crown is daily disputed; and he himself has claimed it. But as to Defender of the Faith, he owes it entirely to the Pope. Will, then, the Protestant divines, boldly tell us, that their and our sovereign wears a title, which, observe, finds its way not only into every treaty, but into every municipal act, deed, or covenant; will they tell us, that he holds this title from the "Man of Sin, Antichrist and the scarlet whore"? Will they thus defame that sovereign, whom they, at the same time, call on us to honour and obey? Yet this they must do ;

or they must confess, that their reviling, their foul abuse of the Catholic Church, have all been detestably false.

**109.** The King's predecessors had another title. They were called Kings of France; a title of much longer standing than that of Defender of the Faith. That title, a title of great glory, and one of which we were very proud, was not worn by "Gospellers" or Presbyterians, or New Lights, with Saint Noel or Saint Butterworth at their head. It was, along with the Three Feathers, which the King so long wore, won by our brave Catholic ancestors. It was won while the Pope's supremacy; while confessions to priests, while absolutions, indulgences, masses, and monasteries existed in England. It was won by Catholics in the "dark ages of monkish ignorance and superstition," It was surrendered in an age enlightened by "a heaven-born" Protestant and pledge-breaking Minister. It was won by valour and surrendered by fear; and fear, too, of those whom, for years, we had been taught to regard as the basest (as they certainly had been the bloodiest) of all mankind.

**110.** It would be time now, after giving a rapid sketch of the progress which the tyrant had made in prostrating the liberties of his people, and in dispatching more of his wives, to enter on the grand scene of plunder, and to recount the miseries which immediately followed, but these must be the subject of the next Letter.



### The End of Letter 3



**THE NEW CHRISTIAN CRUSADE  
CHURCH**

**CALLING THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN**

**At last the bible makes sense!**

**At last we know its meaning.**

**Its the book of the RACE**

**"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the  
Word of the Lord from Jerusalem"  
(Isaiah 2:3)."**

