

**QUEEN ELIZABETH AND THE PENAL
LAWS, WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON
WILLIAM COBBETT'S "HISTORY OF
THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION".
PASSING IN REVIEW THE REIGNS OF
HENRY VIII., EDWARD VI., AND MARY**

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Queen Elizabeth and the penal laws, with an introduction on William Cobbett's "History of the Protestant reformation". Passing in review the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Mary by Charles Hastings Collette

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CHARLES HASTINGS COLLETTE

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BY
CHARLES HASTINGS COLLETTE.

"Let me speak, sir,
For Heaven now bids me; and the words I utter
. . . . They will find them truth."
Henry VIII., Act v., Scene xiv.

LONDON:
PROTESTANT ALLIANCE, 9 STRAND,
1890

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PREFACE.

“ Truth is of so pure and virtuous a Nature that it refuseth to be in league with any falsehood in the world, much more disdaineth to be assisted by it.”—*Sir Edwin Sandy's Europæe Speculum.*

It was Lord Bacon who said that Prefaces and passages of excusations are great wastes of time. Adopting this practical advice, I ask my fellow countrymen to give a patient and unprejudiced perusal of the following narrative of the most eventful period of our history. The circumstances connected with that history having been shamefully perverted by the enemies of the Reformation, I would fain hope that my labour will not have been in vain in exposing fallacies and fictions which have been put forth by the opponents of the Protestant constitution of this country.

N.B.—Cobbett's book being divided into paragraphs each bearing a distinct number, the passages quoted are distinguished by such numbers within [], of the first edition dated 1824, preserving his *italics* and *capitals*.

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND THE PENAL LAWS.

CHAPTER I.

COBBETT'S HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

"But that slander, sir, grows again
Fresher than e'er it was; and held for certain."

Henry VIII., Act ii., Scene i.

IT may be objected that I should have adopted the book passing by the title of "The History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland," by WILLIAM COBBETT, as the basis of the following compilation. I feel the force of the objection, but there is a sufficient justification. The so-called "History" by Cobbett, is, even at the present day, not only confidently quoted by Priests of the Roman Church as the testimony of a "Protestant Historian," but they have republished the work in an unprecedented cheap form, and industriously circulate it broadcast, recommending and quoting it on every available occasion; and it has been deemed worthy of being translated into several foreign languages. But for this public recognition, and recommendation, and, therefore, adoption by Romanists, I fully admit that such a travesty of history would be quite beneath serious consideration. But, further, the incidents alluded to by Cobbett have given me an opportunity of stating the real facts as recorded, in histories, as well from the pen of Romanists as Protestants.

Cobbett's book is proposed for acceptance on the alleged fact that its author was a "Protestant" and a member of the Church of England; and that, therefore, his motives at least, cannot be questioned, and his statements ought to be accepted against members of his own Communion. The proposition is plausible,

but the alleged fact of his being, at the time he wrote his "History," either a member of the Church of England, or even a Protestant, is very questionable, for when he published his book he openly avowed himself an admirer of the infidel, "Thomas Paine;" and his entire work is a fulsome praise of the Roman Church, her institutions, principles, and doctrines; while he does not hesitate to vilify the leading Reformers, the Reformation, and everything connected with our reformed Established Church.

First, let me prove by incontestable evidence that Cobbett, when he wrote his history, was neither a member of our Reformed Church, nor a "Protestant."

A church is known by its creed or symbol of faith. To the year 1546 the only creeds professed by any Christian church were the three creeds passing by the titles of the Nicene, Apostles', and Athanasian, as they stand at the present day in our "Book of Common Prayer;" and the Canon of Scripture as given in the Sixth Article of the Church of England (excluding the Apocrypha), was the only recognized Code of Scripture of the Universal Church.

The books passing by the title of the *Apocrypha* were first admitted into the Roman Code, as divinely inspired, in the year 1546, at the third Session of the Council of Trent. The Council of Florence, 1439, is sometimes quoted; but it is very doubtful whether that Council passed any such decree, as the whole subject was re-argued at the Council of Trent. Courayer, in his history of the Trent Council, says: * "Not only the heretics, but the catholics, and what was worse Cardinals themselves, called in question the canonical authority of some of the Books of the Old and New Testament received by the Council of Carthage."

The law of the Universal Church was proclaimed by the Code of Justinian, which we find incorporated at the present day in the book of Canon Law of the Roman Church: "We order that all who follow this rule (that is, who believe in the Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in their co-equal majesty and triune Godhead, according to Apostolic teaching and Gospel doctrine) shall adopt the name of Catholic Christians." †

* Lib. ii. 5-58.

† Hanc legem (*i.e.* qui secundum Apostolicam disciplinam Evangeli-

In the year 325, at the first General Council of the Church, that of Nice I., a form of creed was drawn up and adopted. In the year 381, the second General Council, Constantinople I., in order to meet certain heresies creeping into the Church, published a creed which amplified certain definitions of the creed passed at the Council of Nice. Attempts were made to alter this creed, now passing by the title the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed; accordingly the third General Council, that of Ephesus, A.D. 431, opposed the proposition and declared:—

“That it should not be lawful for any one to write or to compose any other form of faith than that defined by the Holy Fathers, who, with the Holy Ghost, had assembled at Nice.”*

The Council proceed to declare of “All such as shall presume either to compose, or to provide, or to offer any other form of faith to those wishing to be converted to the acknowledgment of the truth, whether from Paganism or from Judaism, or from any other form of heresy, that they, be they Bishops or clergymen, shall be deposed—the Bishops from their episcopacy, and the clergy from their clerical office; but if laymen they shall be subject to anathema.”

Again, the General Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, attended by 630 Bishops, confirmed the decision of the three previous General Councils; and when, according to custom, the same amended Nicene Creed was rehearsed, it is recorded in all histories of this Council that the assembled Bishops declared: “Let no person make any other exposition of faith. We neither attempt nor dare to do so. For the fathers have taught, and in their writings have been set forth by them (namely in the said Creed), and other than these we cannot speak. These principles which have been set forth are sufficient, it is not lawful to make any other exposition.”†

camque doctrinam, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti unam deitatem sub pari majestate et sub piâ Trinitate credunt) sequentes Christianorum Catholicorum nomen jubemus amplecti.” (Vide *Cod. Just.*, Lib. i., Tit. i.)

* *Labb. et Coss. Concil.*, Tom. iii., col. 689, Paris, 1671; and Tom. iv., col. 1362, Florentiæ, 1759.

† *Labb. et Coss. Concil.*, Tom. iv., cols. 1-10, Paris, 1671; and Mansi, Tom. vi., col. 630, Florentiæ, 1759.

“It was Gregory I., Bishop of Rome, in the year 600, who said (and his words are recorded in Rome’s Book of Canon Law),* “I acknowledge and receive and venerate, as I do the four Gospels, the four Councils, to wit the Nicene—also the Constantinopolitan—the first of Ephesus—that of Chalcedon. Moreover I embrace them with entire devotion. I guard them with perfect approval, because of them, as on a squared stone, the building of the holy faith rises.”

The three creeds were retained by our Reformers, as appears in our Book of “Common Prayer.”

According to the “Annalist” Cardinal Baronius, the Spanish provincial Council of Toledo, in 477, added the word “filioque,” the procession of the Holy Spirit from the “Son” as well as the “Father.” The Greek Church, at a Council held at Constantinople, A.D. 879, would not recognize this addition, acting on the above principle laid down by the early councils, not because they objected to the *doctrine* propounded by the addition.

It is important to note, that so jealous was even the Roman Church of the integrity of that creed that Pope Leo III., in the year 809, in order to put a stop to the publication of the interpolated creed, caused that of the year 381 to be engraved in Greek and Latin, on silver tablets, and placed in his chapel, without the addition of “filioque”; and he personally forbade the interpolated creed to be used to the deputation from the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle,† which had waited on him with reference to the addition of the “filioque,” so careful was he to retain the integrity of the common Creed of Christendom.

From the sixth century until the sixteenth, various practices and innovations in faith and worship were introduced by the Roman Church, but never recognized by the *Universal Church*, or added to any creed.

In the year 1545 the Roman Church was represented by a Council held in the town of Trent, under the order of Pope Paul III., professedly to reform that Church in *faith* and *morals*. The

* *Decret.* i., Dist. xv. 2.

† See *Labb. et Coss.*, Tom. vii., cols. 1194, 1198, Paris, 1671.