

REFLECTIONS ON REVELATIONS

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Reflections on Revelations by Peter Clarkin

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PETER CLARKIN

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REVELATIONS**

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ON

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BY PETER CLARKIN.

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P R E F A C E .

A KNOWLEDGE of an author is sometimes necessary to the acceptance and appreciation of his work. I have, therefore, concluded to give a few outlines of the personal history of the humble individual who presents the following "REFLECTIONS," to the public.

I was born of poor and virtuous parents, who had at all times a desire to die the death of the righteous. By them I was taught to read and to write, and also arithmetic, which, with a very slight knowledge of a few other branches of learning, was all the useful education their limited means could afford me. I say *useful* education—for I was made too well acquainted with the sciences of the papal school. My youth was devoted to hard labor which left little time for literary improvement; and the care of a family, and the life of a farmer succeeding, still prevented attendance of much extent to mental cultivation. This having been my situation in life, I can only hope that the truth which may appear in the following pages, and the sincere desire that they may do good, with which they are presented, will excuse the defects of style and lack of elegance in language, which I am conscious they display.

Being little acquainted with the learned languages, I have adhered chiefly to that contained in the Scriptures, which has been through the whole of this little work, my principal guide. A

strong conviction of the truths contained in the Word of God, and the blessing promised to those who read and keep the sayings it contains, have urged me to attempt, with what light I could command, and in despite of persecution in my own land, an exposition of the divine mysteries which God in his mercy through Jesus Christ has given to mankind. Many of the prophecies of St. John have evidently been fulfilled; and as they were designed for our instruction, must be within the grasp of the human understanding.

As my youth was spent under circumstances calculated to fasten upon me prejudices in favor of popery, my change and present state of thought has not been the work of a moment. The reflections in the following pages are the effects of a mind that has overcome an almost invincible ignorance of the truth, and a prejudice of long duration—a prejudice that grew up with my youthful days, accompanied my more mature years, and had very nearly interwoven itself around the future destinies of my soul. They are the effect of a mind that has taken impartiality for its guide, and looked upon truth as the sole object of its ambition—a mind that has ruminated day and night upon the subject, that has viewed both sides of the question, closely, attentively, and, I trust, religiously. The conclusions to which I have come are founded on a conscious rectitude. During those hours of darkness, when sleep falleth upon man, and others were taking that repose to which the silence of the night or exhausted nature might invite them, I thought of my present change, and often bedewed my pillow with tears till my eye-sight became dim. Before a change took place, this severe, continual struggle afflicted me. My nights were turned into day, because of my watching, and I could find no rest until I obeyed the advice of the Psalmist, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." When my mind turned on the serious question of religion, and I looked upon the book of God as the sole standard of my faith, and began to view

through the medium of impartiality the important subject of my soul's salvation, my mind became more enlarged, and my thoughts expanded, till doubt followed doubt, and my prejudices all vanished before the sun-light of a more liberal knowledge — the elements of darkness became superseded by the glorious principles of unerring light, while the effulgence of the religion of the Reformation, which I had so often heard misrepresented through life, pierced through the mystic veil in which my mind was enveloped, giving me soon to hear my Protestant brethren say, "He that persecuted us in times past, now proclaims the faith which once he destroyed." There was a time during the imperial and papal power, when the dungeon or scaffold would be the temporary but certain reward of these my humble efforts for vital, real religion to be restored. But, blessed be the Father of love, those times are past, and a purer religion, producing a more refined civilization, has counteracted the unwarrantable stretch of Roman church authority, and the intelligence of mankind points to a safer way in the glorious spirit of religious toleration. c/

With regard to the doctrines contained in the "REFLECTIONS:" I know it will be charged that I maintain the opinions of the Arians; but by those perhaps who know only the name of that party, and not its tenets. The doctrines of the Arians are not known. Their writings were destroyed by the apostates in after ages. That the Arian and Athanasian factions strove violently together in the church councils of the first ages, is well known. Under Constantine, the latter became predominant, banished the other, destroyed its records, and founded the infamous Athanasian creed. How far the Arians disagreed with their opponents in point of doctrine is more legitimately the province of conjecture than of demonstration, for nothing more than shadowy tradition can be appealed to in the matter. The assumption, therefore, that I support Arian opinions be that assumption, if true, of whatever value it may, is necessarily unfair. That I oppose and detest the Athanasian platform is true;