

**THE JESUITS, THEIR RISE
AND
PROGRESS, DOCTRINES,
AND MORALITY**

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The Jesuits, Their Rise and Progress, Doctrines, and Morality by T. H. Usborne

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THE JESUITS,
THEIR
RISE AND PROGRESS, DOCTRINES, AND
MORALITY;
WITH NUMEROUS
EXTRACTS FROM THEIR OWN WRITERS.

BY

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'Tales of the Braganza;' &c.



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RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

THE JESUITS.

WHAT is Christianity? and why is that religion which Christ himself taught us, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men," now torn and divided into so many furious sects and hostile parties? is a question that may well be asked and as readily answered. We are more fond of theology than of God. We are too prone to regard the authority of man rather than *His Revealed Will*. If in everything connected with religion we were strictly to confine ourselves to the study of the Bible, no differences of opinion could then exist between us—at least, if to that study we joined a humble and prayerful spirit; for that sacred volume, perused with any other feeling, is to us, as to the Jews of old, "a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

The whole doctrine of vital Christianity may be comprised in two parts: the one which teaches us

what we are to believe; the other, *how we ought to live*. The standard and rule of both are the *Old and New Testaments*.

Provision was early made by the Apostles and their disciples that these books should be read in the assemblies of the first Christians, to enlighten their minds with truth and to advance them in all piety. The manner of teaching these religious truths was at first perfectly simple. They had no thought or wish to recommend them by ingenious explanations and philosophical arrangements.

These Christian associations were scarcely organized before many of the early converts, little contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the Apostles taught, attempted innovations, wanting, in fact, to fashion out a religion for themselves, as we learn from various passages in the Epistles of St. Paul.

After the death of the first Apostles and followers of our Saviour, these gradually acquired influence, laying the foundations of those sects which gave rise to so many contests in the Christian community. The system of morals of the sects widely differed. Some recommended abstinence, and austerity, and bodily mortifications, in order that the soul might enjoy greater liberty. While others, on the contrary, maintained that men might safely indulge in libidinous desires, and that there was no moral difference in human actions. Both of these extreme opinions

derived their origin from Eastern philosophy—from the Ascetics and Epicureans, who grafted their ideas upon a Christian stock.

To the common people the truths of Christianity were for some centuries explained in their purity and simplicity, nor were their minds overloaded by a multitude of precepts or subtleties of distinction. But in their schools and books, the higher class, who cultivated philosophy and literature, especially those of Egypt, were too fond of subjecting divine wisdom to the light of reason and to the precepts of philosophy. At the head of this class was Origen, who endeavoured to determine the causes and grounds of every doctrine of religion by the rules and precepts of Platonic philosophy. Though for the most part he proceeded with carefulness, yet his example led his disciples to burst the barriers he had prescribed, and to explain divine truths by the somewhat licentious dictates of philosophy. To these divines we owe that species of *theology* called scholastic, in which theology, in after years, the religious orders, and especially the Jesuits, so pre-eminently excelled. Origen was one of the first of those interpreters of the Bible who found in its writings a secure retreat for errors and idle fancies of all kinds. He taught that the words in many portions of the Scriptures convey no meaning at all; or a hidden sense, altogether different to their natural import, and far preferable