

**THE END OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY
IN A FREINDLY CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF
PROTESTANTS AND A ROMAN CATHOLI
DIVINE. IN THREE PARTS**

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The End of Religious Controversy in a Freindly Correspondence Between a Religious Society of Protestants and a Roman Catholi Divine. In Three Parts by John Milner

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JOHN MILNER

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THE PSALTERY.

To thee, O God my God I will give praise upon the Harp.
PSALM LXXXIII.

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RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY,
IN A
FRIENDLY CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN
A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF PROTESTANTS
AND
A ROMAN CATHOLIC DIVINE.

In three Parts:

PART I.—ON THE RULE OF FAITH; OR, THE METHOD OF FINDING OUT
THE TRUE RELIGION.

PART II.—ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

PART III.—ON RECTIFYING MISTAKES CONCERNING THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH.

BY THE RT. REV. JOHN MILNER, D. D.,

V. A., F. S. A. LONDON, AND THE CATHOLIC ACADEMY, ROME.

*Addressed to the Rt. Rev. DR. BURGESS, Lord Bishop of St. David's, in
Answer to his Lordship's PROTESTANT CATECHISM,*

TO WHICH IS ADDED THE AUTHOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

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**Thus saith Jesus : and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates
of hell shall not prevail against it."**

LOAN STACK

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THE EDITOR TO THE READER.

In this work, entitled "The End of Religious Controversy," the author and his correspondents having established the certainty of divine revelation and the truth of the Christian religion, he proposes the means by which, among the various discordant creeds of those who profess Christianity, the *true faith* which Jesus Christ brought down from heaven, and the *true church* which he established on earth, may be discovered. He undertakes to prove that we are provided with the certain *means* of making this discovery, and that Christ himself has left us a *rule of faith*, adapted to the *capacities of all*, by which we may come to the knowledge of *true religion*.

Before he attempts to show what this rule is, he notices certain methods, which have been adopted as rules of faith, and proves them to be insufficient and fallacious. *Private inspiration*, he maintains, cannot be a *rule of faith*, because private inspiration is in itself a *questionable* pretension; may be claimed by one as well as by another, and all alike; and has, in fact, been claimed and acted upon by *different* sectaries, in support of *different* and *contradictory* tenets; at the same time that it has, in many instances, led the pretenders to it into the greatest *absurdities* and most shocking *impieties*. Another rule of faith, the rule adopted by the reformed churches in general, is the *scripture* or the *written word of God*, left to the *interpretation of each individual*: for as no *supreme, unerring* authority is acknowledged by Protestants to determine the *sense* and *meaning* of Scripture, or to decide and announce what articles of faith are necessary for salvation, individual judgment is made the guide to individuals, the necessity of preachers is done away, and the commission of Jesus Christ to his apostles, "Go, *teach* all nations," is annulled. Where there is no *obligation to hear and obey*, there can be no *authority to teach and instruct*. The church, as an infallible teacher, is discarded, but its powers are transferred to each individual person; each person possesses *infallibility* in himself, each person is himself a church, accord

ingly as he may please to form his creed; and every possible contradictory opinion is *equally* defensible, as resting upon the interpretation of Scripture, adopted by the person who maintains it. This rule, like private inspiration, is shown to be fallacious; since, like the former, it has led, as it is calculated to lead, to *opposite conclusions* on numberless points of faith: and since there is no acknowledged *judge* on earth to *decide*, it necessarily follows that either contradictory doctrines are *favoured* by the sacred volume, and revealed, as *equally true*, by the God from whom that sacred volume came, or else that it was intended by the God of *peace*, as an *apple of discord*, and *meant* by the God of *truth* for the propagation of *falsehood*. But as such intentions can never be imputed to the Deity, nor can it be imagined that our Redeemer established a church to succeed to the Jewish Dispensation, and to last *till the end of the world*, so vague and indeterminate in its creed, so uncertain as to its form or even existence, in one place professing, on the authority of God's infallible word, articles and doctrines which, in another place, it anathematizes and disclaims on the same unerring authority,—the author maintains that the Scripture *alone* does not furnish this *certain* and *attainable* rule adapted to the capacities and situations of mankind at large.

Still he maintains that a *rule* does exist, and ever has existed since the time of Christ, by which the *faith of his disciples is secured from error*, and his *true religion*, with all its *doctrines* and *articles of belief* proclaimed to them with equal certainty, by means of his *protecting Spirit*, his promised *Paraclete*, as if He were visibly *seen* by them, and were *heard* by them speaking in his own person, as when he conversed with his disciples upon earth. This rule, he contends, is *the word of God, written and unwritten*, as it is interpreted and explained by his appointed oracle, HIS CHURCH, which he has *authorized and commissioned to teach all nations*, while he has *commanded* all mankind to *hear his church*. This *rule of faith*, subject to the interpretation of an *infallible expositor*, inspired by *himself*, and guided by *his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth*, must *necessarily* communicate his revelations, must *infallibly* teach his truth, the *whole truth*, and the *truth alone*. This rule, thus unerringly explained by the *Light of Light*, inevitably implies teachers *instituted by Jesus Christ himself*, and a *succession* of teachers *kept up by Him*, and *inspired by Him*. It secures their followers from the danger of error, in adopting their own conjectures, and the teachers it preserves from the spirit of innovation and imposture, from all the attempts of ambitious or interested dogmatizers. He then proceeds to show, that the church dispersed throughout the world and in communion with the See of Rome (commonly

called the **CATHOLIC** Church) alone adopts and follows this infallible rule; and he produces numberless arguments to prove that, whereas Christians have, in every age since that of the apostles, professed their belief of *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church*,—the Church in communion with the See of Rome, and presided over by the successor of St. Peter in that see, exclusively exhibits these four essential marks of the church of Christ, viz., **UNITY**, in doctrine, liturgy, government, and constitution; **SANCTITY**, in doctrine, in the means of holiness, and the fruits of holiness; **CATHOLICITY**, or universality, in its extent, as to time and place, no less than its name, which it has borne from time immemorial; and, finally, **APOSTOLICITY**, in its descent and regular succession of ministers, from the time of the apostles, as well as in its sacraments and sacred institutions. He then proceeds to show, that these marks are deficient to every Christian society, except that which is in communion with the See of Rome, and which exclusively enjoys, as it ever has enjoyed, the distinctive appellation of the *Catholic Church*.

Here, strictly speaking, his work is at an end and controversy concluded. For the infallible superintendence and inspiration of Jesus Christ promised and preserved, and the marks, by which his church may be distinguished from every other society or congregation, being ascertained and applied, it follows of consequence, (without particular proof with regard to each particular article,) that every doctrine of a church so guarded and protected, must be the doctrine of Jesus Christ himself, and the church secure from error. However, for the sake of candid and sincere inquirers, the author condescends to particular examination; brings forward the principal charges that are usually made against the Roman Catholic Church, and proves them to be either the involuntary errors of mistaken ignorance, or the unfair means resorted to by misrepresentation, with the view to blacken and disfigure the spouse of Christ. He draws aside the mask which malice had held up as her genuine countenance, and displays her form and features in all their native beauty and loveliness. For further satisfaction, he explains and justifies those particular doctrinal points, which are excepted against by the separatists from the Church of Rome.

Such are the nature and character of the work now presented to the public; such is the object of the pre-eminent writer, which if he have attained, he has without question put an *End to Religious Controversy*, and fully justified the title given to his matchless performance. Let the reader judge.

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