

**THE REIGN OF
INFIDELITY A GLIMPSE
AT THE LAST DAYS**

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The reign of infidelity A Glimpse at the last Days by Oral

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ORAL

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INFIDELITY A GLIMPSE
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THE
REIGN OF INFIDELITY:

A
Glimpse at the last Days.

BY ORAL.

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THE REIGN OF INFIDELITY.

It was a hot afternoon, or rather evening, in the middle of June, and the sun, like a ball of molten fire, was sinking fiercely to rest; its last rays were lingering in dazzling light over a city, whose world-wide renown seemed haughtily to claim from the laws of Nature, an exemption from homage, as it proudly exacted smiles and bows from all the nations of the earth who traded with her vast commerce. The sun's rays lingered over the mighty city, and calmly pursued their way to other lands. Wealth, learning, and sin, could not disturb the laws which guide the universe. And a smile of satisfaction passed over the face of Lord Mauve, as he turned his eyes from the vast regions of London to the rosy west, where in silence a voice daily repeated, '*I will not be defied.*'

'Farewell! In these days, who can tell

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what an hour may bring forth? Alphonse, it is not a novelty for me to be standing here at this hour. I come up every evening to watch the sunset, and meditate upon the bright land I may have entered before it again shines over this unhappy country.'

'My good fellow, it makes me angry to look at you, in the full vigour of health and strength, and to hear you coolly talking of death as if any religion were worth dying for! Jew, Turk, or Christian, you all worship the one God—what matter *how*?'

'But, Alphonse, we are not fighting for mere forms; the evil is far greater. This is the reign of infidelity, and it is for my belief in an Almighty God that I am ready to die. England, the last to fall a victim to Satan's wiles, is now sunk deeper in the evil than any country in Europe. It is the richest, the proudest, and the most wicked nation on the earth.'

'Well, Mauve, the love of your country will never break your heart; you are as bitter as a coquette playing upon an insensible heart; and now that you have meditated upon the shortness and uncertainty of life, and compared your existence to the setting sun, suppose we

descend this tower and take a stroll in the park. By Jove! what a height this tower is! the trees look like mushrooms, and yet we are only a quarter up; it was worth while coming all the way from Spain only to see this. It is the tower of Babel, without the confusion of tongues.'

'And built much in the same spirit: pride is the foundation-stone, and reason the structure that progresses higher and higher, until it ends in ruin. By making itself equal with God, the creature attempts to mould the Creator. The study of the heavens, in conjunction with the word of God, is good; but when reason sits alone upon its throne, and judges the Maker of the universe, wisdom then is folly.'

'Ah! Mauve, you are a Catholic, and the Catholic Church puts reason in fetters, for fear it should discover a flaw in the system; but reason is stronger than iron, and you cannot keep it in bondage.'

'On the contrary, Alphonse; the Catholic Church, in teaching the doctrines of Christ, gives reason an endless scope for exercise; and in believing, finds its reward

in the golden cup of peace. Reason, in the Catholic Church, is like a bee in a flower garden : it extracts sweets from each doctrine, and lays up a store for eternity.'

'But your belief is contrary to reason, and, however sweet you may make the pill, it is very difficult for common sense to swallow ; for example—the Holy Eucharist, as you call it. What a blasphemous doctrine ! a cannibal would jump at the belief.'

'If it is blasphemy and cannibalism to believe the words of Christ, we are guilty of both. "Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in me." These are God's words, Alphonse.'

'You have taken an isolated sentence, Mauve. Read the whole chapter that you have quoted from, and you will find that our Lord spoke figuratively, thus — "Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. The bread which I will give you is my flesh ;" God in the flesh, is the type of the bread ; we are to eat by faith and be saved.'

'I will answer you on your own ground, and consider that the chapter in Saint John, to which we allude, was uttered by our Lord in a figurative

sense :—‘Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood’—was the type of the bread the Israelites of old ate in the wilderness. The type is less than the reality. Thus God is less than bread, and for the words, “The bread which I will give is my flesh,” we must read, “The flesh which I will give is bread.” And may I ask you, Alphonse, what virtue or divinity there is in a piece of flour and water, that it can of itself save us from our sins, and take us to Heaven?’

‘By faith, Mauve, and the grace of God, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ to our salvation.’

‘Thus you admit the truth in words, and deny it in fact, and call us Catholics cannibals, for *believing* the words of Christ, “Take, eat, this is my body.”’

‘Exactly, Mauve ; and what follows?—“As often as you do this, you do show my death until I come.” It is a representation, not a reality ; and *faith* in the actual atonement is the source alone through which we receive our salvation.’

‘In fact, you regard the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament as a mere form, an acknowledgment of an event through

which, by faith, you will be saved ; and therefore, it is very clear that, if once a year, you walked up to the altar in your church, and looked at a piece of bread laid thereon, saying, " I believe this represents the body of my Saviour who died for me," and the same before a glass of wine, " This wine represents the blood of my Redeemer, shed for me," you can leave the church under the firm belief that you are an orthodox Christian. And is it for this cold form that our Saviour so earnestly desired to institute the sacrament with his disciples ? No, he desired to *unite* himself with erring man, that through his grace we might be saved ; therefore he left us his own divine body to be our strength and guide through this sinful world.'

' But, my dear Mauve,—Our Lord had not suffered upon the cross when he said, " Take, eat, this is my body."'

' True, but the God who by one word could put life into the dead, could equally animate a piece of bread, to fulfil his earnest desire of incorporating himself with those he loved.'

A short grunt of assent was the only answer Alphonse Danby made to his companion, whilst he ruthlessly knocked off