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On the Re-establishment  
of the Inquisition.

( J. Macdonald )

1815

~~By J. Macdonald~~

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To the Rev. George Marsden  
from the Author.

OBSERVATIONS

ON A

SPEECH

DELIVERED TO

HIS CATHOLIC MAJESTY FERDINAND VII.

BY

M. BLAISE ASTOLAZA,  
CHAPLAIN OF HONOUR TO THAT MONARCH,

ON

The Re-establishment of the Inquisition;

WITH

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PROTESTANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN;

on the long agitated and still impending

CATHOLIC QUESTION.

---

Erravit Ecclesia Romana, non solum quoad agenda, & ceremoniarum ritus,  
verum in his etiam quæ credenda sunt.—19th ARTICLE.

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## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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**P**APISTS, by assuming, as first principles, the infallibility of their own church, and the impossibility of obtaining salvation out of its pale, render themselves incapable of meeting Protestants on any common ground, in the field of theological controversy. They represent their church as the supreme mistress of all other churches, and maintain, that to reject any of her dogmas is to be guilty of an act of rebellion against Christ in heaven, and his Vicar upon earth. Those who refuse to adopt, as necessary articles of faith, the whole of the unscriptural and absurd dogmas, which that most corrupt of all churches has, in the course of ages, added to the doctrines of Christianity, they pronounce heretics, who, in order to the preservation of the catholic faith, ought to be exterminated. Even transubstantiation, a doctrine the reception of which is a disgrace to the reason of man, must, according to them, be embraced, upon pain of damnation! Instead of meeting Protestants as brethren, for

the purpose of reclaiming them from the errors which they suppose them to have adopted, they assume the office of judges; and, not satisfied with pronouncing them erroneous, maintain that they make no part of the church of Christ; and that, if they die in a state of separation from the Church of Rome, "they shall, without doubt, "perish everlastingly." Authority, supported by pains and penalties of the most dreadful nature, is that by which the Romish church is professedly supported; and that authority the adherents of popery have exercised for ages, whenever they imagined they could do so with safety to themselves. To all the most conclusive arguments urged by Protestants against their novel and unscriptural tenets, they urge the infallibility of their church, which, in the face of ten thousand proofs to the contrary, they maintain has never erred, nor was ever capable of error. Thus, adopting as axioms the principal points in controversy betwixt themselves and the Protestants, they demand unqualified submission to the decisions of their church. For the members of a church so grossly erroneous in doctrine, so absurd and heathenish in worship, as that of Rome is, to maintain that she has *never erred*, is sufficient to excite the risibility of all who have the least acquaintance with church history, or who give themselves leisure for a moment to reason upon

the absurd and unscriptural doctrines which she has magnified into articles of faith. But when we consider that millions of our fellow-creatures have been slaughtered in virtue of the decrees of that church, for refusing to believe those wretched doctrines, our laughter is turned into sorrow.

These observations open the way to a consideration of a famous address, recently delivered to Ferdinand VII. of Spain, by his Chaplain of Honour, on the subject of the re-establishment of the Inquisition.

“ Madrid, Nov. 2, 1814.

“ The following is an extract from the speech of M. Blaise Astolaza, Chaplain of Honour to the King, who has been lately presented to a princely benefice in the diocese of Carthageña.

‘ SIRE,

‘ The municipality of Soria has appointed us to congratulate your Majesty in its name, and humbly to express our grateful acknowledgments for your immortal decree of the 21st of the month of July last. This decree, by re-establishing the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition, the incessant object of the fury of the heretics and the sarcasms of philosophy, hath wiped away the tears of the Church of Spain, laid waste by reason of the

suppression of an establishment so salutary in every respect, so worthy of praise from all the old Christians, and all those who take an interest in the purity of the faith. Everlasting thanks to the God of our fathers, who vouchsafes to allow us, at length, to see realized the hopes of the whole nation, when afflicted by the absence of your Majesty, the people offered up to heaven the most fervent prayers for your return. A series of miracles hath brought back to us our august monarch for the consolation of the church, and for the re-establishment of our ancient laws and customs. Such, Sire, are the sentiments of this municipality, of all the provinces of Soria,---not less catholic than courageous; and I dare affirm to your Majesty, that similar sentiments pervade the whole of Spain, whose love for your person will become more ardent on beholding this new proof of the great abundance of the religion of her sovereign, and the influence he uses to preserve in its purity the faith of our fathers.' ”

The sentiments contained in this extract from the speech of Ferdinand's "Chaplain of Honour," need only to be read in order to excite the indignation of every man who has not sacrificed his understanding to the wicked and absurd claims of popish infallibility. It is not in language to reprobate such sentiments with sufficient severity ;



sentiments which are an outrage upon the reason, common sense, and feelings of mankind. It was not enough for the inhabitants of the municipality of Soria, to suffer in gloomy silence the re-establishment of a horrid tribunal, the existence of which stamps eternal infamy on the Church of Rome; but they must be made, by the mouth of a "Chaplain of Honour," to express their "grateful acknowledgments" for the favour! O poor deluded Spaniards! what have you gained by the noble and successful stand which you made against foreign invasion? By the powerful assistance of England, which you are taught by your ghostly tyrants to denominate a nation of heretics, you were enabled (for you could not do it yourselves) to drive the invading foe from your territories; and, as the fruit of all your toils and sufferings, you have obtained FERDINAND and the INQUISITION! These are the blessings for which you are forced to express your grateful acknowledgments, especially for the latter; for *forced* you must be---it is not in human nature that it should be otherwise. From the rank in civilized and enlightened nations to which you were recently approaching, you are cast back into such a state of civil and religious degradation, as is sufficient to excite the pity of every human being, who joins to the exercise of reason the feelings of human nature. What a dreadful prospect for yourselves and your children

lies before you! When in the silent shade, remote from inquisitorial inspection, you venture for a moment to think for yourselves, terrified and ashamed at the sight of your present degraded state, and looking forward with boding apprehensions at the woes which are in reversion for your descendants; you are ready, in the anguish of your souls, to exclaim

— “ Fair patrimony  
 “ That we must leave you, sons! O were we able  
 “ To waste it all ourselves, and leave you none!”

Such must sometimes be the language of your hearts; for, though degraded by civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, you are men, and consequently cannot wholly divest yourselves of the feelings of humanity.

The decree by which the Inquisition in Spain has been re-established, is termed an “ immortal decree;” and there is a sense in which that appellation may be considered appropriate; for it brands with *immortal* infamy all who, directly or indirectly, contributed towards its being issued.

As a negative proof of the excellence of the Inquisition, the “ Chaplain of Honour” represents it as an “ object of the incessant fury of the heretics,” *i. e.*, all the Reformed Churches in the

world. How softly and sweetly would the "Chaplain of Honour" have the Protestant world express themselves on the subject of a tribunal, blasphemously termed *holy*;---a tribunal by which myriads of the saints of God have been doomed to suffer the most cruel and protracted torments, for the *sole* crime of worshipping their Maker according to the dictates of their own consciences! Yes! Protestants detest the Inquisition, and every other species of persecution. To be denominated heretics by a church which has for ages greatly contributed towards brutalizing mankind, and peopling the world with infidels, by her absurd and sanguinary decrees, is looked upon by Protestants as a mark of honour. Against the Inquisition, and every other species of persecution, they are waging a *just* and *necessary* war, in which they use no other weapons than those which Scripture and reason furnish; nor will they ever give over the holy contest, till mystic BABYLON shall fall to rise no more. An increase of the spirit of piety, and an ardent thirst for scriptural knowledge, so visible at this time, together with the most cordial union of all the Protestant powers of Europe, afford a favourable omen that Popery, notwithstanding the foolish, cruel, and absurd flourish of many of its deluded adherents, is in the pangs of dissolution. Those powers, strong in the goodness of their cause, and influenced by principles of reason,

religion, and humanity, are above acting upon the principle of *retaliation*; and hence they grant to papists complete religious toleration. But they know that to do more than this, viz. to grant them the power of legislating, would be, even according to the views of sensible and consistent papists themselves, incompatible with the safety of any Protestant government.

Another negative excellence of the Inquisition, in the account of the "Chaplain of Honour," is, that it has been an "incessant object of the sarcasms of philosophy." There is unquestionably a *true*, as well as a *false*, philosophy; and though the latter is no more than a counterfeit of the former, yet it so far resembles the original, as to ridicule, with good effect, a tribunal which is a disgrace to any age or country. Never was false philosophy so innocently employed, as when exposing to infamy the cruelties, superstitions, and absurdities of papal Rome. Unhappily for themselves, the patrons of that philosophy, confounding Popery with Christianity, rejected both the one and the other. But still, notwithstanding their fundamental errors and numerous crimes, they taught millions on the continent of Europe one important lesson, which legions of Jesuits will never be able to unteach them; namely, that persecution is *unjust*, *cruel*, and *absurd*.

We learn from the "Chaplain of Honour," that the Church of Spain, from the time that the *Holy Inquisition* was suppressed till that of its restoration, was truly disconsolate; that, like Jerusalem of old, in the day of her sore calamity, her *tears were upon her cheeks*; for he tells us, that the re-establishment of the Inquisition has wiped away her tears! What sort of a church must that be, which wept at the downfall of the most dire instrument of cruelty, and, in its absence, refused to be comforted? It surely, to say the least, cannot be a sound part of that Universal Church which is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

We are told, that the Church of Spain was "laid waste by reason of the suppression of an establishment so salutary in every respect, so worthy of praise from all the old Christians, and all those who take an interest in the purity of the faith." Here we are informed, that the Church of Spain is indebted to the Inquisition for its support. We have long thought so, but we could not imagine that a "Chaplain of Honour" would, by an explicit avowal of the fact, proclaim his own infamy, and that of a church which he must naturally wish to appear respectable. Stand it upon record, for the perusal of generations unborn, in order to excite their lasting detestation of

popery, that Papists themselves avow, that the support of their religion depends upon the greatest instrument of cruelty which has ever been invented by men or devils. Surely the Church of Rome has "a whore's forehead," for she refuses "to be "ashamed" of the greatest cruelties, absurdities, and abominations. But the day of her calamity is approaching, when the kings of the earth, by refusing to be the executioners of her bloody edicts, will make her desolate; for then, even according to her own declaration, she will be "laid waste."

"An establishment so salutary in every respect."---In what respects is it salutary? Either to murder men in cold blood, who have honesty and courage sufficient to avow their religious sentiments; or to force them, in opposition to reason and conscience, to profess that they sincerely embrace dogmas, which they not only believe to be false, but impious and absurd. If an engine of destruction, the design of which is either to murder men, or make them hypocrites, be salutary, the Inquisition may justly be called a salutary establishment! "So worthy of praise from all the old Christians, and all those who take an interest in the purity of the faith;"---*i. e.* all the novelties, superstitions, and idolatries of the Church of Rome. We doubt not that

maty, whom the "Chaplain of Honour" terms old Christians, *i. e.* thorough-paced Papists, who hold the *tolerating* of Protestants in the greatest abhorrence; hail, as worthy of the highest praise, the re-establishment of the *Holy Inquisition*. On this horrid tribunal they depend for the support of their wretchedly erroneous and corrupt faith; and, confounding it with the faith "once delivered to the saints," they would devote to destruction all who dare to assert that they have erred in any point of either faith or morals, or that they ever *could possibly* err. These are the old Christians (of what stamp let reason and Scripture decide) on whom the "Chaplain of Honour" lavishes his praises.

"Such, Sire, are the sentiments of this municipality,---of all the provinces of Soria, not less catholic than courageous." Courageous enough to submit, in silent obedience, when the Inquisition was put down by Buonaparte, and when the decree was passed by the Cortes that it should be abolished; but valiant enough to be clamorous for its restoration, when the British troops, to whom Spain owes her deliverance from a foreign yoke, were withdrawn; and when the mercenary soldiers of Ferdinand could find no other employment than that of pursuing, with relentless fury, all in whom the fire of true patriotism had begun

to glow, or who felt for the moral and religious degradation of Spain.

“Similar sentiments pervade the whole of Spain, whose love for your person will become more ardent on beholding this new proof of the great abundance of the religion of her sovereign.”— Enlightened Spaniards! whose affection has become so ardent on beholding this new proof (the blessing of an INQUISITION!) of the “great abundance” of the religion of your august monarch! And O! pious king! who is able to give so striking a proof of the “great abundance” of his religion! This is a *Catholic* monarch! Spain is a *Christian* country!

The unclouded light of divine truth, which, in conjunction with reason, has been gradually diffusing its influence over the nations of the world, since the glorious era of the Reformation, has not so succeeded as to raise Spain from her low estate; for the clouds of ignorance and superstition under which a people must necessarily lie, who groan under the domination of such spiritual guides as the priests of Rome, must certainly exclude the rays of evangelical truth; and inquisitorial cruelty must generally prevent the right use of reason in matters of religion. Yet even in Spain, that land of clouds and shadows,



we live not without hope of seeing the dawning of that latter-day glory, the light of the gospel of Christ, which shall illuminate the world. The late protracted and bloody war, which raged in that country so long, must have had the effect of rousing the energies of many of its inhabitants; and on account of the intercourse which they must necessarily have had with men of different countries, but especially with the English, some of their prejudices, and much of their ignorance, must have been removed. And though the return of a captive king, full of Romish bigotry, and the re establishment of the Inquisition, may, for a time, suppress any spirit of civil liberty or true religion which the people may manifest; yet there is good ground to hope, that the Spaniards, who are naturally a brave people, ashamed of their state of civil and religious degradation, and improving the knowledge they have acquired by their intercourse with foreigners, will indignantly cast off the galling chains of popery, and eventually become an enlightened, free, and great people.

Protestants of Great Britain! to whatever denominations you may belong, you have a common interest, sufficient to promote your union in a decided opposition to popery. However divided in sentiment on a variety of subjects, you are

unanimous in maintaining, that liberty of conscience is the birth-right of every human being, and that, consequently, coercion in matters *purely* religious, is equally opposed to Scripture and reason. Influenced by the principles of civil and religious liberty, you are straining every nerve, for the purpose of diffusing happiness similar to that which yourselves enjoy. Your extraordinary exertions in favour of Africa's injured sons and daughters, evince that, from principle and affection, you are lovers of mankind. The numerous petitions which you recently addressed to the Legislature for permission to send Christian Missionaries to India, are so many demonstrative proofs, that you are alive to the best interests of the human race! To the men who pronounce the pure and scriptural religion which you profess, a novelty, which will, like other novelties, shortly disappear, and be only remembered from the mischief it has occasioned, you rejoice to see complete religious toleration extended. You know that I refer to the Irish Roman Catholics, whose hostility to the Protestant religion, and the constitution of your country in Church and State, has provoked the resentment of even their warmest advocates in Parliament. You justly merit the highest praise for your generosity. Sincere yourselves, you are not disposed to suspect the sincerity of others. But the writer of this address,

who has studied the popish controversy, and who has had many opportunities of knowing the tempers, practices, and prevailing dispositions of the Irish Papists, takes the liberty of warning you against reposing the slightest confidence in their warmest professions in favour of religious liberty.

Such of the inhabitants of Spain as the “Chaplain of Honour” terms “old Christians,” who have recently expressed their grateful acknowledgments for the blessing of an Inquisition, are not more determined enemies to Protestantism than the Irish Papists. They possess an inextinguishable hatred to both you and your religion; and nothing in the Universe would afford them greater pleasure than the downfall of our Protestant Government. I speak thus of them in general, which is sufficient for my argument; for there may possibly be found among them a few exceptions; who, though still connected with the Church of Rome, are not thorough Papists. It is a fact, that popery, in its worst and most hideous forms, is still the religion of the Irish Roman Catholics.

British Protestants! let not your generosity lull you into security! While *generous* to the world at large, be so *just* to yourselves and your descendants as to preserve inviolate the sacred deposit of civil and religious liberty, to procure which your

ancestors did not reckon their lives too dear a purchase. Keep in mind, not for the purpose of revenge, but caution, the war of extermination which papal Rome has carried on for ages against thousands and tens of thousands, who dared to shew the reason of men, and the piety of Christians, by refusing to obey her absurd, cruel, and abominable edicts. Let the horrors of the Irish massacre, and that of St. Bartholomew, with the rejoicings they occasioned at Rome, prevail in your minds, whenever the popish question is agitated ; and, with the resolution of your forefathers, who braved danger and death, in order to free themselves and you from the degrading yoke of popish tyranny, express to the Legislature your determined opposition to any change in the British Constitution ; and the government under which you live will continue a free, because a *Protestant*, government.

You are aware, that the violent clamours of the Irish Papists for *liberty of conscience*, have their origin in the most palpable ignorance, or intolerable impudence ; as *liberty of conscience*, in its utmost latitude, is guaranteed to them, in common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects. In what popish country in the world do (I will not say *Protestants*, but) Papists themselves, enjoy such a portion of civil liberty as they possess ? Is it in Spain, that emphatically popish country ? In

that region of pure tyranny, civil and religious liberty are equally unknown: Ferdinand and the Inquisitors, who are themselves vassals of the Pope, lord it over a nation of slaves, who must tamely submit to express their "grateful acknowledgments" for the blessing of an Inquisition! Popery, the nature of which is to produce slaves and tyrants, is an eternal enemy to civil as well as religious liberty. Popery and civil slavery are identified; for what free government would deliver its subjects into the hands of bloody Inquisitors, to be tortured at their discretion; and then be called upon, as an executioner, to finish the horrid catastrophe! When in Spain, France, Italy, and other popish countries, Protestants shall have *liberty of conscience*, it will be time enough to consider soberly, whether it may be judged prudent to entrust Papists with the power of legislating under a Protestant government. But, while popish governments absolutely refuse liberty of conscience to Protestants, for Protestant governments to suffer Papists to legislate in their dominions, would be an act of rashness and folly, of which, it is to be hoped, they are incapable of being guilty. Shall England, the centre of liberty and civilization, as well as the grand bulwark of the Reformation, submit to place the devoted slaves of papal Rome on a level with its free and honourable legislators? Liberty of conscience is out of the

question ; and therefore, the point to be considered is, Shall Papists be allowed to legislate for this Protestant country ? Some Protestants, who have most unaccountably become advocates of what they term *Catholic emancipation*, say, “ We admit this ; and ask, why, in this enlightened age, should they not be placed on a level with his Majesty’s Protestant subjects ? ” They ought not ; and that for two plain reasons ; first, they are, and must be, avowedly or secretly, inimical to our Protestant government ; and, secondly, their unqualified submission to the see of Rome, renders it impossible for them to give such security for their civil obedience as is essential to their being fit for any of the higher offices of a Protestant state. *Authority* with them is every thing, in civil as well as religious matters ; and, since they submit to the jurisdiction of Rome, which, by force or fraud, carries on an incessant war against the interests of every Protestant state, they ought to be explicitly assured, from *Protestant authority*, that not one of them, acknowledging such jurisdiction, shall ever legislate for this free country. This appears to be the *only* method of setting the popish question at rest for ever. But it will be urged, we ought to conciliate the Roman Catholics. Granted ; and we have proceeded so far in conciliating those of them in Ireland, that to do more would be to ruin the

Constitution, which we are under ten thousand obligations to maintain inviolate, at the risk of all that is dear to us on earth. But there is no risk to be run by maintaining our Protestant government: sensible Papists, who are amused with the credulity of some of our legislators, will respect us for so doing. Our reasonings they despise, because they consider us heretics, who err fundamentally; but they will submit to the *authority* of government. I had numerous opportunities of knowing many of them, when they not only submitted to government, but were, in general, apparently grateful for the liberty they enjoyed under it. This was the case for many years before the dazzling and deceitful glare of the French Revolution bewildered them; many years before a popish rabble, under the direction of their priests, exhibited on *Vinegar Hill*, the tree of *liberty* in conjunction with the *cross*; while, at the same time, they sacrificed, with unrelenting fury, all in their power who claimed *liberty of conscience!* O Liberty! the glory of Britons, in whose capital an Apostolic Vicar (Dr. Milner) can declare with impunity, that *submission* to the Pope is absolutely necessary to salvation, how art thou blasphemed by a church which will not suffer her members to read the Bible "WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THEIR SUPERIORS!" In that church, according to her pretended infallible rulers, no man can call either his

soul or his body his own ; for if he happen to think agreeably to Scripture and reason, the priests will deliver his soul to the devil, and the chief magistrate must, on pain of forfeiting his dominions, order his body to the flames.

In proof that what is improperly termed *Catholic emancipation*, would, if carried into effect, not only injure, but destroy the Constitution of this Country, I avail myself of the sentiments of that celebrated lawyer and statesman, the late Lord KENYON.---“ If,” saith he, “ the day of trial should  
 “ ever arrive, and the motives influencing those  
 “ who profess Popery are called into action, either  
 “ by a domestic or foreign cause, the safety of  
 “ the Throne and Constitution will depend entirely  
 “ on the strong ascendancy of the Protestant sub-  
 “ jects. If the principle of Protestant union in  
 “ Church and State were abandoned, (which I  
 “ insist the granting of power, legislative or mili-  
 “ tary, to the Romanists, would essentially de-  
 “ stroy,) it is impossible to see on what it is that  
 “ any title to the throne would remain to the  
 “ family of the house of Brunswick. Let those  
 “ who doubt on the admissibility of the Romanists  
 “ to power seriously consider this.---On the whole  
 “ it appears very evident, that a conscientious  
 “ adherence to an oath, originally required of the  
 “ sovereign, as a further security that the English



“ Constitution might ever remain essentially Pro-  
 “ testant in Church and State, requires an absolute  
 “ denial on his part, to any further demands which  
 “ may be made for concessions to the Roman Ca-  
 “ tholics. If the Parliament will not do its duty,  
 “ it is for the Sovereign to remember, be it as-  
 “ serted with deference and humility, that he is  
 “ still not absolved from his engagement; but is  
 “ bound, by every tie, to his family, his country,  
 “ and his God, to maintain in spirit and in truth  
 “ an engagement by which he holds his throne.  
 “ And may the general sentiment of the country  
 “ be ever asserted, in the maintenance of our  
 “ happy Constitution, as, blessed be God, it has  
 “ been by our present venerable and beloved  
 “ Monarch.”

Protestants of Great Britain ! whose country is  
 an asylum for civil and religious liberty, in which  
 even Papists may indulge in all the fooleries and  
 superstitions of their religion, be true to your-  
 selves, by spurning the unconstitutional claims of  
 the Papists; and to all succeeding ages you will  
 stand, as you do at present, at the head of the  
 first nations upon the globe.

THE END.



