

ments of men. The spirit which was most active in the formation of such systems, and which, in the mysterious wisdom of God has been permitted to be so awfully and fatally successful, is the very spirit, which, on its first manifestation, received so severe a rebuke on the part of Christ—the spirit of worldly ambition, mingling with it the desire of pre-eminence over their brethren in the ministry of the Gospel, entertained by some of the professing servants of the Redeemer. As this twofold ambition could not be successfully vindicated, so long as the Bible was known and recognised as the only infallible test of procedure, both on the part of the teachers and the taught, that Divine Rule was set aside; and though it could not be destroyed, it was ere long made a sealed book to the great mass of those who composed the churches and the nations, now no longer permitted to hear or to read in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. The effect of all this was, a fearful growth of worldliness and faithlessness to Christ on the part of an overwhelming majority of those who still bore the name, but performed none of the duties of Christ's Ministers; and who, the more to aggrandize their worldly interests amongst the nations of the earth, invented new titles of honour and dignity for themselves, regardless of the honour of the Saviour—and on the part of the people, such an amount of ignorance and superstition, as rendered them the easy prey of every destroyer. Not many centuries elapsed, after the successfully attempted perpetration of such wickedness, until that which the various nations of the earth blindly consented to call *the Church*, presented even to the nations themselves such a mass of corruption, depravity and despotism, that it became a by-word and a loathing to every one of them. That prelatic and hierarchical power with which the professed church of Christ was so overrun, by which the presbyters and overseers of the church were completely overborne, and which Civil Rulers at first permitted, nay, even invited to enter into the various departments of their States, was at length found to have erected a separate Kingdom in the midst of the nations—a Kingdom all the more powerful, because he who sat upon its throne, having reduced the nations to ignorance by the withdrawal of the light of the Bible, and usurping the attributes and the place of the God of the Bible, felt himself at liberty, not only to kill the body, but also to exercise the power, which the besotted nations of Christendom feared he possessed, to cast into the fire of hell, those who bore not his image, and the number of his name.

Still, though all the witnesses for Christ appeared to human eyes, to have been slain, it was not, it could not, be so. The Redeemer has had, in every age of the world that is past, and shall have through every coming age, a seed to serve Him, which shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. He then proved himself to be, as he always will, “a

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