**“The Papacy and Civilisation. Rome and the Ostrogoths” The Present Truth 11, 29, pp. 453, 454.**

**ROME AND THE OSTROGOTHS**

A FEW weeks ago we examined on its merits, and in the light of indisputable historical facts, the claim that the Papacy is the source and stay of civilisation. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.1}

We found that in the great and leading opportunity which she first sought and found, for the establishment of a permanent “Christian civilisation,” she proved herself a most deplorable failure—that, instead of purifying and enlightening anything, she corrupted and darkened everything. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.2}

We found that the claim that is made by her, and in her behalf by some “Protestants,” that she civilised the barbarians who destroyed the Western Empire, is false: that instead of converting them she corrupted them; and instead of aiding them in any way, she retarded them in every way. And we promised to show now what she did for those whom she could not corrupt; and what she did within her own proper sphere in the way of helping or blessing mankind. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.3}

And assuredly the time when she had the most untrammelled opportunities to do what she could or would do for nations—that is the time which presents the fairest point from which to view her. In studying these things we are but studying the lessons which faithful history has taught—alas, however, too much in vain. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.4}

We may take as an example the history of the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy, under Theodoric, who was, to the Catholic, and heretic. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.5}

**PEACE AND SECURITY UNDER THE “HERETIC”**

THEODORIC ruled Italy thirty-three years, A. D. 493-526, during which time Italy enjoyed such peace and quietness and absolute security as had never been known there before, and has never been known there since until 1870. The people of his own nation numbered two hundred thousand men, which, with the proportionate number of women and children, formed a population of nearly one million. His troops, formerly so wild and given to plunder, were restored to such discipline that in a battle in Dacia, in which they were completely victorious “the rich spoils of the enemy lay untouched at their feet,” because their leader had given no signal of pillage. When such discipline prevailed in the excitement of a victory and in an enemy’s country, it is easy to understand the peaceful order that prevailed in their own new-gotten lands which the Herulians had held before them. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.6}

During the ages of violence and revolution which had passed, large tracts of land in Italy had become utterly desolate and uncultivated; almost the whole of the rest was under imperfect culture; but now “agriculture revived under the shadow of peace, and the number of husbandmen multiplied by the redemption of captives;” and Italy, which had so long been fed from other countries, now actually began to export grain. Civil order was so thoroughly maintained that “the city gates were never shut either by day or by night, and the common saying that a purse of gold might be safely left in the fields, was expressive of the conscious security of the inhabitants.”—*Gibbon and Milman*. Merchants and other lovers of the blessings of peace thronged from all parts. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.7}

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

BUT not alone did civil peace reign. Above all, there was perfect freedom in the exercise of religion. In fact, the measure of civil liberty and peace always depends upon that of religious liberty. Theodoric and his people were Arians, yet at the close of a fifty-years’ rule of Italy, the Ostrogoths could safely challenge their enemies to present a single authentic case in which they had ever persecuted the Catholics. Even the mother of Theodoric and some of his favorite Goths had embraced the Catholic faith with perfect freedom from any molestation whatever. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.8}

The separation between Church and State, between civil and religious powers, was clear and distinct. Church property was protected in common with other property, while at the same time it was taxed in common with all other property. The clergy were protected in common with all other people, and they were likewise, in common with all other people, cited before the civil courts to answer for all civil offenses. In all ecclesiastical matters they were left entirely to themselves. Even the papal elections Theodoric left entirely to themselves, and though often solicited by both parties to interfere, he refused to have anything at all to do with them, except to keep the peace, which in fact was of itself no small task. He declined even to confirm the papal elections, an office which had been exercised by Odoacer. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.9}

**GOLDEN PRINCIPLES OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

NOR was this merely a matter of toleration; it was in genuine recognition of the rights of conscience. In a letter to the emperor Justin, A.D. 524, Theodoric announced the genuine principle of the rights of conscience, and the relationship that should exist between religion and the State, in the following words, worthy to be graven in letters of gold:— {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.10}

To pretend to a dominion over the conscience, is to usurp the prerogative of God. By the nature of things, the power of sovereigns is confined to political government. They have no right of punishment but over those who disturb the public peace. The most dangerous heresy is that of a sovereign who separates himself from part of his subjects, because they believe not according to his belief. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.11}

Similar pleas had before been made by the parties oppressed, but never before had the principle been announced by *the party in power*. The enunciation and defence of a principle by the party who holds the power to violate it, is the surest pledge that the principle is held in genuine sincerity. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.12}

The description of the state of peace and quietness in Italy above given, applies to Italy, *but not to Rome;* to the dominions of Theodoric and the Ostrogoths, but not to the city of the pope and the Catholics. How affairs went amongst the subjects of the Pope, and how the Catholic Church finally compassed the destruction of the Ostrogothic power we will consider next week. {PTUK July 18, 1895, p. 453.13}

A. T. JONES.

**“The Papacy and Civilisation. A Shameful Record” The Present Truth 11, 30, pp. 469, 470.**

**A SHAMEFUL RECORD**

IN our study of the influence of the Papacy—whether for or against civilisation—we saw last week how, under the Arian Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, Italy enjoyed civil liberty and peace. Theodoric enunciated the true principle that civil government has no right or province in the domain of religion. But this peace and these principles were limited to the dominions of the Ostrogoths; in Rome itself, the city of the Pope, it was far different, as will appear. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.1}

**“ELECTING” A POPE**

IN A. D. 499, there was a papal election. As there were, as usual, rival candidates—Symmachus and Laurentius—there was a civil war. “The two factions encountered with the fiercest hostility; the clergy, the Senate, and the populace were divided;” the streets of the city “ran with blood, as in the days of republican strife.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.2}

The contestants were so evenly matched, and the violent strife continued so long, that the leading men of both parties persuaded the candidates to go to Theodoric at Ravenna, and submit to his judgment their claims. Theodoric’s love of justice and of the rights of the people, readily and simply enough decided that the candidate who had the most votes should be counted elected; and if the votes were evenly divided, then the candidate who had been first ordained. Symmachus secured the office. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.3}

Laurentius, though defeated at this time, did not discontinue his efforts to obtain the office. For four years he watched for opportunities, and carried on an intrigue to displace Symmachus, and in 503 brought a series of heavy charges against him. “The accusation was brought before the judgment-seat of Theodoric, supported by certain Roman females of rank, who had been suborned, it was said, by the enemies of Symmachus. Symmachus was summoned to Ravenna and confined at Rimini,” but escaped and returned to Rome. Meanwhile, Laurentius had entered the city, and when Symmachus returned, “the sanguinary tumults between the two parties broke out with greater fury;” priests were slain, monasteries set on fire, and nuns treated with the utmost indignity. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.4}

**IN CATHOLIC ROME**

THE Senate petitioned Theodoric to send a visitor to judge the cause of Symmachus in the crimes laid against him. The king finding that the matter was only a church quarrel, appointed one of their own number, the bishop of Altimo, who so clearly favored Laurentius that his partisanship only made the contention worse. Again Theodoric was petitioned to interfere, but he declined to assume any jurisdiction, and told them to settle it among themselves; but as there was so much disturbance of the peace, and it was so long continued, Theodoric commanded them to reach some sort of settlement that would stop their fighting, and restore public order. A council was therefore called. As Symmachus was on his way to the council, “he was attacked by the adverse party; showers of stones fell around him; many presbyters and others of his followers were severely wounded; the pontiff himself only escaped under the protection of the Gothic guard,” and took refuge in the church of St. Peter. The danger to which he was then exposed he made an excuse for not appearing at the council. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.5}

The most of the council were favorable to Symmachus and to the pretensions of the bishop of Rome at this time, and therefore were glad of any excuse that would relieve them from judging him. However, they went through the form of summoning him three times; all of which he declined. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.6}

The majority of the council declared Symmachus “absolved in the sight of men, whether guilty or innocent in the sight of God,” for the reason that “no assembly of bishops has power to judge the pope; he is accountable for his actions to God alone.” They then commanded all, under penalty of excommunication, to accept this judgment, and submit to the authority of Symmachus, and acknowledge him “for lawful bishop of the holy city of Rome.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.7}

**THE BARBARISM OF THE CHURCH**

FROM The foregoing facts as to both sides, the condition of civilisation among the “barbarians” and that among the Catholics in the city of Rome, there can be no difficulty in deciding where civilisation, and civil order, and peace, and good of every kind, really dwelt. All the blessings of civilisation and enlightened principles were found with the “barbarians;” while the violence, the strife, and the determination to be chief, that belong to barbarians, were all found in the Catholic Church, led on by her chief leaders, and in the city of her sole possession and government. The “barbarians” gave to Italy all the blessings of enlightened civilisation. The Catholic Church gave to Rome such violence, strife, and bloodshed as could hardly be outdone by barbarians. Nor was this scene in Rome merely a spasmodic affair—this had been the customary procedure in the election of a Pope for more than a hundred years. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.8}

And this barbarism of the Church in Rome was only the same sort as that which prevailed in the Church throughour the empire where there were no “heretic” barbarians to keep order. In the eastern part of the empire the Church had everything her own way, with no “barbarian” heretics to check her barbarism anywhere, and the results were correspondingly barbaric. By the council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, the faith of the world was finally “settled,” and all were forbidden, under severe penalties, “to dispute concerning the faith.” But in such barbarism as pervaded all the Catholic Church, neither “the faith,” nor laws, nor penalties were of any avail. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 469.9}

In Jerusalem a certain Theodosius was at the head of the army of monks, who made him bishop, and in acts of violence, pillage, and murder, he fairly outdid the perfectly lawless bandits of the country. “The very scenes of the Saviour’s mercies,” says Milman, “ran with blood, shed in His name by His ferocious self-called disciples.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.1}

In Alexandria “the bishop was not only murdered in his own baptistery, but his body was treated with shameless indignities, and other enormities were perpetuated which might have appalled a cannibal.” And the monkish horde then elected as bishop one of their own number, Timothy the Weasel, a disciple of Dioscorus. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.2}

**SETTLING A FINE POINT IN THEOLOGY**

SOON there was added to all this another point which increased the fearful warfare. In the Catholic churches it was customary to sing what was called the *Trisagion*, or Thrice-Holy. It was, originally, the “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts” of Isaiah 6:3; but at the time of the Council of Chalcedon, it had been changed, and was used by the council thus: “Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” At Antioch, in 477, a third monk, Peter the Fuller, “led a procession, chiefly of monastics, through the streets,” loudly singing the Thrice-Holy, with the addition, “who was crucified for us.” It was orthodox to sing it as the Council of Chalcedon had used it, with the understanding that the three “Holies” referred respectively to the three persons of the Trinity. It was heresy to sing it with the later addition. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.3}

In A. D. 511, two hordes of monks on the two sides of the question met in Constantinople. “The two black-cowled armies watched each other for several months, working in secret on their respective partisans. At length they came to a rupture.... The Monophysite monks in the Church of the Archangel within the palace, broke out after the ‘Thrice-Holy’ with the burden added at Antioch by Peter the Fuller, ‘who wast crucified for us.’ The orthodox monks, backed by the rabble of Constantinople, endeavored to expel them from the church; they were not content with hurling curses against each other, sticks and stones began their work. There was a wild, fierce fray; the divine presence of the emperor lost its awe; he could not maintain the peace. The Bishop Macedonius either took the lead, or was compelled to lead the tumult. Men, women, and children poured out from all quarters; the monks with their archimandrites at the head of the raging multitude, echoed back their religious war cry.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.4}

These are but samples of the repeated—it might almost be said the continuous—occurrences in the cities of the East. “Throughout Asiatic Christendom it was the same wild struggle. Bishops deposed quietly; or where resistance was made, the two factions fighting in the streets, in the churches: cities, even the holiest places, ran with blood.... The hymn of the angels in heaven was the battle cry on earth, the signal of human bloodshed.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.5}

In A. D. 512, one of these *Trisagion* riots broke out in Constantinople, because the emperor proposed to use the added clause. “Many palaces of the nobles were set on fire, the officers of the crown insulted, pillage, conflagration, violence, raged through the city.” In the house of the favorite minister of the emperor there was found a monk from the country. He was accused of having suggested the use of the addition. His head was cut off and raised high on a pole, and the whole orthodox populace marched through the streets singing the orthodox *Trisagion*, and shouting, “Behold the enemy of the Trinity.” {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.6}

**ROME THE SAME TO-DAY**

THIS is enough, but it is not in vain to show the difference between barbarism and Christian civilisation in the Roman Empire when the Catholic Church had everything in her own hands and was allowed to show fully what she could do. And what did she do with the Ostrogoths? Why, finding she could not corrupt them with her own barbaric religion, she secured from Justinian the armies of the Eastern Empire and swept them not only out of Italy, but out of existence. The Ostrogoths were one of the three nations that were “plucked up by the roots” to give full place to the Papacy. Daniel 7:8, 20, 24, 25. And now she announces to governments and peoples of the West that what she has done for other nations in the past she will now do for them. And there is not the least doubt that she will do all in her barbaric power to fulfil this avowed purpose. She will corrupt to the core all whom she can; and such as she cannot corrupt she will do her utmost to destroy. But, thank the Lord, she cannot destroy them, for God has promised to all these “the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name”—a complete and triumphant victory over her and all her barbarism—and these shall stand on the sea of glass before the throne of God. Revelation 15:2, 3. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.7}

Who will favour Rome? Who will admit her claims? Who will sanction her pretensions? Who will yield to this mystery of lawlessness? this synonym of worse than barbarism? Who will share the perdition that must come, with the coming of this “savious, with the coming of this “saviour from the Vatican”? Who? It is time to decide. {PTUK July 25, 1895, p. 470.8}

A. T. JONES.