**“After the Creed was Made: How the Papacy Ruled and Ruined. The Ruin of the Roman Empire” The Present Truth 13, 44, pp. 693-695.**

WE have seen how religion was corrupted by the adoption of pagan ideas and observances, and how the exaltation of the papal religion as the religion of the empire filled the church with elements of evil. So that, instead of having an influence to restrain and uplift society, it actually corrupted it and dragged it into deeper vices. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.1}

**MONKERY**

ANOTHER most prolific source of general corruption was the church’s assumption of authority to regulate by law the whole question of the marriage relation, both in Church and State. As monkery was so popular among all classes from the height of imperial dignity to the depths of monkish degradation itself, it became necessary for the clergy to imitate the monks in order to maintain popularity. And it led into the same profligacy of morals amongst the clergy generally as existed in monkery. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.2}

The first decretal ever issued, namely, that by Pope Siricius, A.D. 385, commanded the married clergy to separate from their wives, under sentence of expulsion from the clerical order upon all who dared to offer resistance. The end of it all was that it was not an uncommon thing for men to gain admission to “holy orders” on account of the facility afforded for leading a vicious life, and a special law was enacted by Valentian I. in A.D. 370, to deal with this scandal among the clergy. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.3}

As the church had assumed “cognisance over all questions relating to marriage,” it followed that marriage not celebrated by the church was held to be but little better than an illicit connection. Yet the weddings of the church were celebrated in the pagan way, and the integrity of the marriage bond was slightly held. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.4}

Of course there were against all these evils, laws abundant with penalties terrible, as in the days of the Cesars. And also as in those days, the laws were utterly impotent; not only for the same great reason that then existed, that the iniquity was so prevalent that there were none to enforce the laws; but for an additional reason that now existed; that is, *the bishops were the interpreters of the code*, and by this time, though the interminable and hair-splitting distinctions drawn against heresies, the bishops had so sharpened their powers of interpretation that they could easily evade the force of any law, Scriptural, canonical, or statutory, that might be produced. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.5}

**HYPOCRISY AND FRAUD MADE HABITUAL**

THERE is yet other element of general corruption to be noticed. As we have seen, the means employed by Constantine in establishing the Catholic religion and church, and in making that the prevalent religion, were such as to win only hypocrites. This was bad enough in itself, yet the hypocrisy was voluntary; but when through the agency of her Sunday laws, and by the ministration of Theodosius, the church received control of the civil power to compel all, without distinction, who were not Catholics, to act as though they were, hypocrisy was made compulsory; and every person who was not voluntarily a church-member was compelled either to be a hypocrite or a rebel. In addition to this, those who were of the church indeed, through the endless succession of controversies and church council, were forever establishing, changing, and re-establishing the faith. And as all were required to change or revise their faith according as the councils decreed, all moral and spiritual integrity was destroyed. Hypocrisy became a habit, dissimulation and fraud a necessity of life; and the very moral fiber of men and of society was vitiated. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 693.6}

In the then existing order of things it was impossible that it should be otherwise. Right faith is essential to right morals. Purity of faith is essential to purity of heart and life. But there the faith was wrong and utterly corrupt, and nothing but corruption could follow. More than this, the faith was essentially pagan, and much more guilty than had been the original pagan; because it was professed under the name of Christianity and the Gospel, and because it was in itself a shameful corruption of the true faith of the Gospel. As the faith of the people was essentially pagan, or rather worse, the morality of the people could be nothing else. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.1}

**AS THE HISTORIAN SEES THESE TIMES**

DEAN MEDIVALE say, in his lectures on the “Conversion of the Northern Nations“:— {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.2}

“There is ample evidence to show how great had been the reaction from the simple genuineness of early Christian belief, and how nearly the Christian world had generally associated itself, in thought and temper, not to say in superstitious practice, with the pagan. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that much of the apparent success of the new religion had been gained by its actual accommodation of itself to the ways and feelings of the old. Once set aside, from doubt, distaste, or any other feeling, the special dogmas of the Gospel, ... and men will naturally turn to compromise, to eclecticism, to universalism, to indifference, to unbelief .... {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.3}

“If the great Christian doctors had themselves come forth from the schools of the pagans, the loss had not been wholly unrequited; so complacently had even Christian doctors again surrendered themselves to the fascinations of pagan speculations; so fatally, in their behalf, had they extenuated Christian dogma, and acknowledged the fundamental truth and sufficiency of science falsely so called. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.4}

“The Gospel we find was almost eaten out from the heart of the Christian society. I speak not now of the pride of spiritual pretensions, of the corruption of its secular politics, of its ascetic extravagances, its mystical fallacies; of its hollowness in preaching, or its laxity in practice; of its saint-worship, which was a revival of hero-worship; its addiction to the sensuous in outward service, which was a revival of idolatry. But I point to the fact, less observed by our church historians, of the absolute defect of all distinctive Christianity in the utterances of men of the highest esteem as Christians,—men of reputed wisdom, sentiment, and devotion. Look, for instance, at the remains we possess of the Christian Boethius, a man whom we know to have been a professed Christian and churchman, excellent in action, steadfast in suffering, but in whose writings, in which he aspires to set before us the true grounds of spiritual consolation on which he rested himself in the hour of his trial, and on which he would have his fellows rest, there is no trace of Christianity whatever, nothing but pure, unmingled naturalism. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.5}

“This marked decline of distinctive Christian belief was accompanied with a marked decline of Christian morality. Heathenism reasserted its empire over the carnal affections of the natural man. The pictures of abounding wickedness in the high places and the low places of the earth, which are presented to us by the witnesses of the worst pagan degradation, are repeated, in colors not less strong, in lines not less hideous, by the observers of the gross and reckless iniquity of the so-called Christian period now before us.” {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.6}

And now all the evils engendered in that evil intrigue which united the State with a professed Christianity, hurried on the doomed empire to its final and utter ruin. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.7}

The criminal and frivolous pleasures of a decrepit civilisation left no thought for the absorbing duties of the day nor the fearful trials of the morrow.... The banquet, theater, and the circus exhausted what little strength and energy were left by domestic excesses. The poor aped the vices of the rich and hideous depravity reigned supreme, and invited the vengeance of heaven. (Lea’s “History of Sacerdotal Celibacy.”) {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.8}

**DESTRUCTION AND DEVASTATION**

THE pagan superstitions, the pagan delusions, and the pagan vices, which had been brought into the church by the apostasy, and clothed with a form of godliness, had wrought such corruption that the society of which it was a part could no longer exist. From it no more good could possibly come, and it must be swept away. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.9}

The uncontrollable progress of avarice, prodigality, voluptuousness, theater-going, intemperance, lewdness; in short, of all the heathen vices, which Christianity had come to eradicate, still carried the Roman Empire and people with rapid strides toward dissolution, and gave it at last into the hands of the rude, but simple and morally vigorous, barbarians. (Schaff.) {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.10}

And onward those barbarians came, swiftly and in multitudes. For a hundred years the dark cloud had been hanging threateningly over the borders of the empire, encroaching slightly upon the West and breaking occasionally upon the East. But at the close of the fourth century the tempest burst in all its fury, and the flood was flowing ruinously. As early as A.D. 377 a million Goths had crossed the Danube, and between that time and A.D. 400 they had ravaged the country from Thessalonica to the Adriatic Sea. In A.D. 400 a host of them entered the borders of Italy, but were restrained for a season. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.11}

In 406 a band of Burgundians, Vandals, Suevi, and Alani from the north of Germany, four hundred thousand strong, overran the country as far as Florence. In the siege of that city their course was checked with the loss of more than one hundred thousand. They then returned to Germany, and with large accessions to their numbers, overran all the southern part of Gaul. The Burgundians remained in Gaul; the Vandals, the Alani, and the Suevi overran all the southern part of Spain, and carried their ravages over the greater part of that province, and to the Strait of Gibraltor. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.12}

In 410 again returned the mighty hosts of the Goths, and spread over all Italy from the Alps to the Strait of Sicily, and for five days inflicted upon Rome such pillage as had never befallen it since the day, nearly a thousand years before, when the Cimbri left it in ruins. They marched out of Italy and took possession of Southeastern Gaul from the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Biscay. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.13}

In May 429, the Vandals, in whose numbers of the Alani had been absorbed, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Africa, and for ten years ravaged the country from there to Carthage, of which city they took possession with great slaughter, October 9, A.D. 439; and in 440 the terrible Genseric, king of the Vandals, ruled the Mediterranean and sacked the city of Rome. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 694.14}

In 449 the Saxons and their German neighbors invaded Britain, of which they soon became sole possessors, utterly exterminating the native inhabitants. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.1}

In 451-453 another mighty host, numbering seven hundred thousand, of all the barbarous nations, led by Attila, desolated Eastern Gaul as far as Chalons, and the north of Italy as far as the Rhone, but returned again beyond the Danube. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.2}

And finally, in 476, when Odoacer, king of the Heruli, became king of Italy, the last vestige of the Western empire of Rome was gone, and was divided among the ten nations of barbarians of the North. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.3}

**NO REMEDY, AND FINAL RUIN**

WHEREVER these savages went, they carried fire and slaughter, and whenever they departed, they left desolation and ruin in their track, and carried away multitudes of captives. Thus was the proud empire of Western Rome swept from the earth; and that which Constantine and his ecclesiastical flatterers had promised one another should be the everlasting salvation of the State, proved its speedy and everlasting ruin. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.4}

It was impossible that it should be otherwise. Pagan Rome had gone in the days of the Cesars, yet the empire did not perish then. There was hope for the people. The Gospel of Jesus Christ carried in earnestness, in simplicity, and in its heavenly power, brought multitudes to its saving light, and to a knowledge of the purity of Jesus Christ. This was their salvation; and the gospel of Christ, by restoring the virtue and integrity of the individual, *was the preservation of the Roman State*. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.5}

But when by apostasy that gospel had lost its purity and its power in the multitudes who professed it; and when it was used only as a cloak to cover the same old pagan wickedness; when this *form* of godliness, practiced not only without the power but in defiance of it, permeated the great masses of the people, and the empire had thereby become a festering mass of corruption; when the only means which it was possible for the Lord himself to employ to purify the people, had been taken and made only the cloak under which to increase unto more ungodliness,—there was no other remedy: destruction must come. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.6}

**WORSE THAN THE BARBARIANS**

And it did come, as we have seen, by a host wild and savage, it is true; but whose social habits were so far above those of the people which they destroyed, that savage as they were, they were caused fairly to blush at the shameful corruptions which they found in this so-called Christian society of Rome. This is proved by the best authority. A writer who lived at the time of the barbarian invasions and who wrote as a Christian, gives the following evidence as to the condition of things:— {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.7}

The church which ought everywhere to propitiate God, what does she, but provoke him to anger? How many may one meet, even in the church, who are not still drunkards, or debauchees, or adulterers, or fornicators, or robbers, or murderers, or the like, or all these at once, without end? It is even a sort of holiness among Christian people, to be less vicious. From the public worship of God, and almost during it, they pass to deeds of shame. Scarce a rich man but would commit murder and fornication. We have lost the whole power of Christianity, and offend God the more, that we sin as Christians. We are worse than the barbarians and heathen. If the Saxon is wild, the Frank faithless, the Goth inhuman, the Alanian drunken, the Hun licentious, they are, by reason of their ignorance, far less punishable than we, who, knowing the commandments of God, commit all these crimes. (Salvian.) {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.8}

“He compares the Christians, especially of Rome, with the Arian Goths and Vandals, to the disparagement of the Romans, who add to the gross sins of nature the refined vices of civilisation, passion for the theatres, debauchery, and unnatural lewdness. Therefore has the just God given them into the hands of the barbarians, and exposed them to the ravages of the migrating hordes.” (Schaff.) {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.9}

And this description, says the same author, “is in general not untrue.” And he confirms it in his own words by the excellent observation that “nothing but the divine judgment of destruction upon this nominally Christian, but essentially heathen, world, could open the way for the moral regeneration of society. There must be new, fresh nations, if the Christian civilisation, prepared in the old Roman empire, was to take firm root and bear ripe fruit.” {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.10}

These new, fresh nations came, and planted themselves upon the ruins of the old. Out of these came the faithful Christians of the Dark Ages, and upon them broke the light of the Reformation. {PTUK November 4, 1897, p. 665.11}

A. T. JONES.

**“After the Creed was Made: How the Papacy Ruled and Ruined. The Papacy Amidst the Wreck of Empire” The Present Truth 13, 45, pp. 710-712.**

AS out of the political difficulties of the days of Constantine, the Catholic Church rose to power in the State; so out of the ruin of the Roman Empire she rose to supremacy over kings and nations. She had speedily wrought the ruin of one empire, and now for more than a thousand years she would prove a living curse to all the States and empires that should succeed it. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.1}

We have seen how that, by the arrogant ministry of Leo, the bishop of Rome was made the fountain of faith, and was elevated to a position of dignity and authority that the aspiring prelacy had never before attained. For Leo, as the typical pope, was one whose “ambition knew no bounds; and to gratify it, he stuck at nothing; made no distinction between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood; as if he had adopted the famous maxim of Julius Cesar,— {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.2}

‘Be just, unless a kingdom tempts to break the laws, For sovereign power alone can justify the cause,’ {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.3}

or thought the most criminal actions ceased to be criminal, and became meritorious, when any ways subservient to the increase of his power or the exaltation of his see.” (Bower.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.4}

Nor was the force of any single point of his example ever lost upon his successors. His immediate successor,— {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.5}

**HILARY, 461-467**

was so glad to occupy the place which had been made so large by Leo, that shortly after his election he wrote a letter to the other bishops asking them to exult with him, taking particular care in the letter to tell them that he did not doubt that they all knew what respect and deference was paid “in the Spirit of God to St. Peter and his see.” The bishops of Spain addressed him as “the successor of St. Peter, whose primacy ought to be loved and feared by all.” He was succeeded by— {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.6}

**SIMPLICIUS, 467-483**

in whose pontificate the empire perished when the Heruli, under Odoacer, overran all Italy, deposed the last emperor of the West, appropriated to themselves one third of all the lands, and established the Herulian kingdom, with Odoacer as king of Italy. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.7}

**THE PAPACY AND THE BARBARIANS**

IN fact, the more the imperial power faded, and the nearer the empire approached its fall, the more rapidly and the stronger grew the papal assumptions. Thus the very calamities which rapidly wrought the ruin of the empire, and which were hastened by the union of Church and State, were turned to the advantage of the bishopric of Rome. During the whole period of barbarian invasions from 400 to 476, the Catholic hierarchy everywhere adapted itself to the situation, and reaped power and influence from the calamities that were visited everywhere. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.8}

Moreover, it was not against religion as such that the barbarians made war, as they themselves were religious. It was against that mighty empire of which they had seen much, and suffered much, and heard more, that they warred. It was as nations taking vengeance upon a nation which had been so great, and which had so proudly asserted lordship over all other nations, that they invaded the Roman Empire. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.9}

And when they could plant themselves and remain, as absolute lords, in the dominions of those who had boasted of absolute and eternal dominion, and thus humble the pride of the mighty Rome, this was their supreme gratification. As these invasions were not inflicted everywhere at once, but at intervals through a period of seventy-five years, the church had ample time to adapt herself to the ways of such of the barbarians as were heathen, which as ever she readily did. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.10}

The heathen barbarians were accustomed to pay the greatest respect to their own priesthood, and were willing to admit the Catholic priesthood to an equal or even a larger place in their estimation. Such of them as were already professedly Christian, were Arians, and not so savage as the Catholics; therefore, they, with the exception of the Vandals, were not so ready to persecute, and were willing to settle and make themselves homes in the territories of the vanished empire. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.11}

**THE BURGUNDIANS**

AN account of the conversion of the Burgundians, and through them of the Franks, will illustrate the dealings of the papacy with the barbarians, and will also give the key to the most important events in the history of the supremacy of the Bishopric of Rome. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.12}

Ever since the time of Constantine, the god and saviour of the Catholics had been a god of battle, and no surer way to the eternal rewards of martyrdom could be taken than by being killed in a riot in behalf of the orthodox faith, or to die by punishment inflicted for such proceeding, as in the case of that insolent ruffian who attempted to murder Orestes. It was easy, therefore, for the heathen barbarians, victory and surest passport to the halls of the warrior god, was to die in the midst of the carnage of bloody battle,—it was easy for such people as this to become converted to the god of battle of the Catholics. A single bloody victory would turn the scale, and issue in the conversion of whole nation. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.13}

The Burgundians were settled in that part of Gaul which now forms Western Switzerland and that part of France which is now the county and district of Burgundy. As early as A.D. 430, the Huns making inroads into Gaul, severely afflicted the Burgundians, who finding impotent the power of their own god, determined to try the Catholic god. They therefore sent representatives to a neighboring city in Gaul, requesting the Catholic bishop to receive them. The bishop had them fast for a week, during which time he catechized them, and then baptized them. Soon afterward the Burgundians found the Huns without a leader, and, suddenly falling upon them at the disadvantage, confirmed their conversion by the slaughter of ten thousand of the enemy. Thereupon the whole nation embraced the Catholic religion “with fiery zeal.” (Milman.) Afterward, however, when about the fall of the empire, the Visigoths under Euric asserted their dominion over all Spain, and the greater part of Gaul, and over the Burgundians too, they deserted the Catholic god, and adopted the Arian faith. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 710.14}

**THE “CONVERSION” OF CLOVIS**

YET Clotilda, a niece of the Burgundian king, “was educated” in the profession of the Catholic faith. She married Clovis, the pagan king of the pagan Franks, and strongly persuaded him to become a Catholic. All her pleadings were in vain, however, till A.D. 496, when in a great battle with the Alemanni, the Franks were getting the worst of the conflict, in the midst of the battle Clovis vowed that if the victory could be theirs, he would become a Catholic. The tide of battle turned; the victory was won, and Clovis was a Catholic. Clotilda hurried away a messenger with the glad news to the bishop of Rhiems, who came to baptize the new convert. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.1}

But after the battle was over, and the dangerous crisis was past, Clovis was not certain whether he wanted to be a Catholic. He said he must consult his warriors; he did so, and they signified their readiness to adopt the same religion as their king. He then declared that he was convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith, and preparations were at once made for the baptism of the new Constantine, Christmas Day, A.D. 496. “To impress the minds of the barbarians, the baptismal ceremony was performed with the utmost pomp. The church was hung with embroidered tapestry and white curtains; odors of incense like airs of paradise, were diffused around; the building blazed with countless lights. When the new Constantine knelt in the font to be cleansed from the leprosy of his heathenism, ‘Fierce Sicambrian,’ said the bishop, ‘bow thy neck; burn what thou hast adored, adore what thou last burned.’ Three thousand Franks followed the example of Clovis.” (Milman.) The Pope sent Clovis a letter congratulating him on his conversion. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.2}

“If unscrupulous ambition, undaunted valor and enterprise, and desolating warfare, had been legitimate means for the propagation of pure Christianity, it could not have found a better champion than Clovis. For the first time the diffusion of belief in the nature of the Godhead became the avowed pretext for the invasion of a neighboring territory.” (Milman.) “His ambitious reign was a perpetual violation of moral and Christian duties; his hands were stained with blood in peace as well as in war; and as soon as Clovis had dismissed a synod of the Gallican church, he calmly assassinated all the princes of the Merovingian race.” (Gibbon.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.3}

**THE “HOLY” WARS OF CLOVIS**

THE Bishop of Vienne also sent a letter to the new convert, in which he prophesied that the faith of Clovis would be a surety of the victory of the Catholic faith; and he, with every other Catholic in Christendom, was ready to do his utmost to see that the prophecy was fulfilled. The Catholics in all the neighboring countries longed and prayed and conspired that Clovis might deliver them from the rule of Arian monarchs; and in the nature of the case, war soon followed. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.4}

Burgundy was the first country invaded. Before the war actually began, however, by the advice of the bishop of Rhiems, a synod of the orthodox bishops met at Lyons; then with the Bishop of Vienne at their head, they visited the king of the Burgundians, and proposed that he call the Arian bishops together, and allow a conference to be held, as they were prepared to prove that the Arians were in error. To their proposal the king replied,— {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.5}

If yours be the true doctrine, why do you not prevent the king of the Franks from waging an unjust war against me, and from caballing with my enemies against me? There is no true Christian faith where there is rapacious covetousness for the possessions of others, and thirst for blood. Let him show forth his faith by his good works. (Milman.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.6}

The Bishop of Vienne dodged this pointed question, and replied, “We are ignorant of the motives and intentions of the king of the Franks; but we are taught by the Scripture that the kingdoms which abandon the divine law, are frequently subverted; and that enemies will arise on every side against those who have made God their enemy. Return with thy people to the law of God, and he will give peace and security to thy dominions.” (Gibbon.) War followed, and the Burgundian dominions were made subject to the rule of Clovis, A.D. 500. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.7}

The Visigoths possessed all the southwestern portion of Gaul. They too were Arians; and the mutual conspiracy of the Catholics in the Gothic dominions, and the crusade of the Franks from the side of Clovis, soon brought on another holy war. At the assembly of princes and warriors at Paris, A.D. 508. Clovis complained,— {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.8}

It grieves me to see that the Arians still possess the fairest portion of Gaul. Let us march against them with the aid of God; and, having vanquished the heretics, we will *possess and divide their fertile province*. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.9}

Clotilda added her pious exhortation to the effect “that doubtless the Lord would more readily lend his aid if some gift were made;” and in response, Clovis seized his battle-ax and threw it as far as he could, and as it went whirling through the air, he exclaimed, “There, on that spot where my Francesca shall fall, will I erect a church in honor of the holy apostles.” (Gibbon.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.10}

War was declared; and as Clovis marched on his way, he passed through Tours, and turned aside to consult the shrine of St. Martin of Tours, for an omen. “His messengers were instructed to remark the words of the Psalm which should happen to be chanted at the precise moment when they entered the church.” And the oracular clergy took care that the words which he should “happen” to hear at that moment—uttered not in Latin, but in language which Clovis understood—should be the following from Psalm 18: “Thou hast girded me, O Lord, with strength unto the battle; thou hast subdued unto me those who rose up against me. Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.” The oracle was satisfactory, and in the event was completely successful. “The Visigothic kingdom was wasted and subdued by the remorseless sword of the Franks.” (Gibbon.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.11}

**THE CHURCH A PARTY TO ALL HIS CRIMES**

NOR was the religious zeal of Clovis confined to the overthrow of the Arians. There were two bodies of the Franks, the Salians and the Ripuarians. Clovis was king of the Salians, Sigebert of the Ripuarians. Clovis determined to be king of all; he therefore prompted the son of Sigebert to assassinate his father, with the promise that the son should peaceably succeed Sigebert on the throne; but as soon as the murder was committed, Clovis commanded the murderer to be murdered, and then in a full parliament of the whole people of the Franks, he solemnly vowed that he had had nothing to do with the murder of either the father or the son; and upon this, as there was no heir, Clovis was raised upon a shield, and proclaimed king of the Ripuarian Franks;—all of which Gregory, bishop of Tours, commended as the will of God, saying of Clovis that “God thus daily prostrated his enemies under his hands, and enlarged his kingdom, because he walked before him with an upright heart, and did that which was well pleasing in his sight.” (Milman.) {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 711.12}

Thus was the bloody course of Clovis glorified by the Catholic writers, as the triumph of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity over Arianism. When such actions as these were so lauded by the clergy as the pious acts of orthodox Catholics, it is certain that the clergy themselves were no better than were the bloody objects of their praise. Under the influence of such ecclesiastics, the condition of the barbarians after their so-called conversion, could not possibly be better, even if it were not worse than before. To be converted to the principles and precepts of such clergy was only the more deeply to be damned. In proof of this it is necessary only to touch upon the condition of Catholic France under Clovis and his successors, as we shall do. {PTUK November 11, 1897, p. 712.1}

A. T. JONES.

**“After the Creed was Made: How the Papacy Ruled and Ruined. The Papacy an Element of Evil” The Present Truth 13, 46, pp. 726, 727.**

LET us notice further the influence of the papal system over the barbarians who overran the empire. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.1}

Into the “converted” barbarians, the Catholic system instilled all of its superstition, and its bigoted hatred of heretics and unbelievers. It thus destroyed what of generosity still remained in their minds, while it only intensified their native ferocity; and the shameful licentiousness of society under the papal system likewise corrupted the purity, and the native respect for women and marriage which had always been a noble characteristic of the Germanic nations. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.2}

“It is difficult to conceive a more dark and odious state of society than that of France under her Merovingian kings, the descendants of Clovis, as described by Gregory of Tours.... Throughout, assassinations, parricides, and fratricides intermingle with adulteries and rapes. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.3}

“The cruelty might seem the mere inevitable result of this violent and unnatural fusion; but the extent to which this cruelty spreads throughout the whole society almost surpasses belief. That King Chlotaire should burn alive his rebellious son with his wife and daughter, is fearful enough; but we are astounded, even in these times, that a bishop of Tours should burn a man alive to obtain the deeds of an estate which he coveted. Fredegonde sends two murderers to assassinate Childebert, and these assassins are clerks [*sic*.]. She causes the archbishop of Rouen to be murdered while he is chanting the service in the church; and in this crime a bishop and an archdeacon are her accomplices.” (Milman.) {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.4}

**WHOM SHE COULD NOT CORRUPT THE PAPACY DESTROYED**

AT the fall of the empire, the bishopric of Rome was the head and center of a strong and compactly organized power. And by deftly insinuating itself into the place of mediator between the barbarian invaders and the perishing imperial authority, it had attained a position where it was recognized by the invaders as the power which, though it claimed to be not temporal but spiritual was none the less real, had succeeded to the place of the vanished imperial authority of Rome. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.5}

And in view of the history of the time, it is impossible to escape the conviction that in the bishopric of Rome there was at this time formed the determination to plant itself in the temporal dominion of Rome and Italy. The emperors been absent from Rome, that the Bishop of Rome had assumed their place there, and we have seen how the church had usurped the place of the civil authority. The Bishop of Rome was the head of the church; and now, as the empire was perishing, he would exalt his throne upon its ruins, and out of the anarchy of the times would secure a place and a name among the powers and dominions of the earth. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.6}

The barbarians who took possession of Italy were Arians, which in the sight of the bishop of Rome was worse than all other crimes put together. In addition to this, the Herulian monarch, Odoacer, an Arian, presumed to assert civil authority over the Papacy, which, on account of the riotous proceedings in the election of the pope, was necessary, but would not meekly be borne by the proud pontiffs. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.7}

And as these elections were carried not only by violence, but by bribery, in which the property of the Church played an important part, Odoacer, by his lieutenant at this same assembly, A.D. 483, “caused a law to be read, forbidding the bishop who should now be chosen, as well as his successors, to alienate any inheritance, possessions, or sacred utensils that now belonged, or should for the future, belong, to the church; declaring all such bargains void, anathematising both the seller and the buyer, and obliging the latter and his heirs to restore to the church all lands and tenements thus purchased, how long soever they might have possessed them.” (Bower.) {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.8}

By the law of Constantine which bestowed upon the Church the privilege of receiving donations, legacies, etc., by will, lands were included; and through nearly two hundred years of the working of this law, the Church of Rome had become enormously enriched in landed estates. And more especially “since the extinction of the Western empire had emancipated the ecclesiastical potentate from secular control, the first and most abiding object of his schemes and prayers had been the acquisition of territorial wealth in the neighborhood of his capital.” (Bryce.) {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.9}

The Church of Rome had also other lands, scattered in different parts of Italy, and even in Asia. As the imperial power faded away in the West, the Bishop of Rome, in his growing power, came more and more to assert his own power of protection over his lands in Italy. And when the imperial power was entirely gone, it was naturally held that this power fell absolutely to him. When, therefore, Odoacer, both a barbarian invader and a heretic, issued a decree forbidding the alienation of church lands and possessions, this was represented as a presumptuous invasion of the rights of the Bishop of Rome, not only to do what he would with his own, but above all as protector of the property and estates of the church. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.10}

For this offence of Odoacer, there was no forgiveness by the bishop of Rome. Nothing short of the utter uprooting of the Herulian power could atone for it. The Catholic ecclesiastics of Italy began to plot for his overthrow, and it was soon accomplished. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.11}

There were at that time in the dominions of the Eastern empire, unsettled and wandering about with no certain dwelling place, the people of the Ostrogoths under King Theodoric. Although in the service of the empire, they were dissatisfied with their lot; and they were so savage and so powerful that the emperor was in constant dread of them. Why might not this force be employed to destroy the dominion of the Heruli, and deliver Rome from the interferences and oppression of Odoacer? The suggestion was made to Theodoric by the court, but as he was in the service of the empire, it was necessary that he should have permission to undertake the expedition. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 726.12}

His proposition was gladly accepted by the Emperor Zeno, and in the winter of 489, the whole nation took up its march of seven hundred miles to Italy, and the Herulian kingdom was destroyed. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.1}

And that this was in no small degree the work of the Catholic Church is certain; for, “Throughout the conquest and establishment of the Gothic kingdom, the increasing power and importance of the Catholic ecclesiastics, forces itself upon the attention. They are ambassadors, mediators in treaties; [they] decide the wavering loyalty or *instigate the revolt of cities*.” (Milman.) {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.2}

The bishop of Pavia bore to Theodoric at Milan the surrender and offer of allegiance of that great city. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.3}

Another thing which makes this view most certainly true, is the fact that no sooner was order restored in Italy and in Rome, and the Church once more felt itself secure, than a council of eighty bishops, thirty-seven presbyters, and four deacons, was called in Rome by the pope, A.D. 499, *the very first act of which was to repeal the law enacted by Odoacer on the subject of the Church possessions*. Nor was the law repealed in order to get rid of it; for *it was immediately re-enacted by the same council*. This was plainly to declare that the estates of the Church were no longer subject in any way to the authority of the civil power, but were to be held under the jurisdiction of the Church alone. In fact, it was tantamount to a declaration of the independence of the papacy and her possessions. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.4}

This transaction also conclusively proves that the resentment of the bishopric of Rome, which had been aroused by the law of Odoacer, was never allayed until Odoacer and the law, so far as it represented the authority of the civil power, were both out of the way. And this is the secret of the destruction of the Herulian kingdom of Italy. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.5}

It was the first of those three powers “plucked up” (Daniel 7:8) to make way for the full development of the papal supremacy. It is true, Theodoric himself was an Arian, but the Papacy has never hesitated to use one enemy to destroy another, and having secured the overthrow of one could trust to time and influence to subject or destroy the one remaining. And as the story will show, she did not rest until the Ostrogothic power was destroyed. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.6}

**PEACE UNDER A “BARBARIAN HERETIC.**

Theodoric ruled Italy thirty-eight 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 since until 1870. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.7}

But not alone did civil peace reign. Above all, there was perfect freedom in the exercise of religion. 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. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.8}

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. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.9}

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 November 18, 1897, p. 727.10}

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 November 18, 1897, p. 727.11}

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 defense 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 November 18, 1897, p. 727.12}

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, as we shall see. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 727.13}

A. T. JONES.

**“The Set Time Is Come” The Present Truth 13, 46, p. 729.**

“THE time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, is come.” The time is here for all the people to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Do you want it?—Of course you do. Come then, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.” These things grieve the Holy Spirit. The two spirits cannot dwell together. Abandon the spirit of bitterness, malice, and evil-speaking, and the Holy Spirit will gladly take possession. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 729.1}

The Holy Spirit is God’s seal of His own righteousness, upon him who receives it. But God never will put His seal upon sin for righteousness. And no person need ever ask Him to do so. Yet for any person to ask for the baptism, or the gift, of the Holy Ghost, while he has not the righteousness of God, this is in itself, though ignorantly and unintentionally, to ask God to put His seal upon sin for righteousness. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 729.2}

Therefore every one who would have the gift of the Holy Spirit must have such righteousness as that Spirit may approve as righteousness indeed. And the righteousness of God is the only righteousness known in the universe which the Spirit of God will approve. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 729.3}

Then let every soul “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” as the divinely appointed preparation for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. {PTUK November 18, 1897, p. 729.4}

A. T. JONES.

**“After the Creed was Made: How the Papacy Ruled and Ruined. The Spirit of Lawlessness” The Present Truth 13, 47, pp. 742, 743.**

IN mentioning the peace and quietness which the reign of Theodoric, the Arian, gave to Italy, we remarked that this did not apply to the city of Rome. The spirit of papal lawlessness ruled there. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.1}

**HOW POPES WERE ELECTED**

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.” (Milman.) {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.2}

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. A council was held by Symmachus, which met the first of March, 499, and passed a decree “almost in the terms of the old Roman law, severely condemning all ecclesiastical ambition, all canvassing either to obtain subscriptions, or administration of oaths, or promises, for the Papacy” during the lifetime of a pope. But such election methods as these were now so prevalent that this law was of as little value in controlling the methods of the aspiring candidates for the bishopric, as in the days of the republic the same kind of laws were for the candidates to the consulship. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.3}

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. Meantime, 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 November 25, 1897, p. 742.4}

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” (Milman), 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 November 25, 1897, p. 742.5}

**THE POPE EXALTED**

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.” (Bower.) 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.” Symmachus was not slow to assert all the merit that the council had thus recognized in the bishop of Rome. He wrote to the emperor of the East that “a bishop is as much above an emperor as heavenly things, which the bishop administers and dispenses, are above all the trash of the earth, which alone the greatest among the emperors have the power to dispose of.” (Bower.) He declared that the higher powers referred to in Romans 13:1, mean the spiritual powers, and that to these it is that every soul must be subject. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.6}

At another council held in Rome in 504, at the direction of Symmachus, a decree was enacted “anathematising and excluding from the communion of the faithful, all who had seized or in the future should seize, hold, or appropriate to themselves, the goods or estates of the church; and this decree was declared to extend even to those who held such estates by grants from the crown.” (Bower.) This was explicitly to put the authority of the Church of Rome above that of any State. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.7}

**OUTBREAK OF PERSECUTION**

JUSTIN was emperor of the East A.D. 518-527. He was violently orthodox, and was supported by his nephew, the more violently orthodox Justinian. It was the ambition of both, together and in succession, to make the Catholic religion alone prevalent everywhere. They therefore entered with genuine Catholic zeal upon the pious work of clearing their dominions of heretics. The first edict, issued in 523, commanded all Manicheans to leave the empire under penalty of death; and all other heretics were to be ranked with pagans and Jews, and excluded from all public offices. This edict was no sooner learned of in the West, than mutterings were heard in Rome, of hopes of liberty from the “Gothic yoke.” The next step was violence. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 742.8}

Under the just administration of Theodoric, and the safety assured by the Gothic power, many Jews had established themselves in Rome, Genoa, Milan, and other cities, for the purposes of trade. They were permitted by express laws to dwell there. As soon as the imperial edict was known, which commanded all remaining heretics to be ranked as pagans and Jews, as the Catholics did not dare to attack the Gothic heretics, they, at Rome and Ravenna especially, riotously attacked the Jews, abused them, robbed them, and burnt their synagogues. A legal investigation was attempted, but the leaders in the riots could not be discovered. Then Theodoric levied a tax upon the whole community of the guilty cities, with which to settle the damages. Some of the Catholics refused to pay the tax. They were punished. This at once brought a cry from the Catholics everywhere, that they were persecuted. Those who had been punished were glorified as confessors of the faith, and “three hundred pulpits deplored the persecution of the Church.” (Gibbon.) {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.1}

The edict of 523 was followed in 524 by another, this time commanding the Arians of the East to deliver up to the Catholic bishops all their churches, which the Catholic bishops were commanded to consecrate anew. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.2}

Theodoric addressed an earnest letter to Justin, in which he pleaded for toleration for the Arians from the Eastern empire. This was the letter in which was stated the principle of the rights of conscience, which we quoted last week. To this noble plea, however, Justin coolly answered:— {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.3}

I pretend to no authority over men’s consciences, but it is my prerogative to intrust the public offices to those in whom I have confidence; and public order demanding uniformity of worship, I have full right to command the churches to be open to those alone who shall conform to the religion of the State. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.4}

Accordingly, while pretending to no authority over men’s consciences, the Arians of his dominions were by Justin “stripped of all offices of honor or emolument, were not only expelled from the Catholic churches, but their own were closed against them; and they were exposed to all insults, vexations, and persecutions of their adversaries, who were not likely to enjoy their triumph with moderation, or to repress their conscientiously intolerant zeal.” (Milman.) Many of them conformed to the State religion; but those of firm faith sent to Theodoric earnest appeals for protection. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.5}

Theodoric did all that he could, but without avail. He was urged to retaliate by persecuting the Catholics in Italy, but he steadfastly refused. He determined to send an embassy to Justin, and most singularly sent the pope as his ambassador! {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.6}

This arrangement gave to the Bishop of Rome the most perfect opportunity he could have asked, to form a compact with the imperial authority of the East, for the further destruction of the Ostrogothic kingdom. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.7}

The Pope, John I., “was received in Constantinople with the most flattering honors, as though he had been St. Peter himself. The whole city, with the Emperor at its head, came forth to meet him with tapers and torches, as far as ten miles beyond the gates. The Emperor knelt at his feet, and implored his benediction.” Such an embassy could have no other result than more than ever to endanger the kingdom of Theodoric. Before John’s return, the conspiracy became more manifest; some senators and leading men were arrested. One of them, Boethius, though denying his guilt, boldly confessed, “Had there been any hopes of liberty, I should have freely indulged them; had I known of a conspiracy against the king, I should have answered in the words of a noble Roman to the frantic Caligula, You would not have known it from me.” Such a confession as that was almost a confession of the guilt which he denied. He and his father-in-law were executed. When the Pope returned, he was received as a traitor, and put in prison, where he died, May 18, 526. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.8}

He was no sooner dead than violent commotion and disturbances again arose amongst rival candidates for the vacant chair. “Many candidates appeared for the vacant see, and the whole city, the Senate as well as the people and clergy, were divided into parties and factions, the papal dignity being now as eagerly sought for, and often obtained by the same methods and arts as the consular was in the times of the heathen.” (Bower.) Theodoric, now seventy-four years old, fearing that these contentions would end in murder and bloodshed again, as they had at the election of Symmachus, suffered his authority to transcend his principles, and presumed, himself, to name a Bishop of Rome. The whole people of the city, Senate, clergy, and all, united in opposition. But a compromise was effected, by which it was agreed that in future the election of the Pope should be by the clergy and people, but must be confirmed by the sovereign. Upon this understanding, the people accepted Theodoric’s nominee; and July 12, 526, Felix III. was installed in the papal office. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.9}

The noble Theodoric died a month later, August 30, 526, and was succeeded by his grandson Athalaric, about ten years old, under the regency of his mother Amalasontha. Justin, the emperor, died, and was succeeded by Justinian, August 1, 527, and under Justinian’s reign the Papacy was to become fully established in its supremacy. {PTUK November 25, 1897, p. 743.10}

A. T. JONES.