

The Papal System – VI. Steps to Papal Sovereignty Over The Churches – Part 2



Continued from [VI. Steps to Papal Sovereignty Over The Churches – Part 1](#)

Mohammedan Victories over the Eastern Empire and Churches

If the churches of the East had retained their old numbers and importance, they would have fought Rome for equality, with the proudest of her bishops, till the blasts of the last trumpet were heard, or the death-knell of superstition was sounded. But help came from strange quarters to the Bishops of Rome.

In the seventh century the warlike followers of the False Prophet conquered all Arabia, and passed like a whirlwind over the famous countries and cities of the East. Palestine fell, and its holy city became the prey of the victorious Omar; and the site of Solomon's temple furnished the ground for his mosque.

Damascus yielded to the far-famed Khaled; and all Syria submitted to the Moslem yoke. Antioch, whose patriarch proudly traced his descent from Peter, was forced to wear the chains of Islam. Egypt was snatched from her Christian Emperors. Alexandria, after a siege of fourteen months, surrendered to the Saracens under the fiery Amrou, giving up four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theaters, twelve thousand stores for the sale of vegetable food, and an incalculable amount of wealth.

In ten years of Omar's administration, the Saracens captured thirty-six thousand cities, and four thousand churches. In a hundred years after the prophet set up his oracle at Medina, his followers had seized Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain. And they imperiled the independence of France and Italy. But in the East everything Christian either perished at their approach, or became palsied and panic stricken. In a few years millions of

Christians died in their fierce wars; and other millions became slaves, proselytes, or martyrs.

The tide of Christian progress in the East was rolled backward, and has flowed in that direction ever since. Two centuries after Mohammed, Christians were distinguished from their Moslem neighbors by a turban, or a girdle of a less honorable color; instead of horses or mules they must ride on asses in the attitude of women; their houses must be smaller; on all public occasions they must bow to the meanest follower of the Prophet; their testimony before a magistrate could not be taken against one of the faithful. They must ring no bells to invite the followers of Jesus to his house. They must make no converts. Nor may they hinder as many as please from deserting to the fold of Mecca.

The Greek Emperors were reduced to comparative helplessness; army after army of the faithful had laid siege to Constantinople, and only its strong walls and Greek fire preserved it from the Mohammedan whirlwind of victory that threatened to sweep the empire of the Caesars out of existence; and it appeared for a time not unlikely to achieve the conquest of the world. The Greeks would cheerfully have ransomed with gold their church and country from these ruthless conquerors; a price, which the old Romans, whose name they proudly bore, or the ancient Macedonians, with whom some of them claimed kindred, would have perished rather than have paid; but the Arabians, on more than one occasion, rejected the cowardly bribe. In the time of Irene, however, Harun encamped on the heights of Scutari with an army one hundred thousand strong, and so terrified were the sovereign and people, that it was agreed to pay an annual tribute of 70,000 dinars of gold for the absence of these terrible strangers, and the possession of a temporary peace.

The old and eminent patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria were almost annihilated. The see of Constantinople was tottering on the brink of ruin, The Emperor of the East distinctly perceived that his days were numbered, and that he was powerless to maintain either the temporal or spiritual supremacy of the countries and cities immediately surrounding his throne.

All rivalry to the pope was at an end. Ancient episcopal claimants to co-ordinate jurisdiction were begging his help, and though not willing to recognize his pretensions, had no heart for controversy; and stripped of their wealth, and robbed by death, or the Koran, of a large portion of their flocks, would only have been subjects of ridicule if they had.

At this very time the Roman Bishop stood forth, the owner of immense estates in all parts of Italy; controlling the greatest resources of any man in the Eternal City. As the government of the Emperor became feeble, and his Italian exarch either fled from Ravenna, or wielded an impotent sword from that ancient city over the western territories of the Caesars, the pope became the acknowledged head of old Rome; its natural chieftain to whom its people looked up for counsel in civil things, at first, and whom they subsequently obeyed as their sovereign. So that the ruins of the eastern churches, and of the empire east and west, largely tended to glorify the vicars of Peter, as for centuries they loved to be called,

Papal Missions.

No church, ancient or modern, perfect or defective, has a nobler missionary record than the church of the popes. Gregory the Great saw in Rome some boys exposed for sale; their bodies were white, their countenances beautiful, and their hair very fine. He inquired about their religion, and was grieved to find that they were pagans. He asked about their nation, and on learning they were Angles: "Right," he replied, "for they have an angelic face, and it becomes such to be co-heirs with the angels in heaven." He asked about the province from which they came. He was answered, that "The natives of that province were called Deiri." "Truly are they De ira," said he, "withdrawn from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ." And from that time Gregory felt a strong desire to see the Anglo-Saxons under the gospel yoke.

Ethelbert, the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon kings, was married to Bertha, a French princess, and a Christian. She enjoyed the free exercise of her religion, and the instructions of a bishop who came with her. Gregory took advantage of this circumstance to send Augustine, a Roman abbot, in A.D. 596, to Ethelbert to preach the gospel to him and his people. Forty monks accompanied the missionary. After starting on his journey he began to reflect upon the character of the barbarous people among whom he was going to labor, and of whose very language he was ignorant; and possessing but little of the material out of which martyrs are made he became discouraged, if not terrified, by the prospect before him; and he returned to Rome. Gregory persuaded him again to go to the heathen islanders. The second time he persevered until he reached Britain. He landed on the Isle of Thanet, where he remained for some time. Then he and his associates were permitted to locate in Canterbury, the capital, of Ethelbert's kingdom of Kent. A dilapidated church, dedicated to St. Martin, existing from the times of the Romans, furnished them their first temple in Canterbury. In process of time Ethelbert was converted; others followed his example, though he publicly proclaimed universal freedom of conscience.

The work prospered in Augustine's hands so extensively, that, during one Christmas he baptized more than ten thousand. Canterbury was made the ecclesiastical capital of England, because London, though much larger, was in the hands of Pagans. Gregory not only made Augustine Archbishop of Canterbury, but he sent him "copies of the sacred Scriptures, relics to be used in consecrating new churches, ecclesiastical vessels;" and some lengthy and curious answers to certain questions Augustine proposed.

The labors of Augustine were attended by the most remarkable results, even in his lifetime, though he died A.D. 605. And after his death, his companions and followers spread over all England, and never rested until the cross was planted on every hill, and gave its protection to every valley, and stood, in his own home, before the eye of every Angle, Jute, and Saxon in Britain, as a dearer emblem than the image of Thor or Woden; as the most sacred treasure under the skies.

The island thus converted, added largely to the numerical strength of the Papal Church; and in three or four centuries, became not only a large center of population, but a powerful kingdom.

All the churches of the Anglo-Saxons were bound to Rome by the strongest ties. They admitted her supremacy, obeyed her edicts, and vastly increased her glory among the nations, and her supremacy over the churches.

The Conversion of the Germans.

An Anglo-Saxon, named Winfrid, born at Kirton in Devonshire, and educated in the convents of Exeter and Nutescelle, was the apostle of Germany. He is best known as Boniface. Winfrid was a man of great courage, untiring perseverance, considerable mind, and extreme credulity.

He greatly *loved the Scriptures*; and in his German home often sent for them from the land of his birth, with expositions of them, distinctly written, on account of his weak eyes. He requested an abbess (the female superior of a community of nuns in an abbey), who was accustomed to send him clothes and books from England, to procure him a copy of Peter's epistles, written with gilt letters, for his use in preaching. He regarded himself as the missionary of St. Peter, whose successor had sent the gospel to his fathers, and in all his labors he felt called upon to pay peculiar honor to that apostle.

He was set apart to preach in Germany, by Gregory II. at Rome, A.D. 718, and after twenty-one years' labor he had baptized 100,000 converts. German forests had rung with his honest fervor; by German rivers listening multitudes had learned the cross from his glowing representations.

At Geismer, in Upper Hesse, grew a gigantic oak, sacred to mighty Thor, the god of thunder; this tree was revered with the most profound awe by the population far and near; to it the whole people frequently came, on solemn occasions. Winfrid saw in it a great enemy to his Master and to his own mission, and at all hazards he resolved to destroy it. Boniface and his friends came to the sacred oak armed with a formidable axe, the pagans gathered in terror to watch the scene; they expected that Thor would destroy the impious wretches the moment the first stroke was given; but the huge tree was cut down and divided into four parts, before their eyes, without miracle or accident; and Thor and his system fell with it. This remarkable man lived to carry the cross over as wide a field as ever was planted by the Christian enterprise of one person, and he died in Friesland, in his seventy-fifth year, A.D. 755, by the hands of pagan persecutors, where he had recently baptized thousands, and founded many churches.

He was a man of spotless purity of life, and he urged the same godliness upon others. Few nobler appeals against an unholy life were ever made than his letter to Ethelbald, an Anglo-Saxon king, in which he shows him that even the heathen Saxons in Germany spurned such crimes as his with horror. William of Malmsbury honors his country by preserving the document.

He was the slave of the popes; brought up from childhood to revere them, he felt bound in conscience to obey them in everything; had it not been for that, Winfrid would have been equally great as a missionary, and free from all religious mistakes. This error made him oppose and even persecute the British and Scotch missionaries in Germany. And it made him bind his German church hand and foot, and deliver it over to the Bishop of Rome, to be ruled,

taught, or kept in ignorance, in coming time, at his pleasure.

The mighty work commenced by Boniface was carried on by succeeding hands till Germany was placed under the spiritual supremacy of the pontiffs. Germany and England, both the fruits of Augustine's mission at Canterbury, gave the largest contribution to papal supremacy ever presented on two occasions, to the vicars of Peter. Men of similar principles and labors led the Scandinavians and others to the cross, and bound them firmly to the spiritual sovereignty of the pope. Through missions, the Roman bishop received his most obedient subjects, and the greatest number of them.

Papal interference in the troubles of Bishops.

This was another stream which aided to swell the mighty current of papal supremacy over the churches. Every bishop in disgrace with his sovereign, or his archbishop, or his synod of bishops, naturally looked out for a friend who was able to help him. The influence of so great a bishop as the pope would be of advantage to any troubled prelate; and nearly every unhappy bishop appealed to his brother in the Eternal City. With an utter indifference to annoyance and responsibility, the pontiff was ready to examine every application, and with a peculiarity which became generally known, more commonly than otherwise, decided in favor of the first applicant; and as these appeals became exceedingly numerous, and as the befriended bishops naturally magnified the wisdom and authority of the judge who had justified them, the Bishop of Rome increased in spiritual power immensely.

Papal inter-meddling with the troubles of Kings.

This became a common practice of the pontiffs, and one which tended largely to advance their priestly authority. In France, in the eighth century, the descendants of the warlike Clovis lived in a palace near Compiègne, the nominal sovereigns of the Franks; they wielded no power over the nation, and they enjoyed no respect; once a year they were conducted in a wagon drawn by oxen to the assembly of the Franks, to give audience to foreign ambassadors, and to ratify the acts of the mayor of the palace; that officer was the master of the king, and the head of the nation. But he wished the nominal monarch to be deposed, and the title as well as the functions of royalty to be conferred upon himself, Childeric, as king, had received oaths of loyalty from his leading subjects, and in that age an oath still meant something. Pepin saw no way of reaching the throne except through the authority of St. Peter and his successor. He applied to Pope Zachary; his holiness decided that Childeric should be degraded, shaved, and confined for life in a monastery, and that the throne might be given to Pepin. The French were pleased; Pepin and his family were delighted, and any number of advantages accrued from this decision to the bishops of Rome.

Pepin twice crossed into Italy and inflicted such chastisements upon the Lombards as freed the Roman bishops from all apprehensions from them. And the French sovereign generously gave to the pope the [Exarchate of Ravenna](#), "the limits of which were included in the territories of Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara: Pentapolis was its inseparable dependency, which stretched along the

Adriatic from Rimini to Ancona, and advanced into the country as far as the ridges of the Apennine." And the pope became a king with all the rights of royalty. Charlemagne confirmed and increased the grants of his father Pepin. The popes stood before the world as the favorites of Pepin and Charlemagne, the two most illustrious statesmen and successful warriors in the Christian world, Frankish, bishops, with ideas of church liberty such as were common two centuries before, were compelled to acquiesce in the supremacy of the pontiffs.

Irish bishops and churches in Germany must not utter their protests against papal supremacy very loudly, or they shall be driven from Charlemagne's empire. All encouragement must be given to Boniface in extending the borders of the Church in that country, and in chaining it to St. Peter's chair. This one act of interference actually placed at the service of St. Peter's vicar, the greatest influences and powers of the age; and it gave a force to the spiritual supremacy of the popes, which for a time cleared its path of opposition, Similar interferences often produced results of the same character, if not reaching quite as lofty a standard. The Childerics pine in unsought convents, and the popes are made secular sovereigns, and spiritual despots, as the wages of injustice.

The Pallium.

This garment has played its part in the drama of spiritual supremacy. It is composed of a long strip of fine woollen cloth, ornamented with crosses, the middle} of which was formed into a loose collar resting on the shoulders, while the extremities before and behind hung down nearly to the feet. It was conferred at first by the Bishops of Rome on their special representatives (*apostolicis vicariis*) among the bishops, or on the primates. Its object was apparently to show favor to some choice friend, when first conferred; but it came in time to be an indispensable title to the episcopal office.

Pope Boniface sends the pallium to Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury, telling him in an accompanying letter that "He only gives him leave to use it in the celebration of the sacred mysteries." Pope Honorius sent it to Paulinus, A.D. 634, meaning thereby that he was Archbishop of the Northumbrians. For a long interval, the Archbishops of York received no pallium or pall. Paris says: "In the year of our Lord 745, Egbert, Archbishop of York, laudably recovered the pall which had been omitted to be received by eight bishops."

Offa, King of the Mercians, having quarreled with the people of Kent, tried to deprive Jainbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, of the primacy; and to accomplish this he sent messengers to Pope Adrian, to persuade him to confer the pall on the Bishop of Lichfield, and make all his bishops subject to that prelate. From which statement it is evident, that at that time, the pall was a bishop's title to rule his brethren. It was equally needful to ordain them. Du Pin quotes a letter of Pope John VIII, condemning the metropolitans of France for consecrating bishops before they received the pall from the Holy See.

The pall was given to archbishops from the fifth century: from the eighth it began to be given to metropolitans. At first it was a mere ornament, and a

token of papal regard; a ribbon of the papal "Legion of Honor." But in time it became a custom, strong as law, that no metropolitan could perform any ecclesiastical function without it. And as the pope might give it or not as he pleased, he acquired unlimited control over the whole episcopacy and priesthood, in part, by this article. In the fifteenth century German archbishops had to pay about \$8000 for this precious badge of slavery.

Purgatory.

As faith in this doctrine became prevalent, from the end of the seventh century onward, the power of the clergy in general grew at an alarming rate. *Men who could add a thousand or ten thousand centuries to your torments by a word; who could keep your mother, wife, or child as long as they pleased, or only for a moment, in raging flames, were not to be treated as other men, who could only hurt the body.* As the existence of these purifying torments seized the minds of men, they left money for masses for the repose of their souls; they were filled with unspeakable terror in prospect of death; real estate in large quantities was given to the Church to modify the pains and abridge the duration of the torments of purgatory. So *lucrative* had purgatory become that at one time, says Hallam, "nearly half the land in England belonged to the Church;" and what was true of Britain may be asserted of the continent of Europe. The Church became the greatest landlord in the world; and with the prestige of enormous wealth, nothing could resist her.

The Roman bishop stood at the head of all the masters of purgatory; he, above all others, could give relief or continue pain, and it became of the very highest importance to cultivate his good will; and not to thwart his wishes; in short, to let him have supremacy everywhere. Dying kings, expiring statesmen, departing millionaires, and men of influence, alarmed for their souls, were ready to make any sacrifice; they were willing to concede anything to his Holiness for a cool and speedy passage through Hades. While to the living, and ambitious, or covetous, **the pope was the chief officer of the richest corporation of all time**, whose fertile acres, great abbeys, gorgeous cathedrals, jeweled Madonnas and miters, and ever expanding wealth, made her first priest a man of infinite importance to conciliate. In this way, purgatory labored to give *the pope that which he desired most, unlimited authority over the churches.*

The Benefits conferred by the Popes.

The bishops of Rome had two channels for making their influence felt over the churches; the clergy, and the monks. Through the priests, for a long time, the popes showed themselves kind fathers of the great masses of the people. In ages when the serf, and the mechanic, and the merchant were of no more importance than stubble, and the chieftain was a dignitary almost worthy of Divine honors, the Church took some honest son of poverty and toil, and made him a bishop, a baron, the equal of the proudest thanes of a kingdom. And in facts of this kind, the priests appeared as the greatest friends of the lowly.

In times of oppression, the churches, and frequently the cemeteries, were sanctuaries where the terrified fugitive might defy the constable, the court,

or the king. The tortured slave could not be torn from the church by his angry master, until assurances were given that he should not be beaten on his return to his home.

Frequently, when fierce kings were about to drag their innocent vassals to fields of slaughter, a priestly representative of the Roman Bishop would soothe their resentments, and sheathe their swords. And often, when armies were drawn up in battle array, papal delegates went from king to king, until a truce was settled, and the soldiers disbanded.

The Bishops of Rome showed the greatest hostility to human slavery, and for many centuries wielded a vast influence to uproot the institution where it existed, and to mitigate its barbarities when its destruction was not possible.

Through the monks of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, and, in some instances, later still, the popes were the benefactors of the nations. These men were directly dependent on the pontiffs, and their labors reflected credit or dishonor upon their commander-in-chief in the Eternal City. They were the schoolmasters of Europe for centuries, and they turned out some disciples of whom the world is still proud. They wrote the histories of Europe for ages. Their literary performances are treasures which we cannot spare, in which the cultivated reader has special pleasure. These men manufactured all the books of the old world for centuries. In their humble cells they composed them, and then they multiplied copies with the pen, until the largest works were accessible to all who could read, or cared to use them. And the writing of those books was often done with a taste and splendor which can scarcely be imitated by all the skill and mechanism of the 19th century. A volume of facsimiles of capital letters, made by these old monks, lies before me; and any thing more exquisitely beautiful, more superbly grand, in design and coloring, could not be conceived. A few of these letters are six and eight inches long; sometimes, they are gilt; more frequently, they are painted. Flowers of gorgeous colors, perfect butterflies, glorious angels, saintly priests, and venerable bishops appear in these letters. The originals enrich museums, of which these are but pictures.

Monks made myriads of copies of the word of God; from their pen and bindery, it went forth to gladden the eyes and rejoice the souls of millions.

The monk threshed his wheat, plowed his fields, performed a list of religious duties every day, and, from the seventh to the tenth century, was the instructor of his neighbors, not only in letters from the alphabet up, but in the best modes of farming, and in the use of the latest mechanical inventions.

The convent furnished meals and lodging to every traveler, as is still done by monasteries in Palestine; it supplied the wants of the poor for many miles around. It rendered needless the hotel and the almshouse, the scourge of hunger, and the heavy poor tax.

Bede, in the Convent of Yarrow, was a highly-favored monk, in the light of science and learning, and in the grace of God.

Malmsbury says that his abbot, Benedict, "was the first person who introduced constructors of stone edifices into England, as well as makers of glass windows." He quotes Bede as stating: "I have given my whole attention to the study of the Scriptures, and amid the observance of my regular discipline, and my daily duty of singing in the church, I have ever delighted to learn, to teach, or to write" This monk wrote seventy-six books, and sent them abroad in thirty-six volumes. He translated the Gospel of John into English for the benefit of his friends who did not understand Latin. He was constantly engaged in teaching. A more blameless, active, and useful life has seldom been given to men than his.

When he came near death, "I desire to be dissolved," he says, "and to be with Christ; I have not passed my life among you in such a manner as to be ashamed to live; neither do I fear to die, because we have a kind Master."

When sorely pained, he said: "The furnace tries the gold, and the fire of temptation the just man; the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the future glory which shall be revealed in us." At night, he spent the whole time in singing psalms and giving thanks. On Ascension day, he lay down upon a hair cloth near the oratory where he used to pray, he invited the grace of the Holy Spirit, saying: "O King of glory, Lord of virtue, who ascendedst this day triumphant into the heavens, leave us not destitute, but send upon us the promise of the Father, the Spirit of Truth." When the prayer was over, his soul had ascended to God. Bede died A.D. 734, in his fifty-ninth year.

In this account, given by the monk William of Malmsbury, he is corroborated by Paris and St. Cuthbert; and it is worthy of notice that no prayer is offered to the Virgin Mary, or to any saint or angel; not a word is said about purgatory or penances. Bede lived like a true disciple, and he died in a sure hope of being with the Lord when he passed away.

Bede, as a scholar, was beyond the rivalry of any Englishman in his day; his piety, too, was probably unequalled in or out of his own country. But there were thousands of monks in the previous and two subsequent centuries who walked with God. Doubtless they were defective in many things, but they were heavenly-minded men, with Christ in their hearts; and they shine in glory to-day among the most conspicuous of the redeemed.

The nations felt themselves under lasting obligations to these school-masters, authors, pen-printers, book-binders, professors of sciences, of theology, of agriculture; to these benevolent hosts, who kept free hotels for travelers, and abundance of food for the poor; to these preachers who visited the homes of wealth and the cottages of want, telling the story of the Cross, and communicating the same blessed tidings by the wayside, in the village, in the church, and wherever men congregated; to these saints of God who, while showing constantly the largest love to men, lived in the closest intimacy with the Eternal King. It is not to be understood that all monks, at the period named, even in the country of Bede, were good or pious men. Indeed, in Italy, and especially in Rome, religion had little place in the hearts of monks, clergy, or people. But elsewhere the peoples, sensible of the varied and vast benefits received from godly monks, bestowed their finest lands

upon the convents, showered their wealth upon the abbeys, and fitted them, some ages later, to be scenes of sloth, luxury, and odious vice.

The monks everywhere extolled the pope. He only could protect them from the tyranny of bishops and parish priests, between whom and them there was constant jealousy. And with a hearty good-will they commended him everywhere as the purest and mightiest of mortals, the successor of glorious Peter, the prince of the apostles, the special favorite of God. They made Europe ring with the praises and powers of the Bishop of Rome; the priests were inclined in the same direction; the people followed with acclamation; and the pontiffs were carried on a great tidal wave of popular enthusiasm into the throne of kings of the Church.

Forgeries.

The Bishops of Rome have never been slow to take advantage of anything that will aid them in obtaining power. Perhaps no one of them ever committed or encouraged forgery. Several of them certainly used the false documents made by others to increase their authority, just as if they had been genuine records,

The most notorious, and we may add the most outrageous instrument of this character, is known as the "Donation of Constantine." It is founded on a fable that he was healed of leprosy and baptized by Pope Sylvester at Rome, and that the Great Constantine, out of gratitude, bestowed the sovereignty of Italy and of the western provinces on the pope. The pontiff is represented as lord of all bishops, having authority over the four patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Constantine confesses in it, how he served the pope as groom, and led his horse some distance. The entire statement is a base forgery. Constantine reigned over old Rome till his death. His successors on the imperial throne exercised unquestioned dominion over the Eternal City. No one ever heard of this grant for at least four, and perhaps, five hundred years after it should have been made. On the strongest authority, the Christian world has always believed he was baptized in Nicomedia. From the canons of councils, and other undoubted testimonies, it is certain that the Roman bishops, at no time, had any authority over one of the Eastern patriarchs. In the language of a learned editor of Mosheim, "The document is universally allowed to be spurious," and yet it was used for centuries to sustain the pope's temporal authority over Rome and Italy; and his spiritual dominion over the Church.

Under the revered name of Isidore, Bishop of Seville, in the early part of the seventh century, the greatest batch of forgeries ever palmed upon men was published in western Gaul about A.D. 850. It was believed at that time that the Church was built upon Peter, and that his supposed successor was invested with extensive powers; but the pontiffs wanted something more, and by the providence of the wicked one, it comes in the form of a "complete series of decretals of the Roman bishops from Clement down; most of them utterly unknown before. The fraud was clumsily contrived and ignorantly executed, and had the deception not fallen in with a predominant interest of the Church, it might have been easily exposed. The letters were for the most part made up of passages borrowed from far later ecclesiastical documents, which the compiler

took the liberty to alter and mutilate to suit his purpose. These ancient Roman bishops quote Scripture from a Latin translation formed from the mixture of one made by Jerome with another that had been current in earlier times."

These letters occasionally forget the lapse of time. Victor, Bishop of Rome, is made to write about the observance of the passover to Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who lived two centuries later!

The Bishop of Rome wanted some early authority for his power over the keys; and as it was never dreamt of before the middle of the fifth century, and as then it was only a dream, Isidore makes a letter from Pope Julius about A.D. 388, declaring that "The church of Rome by a singular privilege has the right of opening and shutting the gates of heaven to whom she will." Julius little imagined that he would be engaged in writing letters five hundred years after his death, and in writing opinions which he never entertained when living, and which none of the dead, holy or wicked, ever received.

Ennodius in defending Pope Symmachus, A. D. 508, said, "That the popes inherit innocence and sanctity from St. Peter;" and as this doctrine was flattering, and fitted to increase their power, Isidore creates two synods at Rome, which unanimously approve the teaching of Ennodius.

The Roman bishop wished to prohibit all men, even though kings, from calling councils, and to keep these powerful bodies entirely in his own hands; and Isidore makes Pope Julius write that, "The apostles and the Nicene council had said that no council could be held without the pope's command."

The Roman bishops saw that an excommunicated man could buy and sell, enjoy the love of his friends and the society of his circle as well after the Church's curse as before it; and perceiving that if excommunication forbade all intercourse with an anathematized man, his family would do nothing for him, his soldiers would not obey him, his subjects would have nothing to do with him; he would be absolutely at their mercy; and reflecting that they could hurl this bolt at any time against the meanest or the most exalted; they quickly saw that exclusion from intercourse would make every man their slave; and, in Isidore, the "earliest popes declare that no speech could be held with an excommunicated man." This barbarous law, intended solely to further papal despotism, soon became a part of the code of the Church, and is there now.

But these forgeries are too extensive to examine separately. They declare the priests to be the apple of God's eye; and as they are the representatives of God, the decretals assert that a sin against them is a transgression against Jehovah. The forgeries claim that priests are subject to no secular tribunal; that Jehovah has appointed them judges over all.

False Isidore frequently declares that Jesus Christ has made the Church of Rome the head of all churches, the sole and sufficient judge of all bishops, and the only authority by which a regular synod can ever be convened. Other forgeries followed the successful efforts of Isidore, until Pope Nicolas I. and pontiffs of equal ability and similar ambition, in ages of special

darkness, abolished the whole liberties of the churches in nearly every country, and threatened the last vestige of freedom where a trace of it, as in France, was permitted to remain. No agencies rendered better service to the popes, in vaulting into their spiritual throne, than the labors of the pious forgers.

Oaths of obedience, binding the bishops to the pope and his interests, have aided the pontiff in securing his spiritual empire.

The Inquisition, though a little late in the field, has done some very gory service in securing papal ascendancy.

The work has been crowned in Rome at the recent council, when it declared the "dogma of infallibility." Now the bishops are nothing; the inferior clergy are nothing; the laity, plebeian and patrician, sovereign and subject are nothing. In the papal Church in matters of faith there is one man, and all the rest are but shadows. He can proclaim anything as an article of faith, as a rule of life, and the whole Church must accept it. The sovereignty of the popes over the Church is now complete; only the celestial Head, set aside for a crowned priest; only the heavenly Foundation, removed for a wavering apostle, can breathe Christian liberty among the bondmen held in subjection by the Bishop of Rome.

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