

the vineyard, the village or the city. Superstition, in like manner, unperceived in the beginning, augments in its progress. The fancy, the fears, or the interests of men supply continual accessions, till the frowning monster affrights the mind and oppresses the conscience. Such was the rise and progress of Romanism. A religion, boasting unchangeableness, received continual accretions of superstition and absurdity, till it became a heterogeneous composition of Gentilism and Christianity, united to many abominations, unknown in the annals of mythology and paganism. The history of these innovations will expose their novelty, and discover their aberrations from the original simplicity of the Gospel.

Popery, in its growth from infancy to maturity, occupied all the lengthened period from the age of the Apostles till the last Lateran Council. This includes the long lapse of time from Paul of Tarsus to Leo the Tenth. Paul saw the incipient workings of 'the Mystery of Iniquity.' The twilight then began, which advanced in slow progress, to midnight darkness. Superstition, which is so congenial with the human mind, was added to superstition, and absurdity to absurdity. Filth collected. The Roman hierarchs, amidst alternate success and defeat, struggled hard for civil and ecclesiastical sovereignty. Leo, Gregory, Innocent, and Boniface, in their several days, advanced the papacy, on the ruins of episcopacy and royalty, bishops and kings. These celebrated pontiffs augmented the papal authority, and encroached on prelate and regal power.

Leo the Tenth, in the sixteenth century, saw the mighty plan completed. The Lateran Assembly, under his presidency, conferred on the pope a full authority over all councils, which, in consequence of this synodal decision, he was vested with the arbitrary power of convoking, transferring, and dissolving at pleasure.¹ This concession subjected synodal aristocracy to pontifical despotism; and, in consequence, extinguished all episcopal freedom. The same convention embodied, in its acts, the bull of Boniface the Eighth against Philip the French king.² This transaction subjugated royal prerogative and popular privilege to pontifical tyranny. The synod had only to advance another step and the work of wickedness was consummated. This was soon effected. The infallible bishops addressed the infallible pontiff as God.³ The successor of the Galilean fisherman was represented as a Terrestrial Deity; while he received with complacency and without reluctance the appella-

¹ Du Pin, 31. 148. Crabb, 3. 696.

² Du Pin 3. 148.

³ Deus in Terris, Bin. 9. 54.