

ciated with the spiritual power of the Papacy would have led to their being averted, we cannot tell. Humanly speaking, it is difficult to imagine, as we trace the course of history, that the Popedom could have been very different from what it was. Be this as it may, it seems inevitable that it should have become a secular power, and equally so that its spiritual character, the world being what it is, should have suffered from the connection.

The deterioration is, in fact, undeniable. As we follow the solemn and impressive history from Pontiff to Pontiff, from age to age, we become aware that the voice of the Vicar of Christ no longer speaks in the pure tones of a Leo or a Gregory; the world also has its prophet on the throne of Peter, and the spirit of the world is blended, in a combination sometimes blasphemous, sometimes touching upon the ludicrous, with the higher spirit of the kingdom. The first Bishop of Christendom is serving two masters.

The moral deterioration of the Roman See is a simple fact of history. It was not rapid, and there were breaks and suspensions and recoils in its course; but it was, on the whole, gradual and certain. We mark it, perhaps, most in the period which elapsed between the beginning of the fourteenth century and the era of the Reformation. The evil, however, was at work long before this time. In the struggles between the great Popes, like Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), and the great Emperors, like Henry IV., there was of necessity a secularizing of the spirit of the ecclesiastical power, far more than a spiritualizing of the secular; and the Popes were quite as much the victims as they were the causes of the circumstances in which they found themselves.