

friends and Christian strangers to his house to read to him, by which means he acquired an extensive knowledge of the Sacred Oracles: and another may be mentioned, of whom the description is so extraordinary; that we shall give it in the words of the historian, Eusebius, who knew him: "Whenever he willed, he brought forth, as from a repository of science, and rehearsed either the law of Moses, or the Prophets, or the historical, evangelical, and apostolical parts of Scripture. Indeed, I was struck with admiration when I first beheld him standing amidst a considerable multitude; and reciting certain portions of Holy Writ. As long as I could only hear his voice, I supposed that he was reading; but when I came close to him, I discovered that, employing only the eyes of his mind, he uttered the Divine Oracles like some prophet."

And again, in reference to the habit of storing the mind with divine truth, Mr. Jamieson tells us,—

Every day it was the practice for each individual to commit a portion of Scripture to memory, and for the members of a family to repeat it to each other in the evening. So much was this custom regarded as part of the ordinary business of the day, that they had a set hour appointed for conning the daily lesson,—an hour which, though every individual fixed it as suited his private convenience, was held so precious and sacred, that no secular duties, however urgent, were allowed to infringe upon it; and while some, who had their time at their own disposal, laid their memories under large contributions, and never relaxed their efforts, till they had completed the daily task they had imposed on themselves, others were obliged to content themselves with shorter passages as they could learn during the intervals of labour, and amid the distractions of other cares. By all classes, however, it was considered so great an advantage, so desirable an attainment, to have the memory richly stored with the records of salvation, that while in the lapse of time, many ancient practices became obsolete, and others more suited to the taste of succeeding ages, were adopted into the church, this excellent custom still maintained its place among the venerable observances inherited from primitive times; and the pious Christians of the first centuries would have regarded it as a sin of omission, for which they had occasion expressly to supplicate pardon in their evening devotions, if they were conscious of having allowed a day to pass without having added some new pearls from the Scriptures, to the sacred treasures their memories had previously amassed.

It were easy to enlarge on so fruitful a theme as the Manners of the first Christians; but we have said enough; surely, to convince every reader that, among ourselves, there is a lamentable degeneracy, in many points connected with vital godliness. It becomes us to humble ourselves, therefore, before God, and to seek to imitate those devout and holy men who, "through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises."—*Scottish Christian Herald.*

## THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF POPERY.

BY THE ABBE HAYNAL.

In an obscure village of Judea, and in the house of a poor carpenter, there arose a man of austere morals. His candour was disgusted with the hypocrisy of the priests of his time. He had discovered the vanity of legal ceremonies, and the vice of expiations; at thirty years of age this virtuous person quitted his employment, and began to preach his opinions. The multitude, from the villages and country places, flocked around him, listened to him, and followed him. He associated to himself a small number of disciples, ignorant and weak men, taken from the lowest conditions of life. He wandered for some time about the capital, and at length ventured to appear there. One of his disciples betrayed him, and the other denied him. He was taken up, accused of blasphemy, and crucified between two thieves. After his death his disciples appeared in the public places, and in the great cities, at Antioch, at Alexandria, and at Rome.— They announced, both to barbarous and civilized people, at Athens and at Corinth, the resurrection of their Master; and the belief of their doctrine, which seemed so contrary to reason, was universally adopted. In all parts corrupt men embraced a system of morality, austere in its principles and unsocial in its councils. Persecu-

tions arose; and the preachers, together with their converts, were imprisoned, scourged, and put to death. The more blood is spilt, the more doth the fact extend itself. In less than three centuries, the temples of idolatry are subverted or abandoned; and notwithstanding the hatred, heresies, schisms, and sanguinary quarrels, which have torn Christianity since its origin, even down to our latter times; yet there are scarce any altars remaining, except such as are raised to the man of God, who died upon a cross.

It was no difficult matter to demonstrate to the pagans the absurdity of their worship; and in all general, as well as particular disputes, if we can prove that our adversary is in the wrong, he immediately concludes that we are in the right. Providence, which tends to the accomplishment of its designs by all sorts of means, intended that this mode of reasoning should lead men into the way of salvation. The founder of Christianity did not arrogate to himself any authority, either over the partners of his mission or over his followers, or over his fellow-citizens. He respected the authority of Cæsar. When he saved the life of an adulterous woman, he took care not to attack the law which condemned her to death. He referred two brothers, who were at variance, to the civil tribunal. When persecuted, he suffered persecution. In the midst of intolerant persons, he recommended toleration. "You shall not," said he to his disciples, "command fire to come down from heaven upon the head of the unbeliever; you shall shake off the very dust from your feet, and you shall retire;" fastened to a cross, his head crowned with thorns, his side pierced with a spear, he said to God: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." To instruct and baptize the nations, was the object of the mission of the apostles; to employ persuasion and not violence; to go about in the same manner God had sent his Son,—such were the means employed for his purpose. Priesthood hath in no time conformed itself to such maxims; and yet religion hath not been the less prosperous.

In proportion as the new doctrine gained ground, a kind of hierarchy was instituted among its ministers, consisting of bishops, priests, acolytes, and sacristans, or porters. The object of the administration itself, included doctrine, discipline, and morals. To confer sacred orders, was the first act of the jurisdiction of the church. To set persons free, or to bind them, and to appoint a spiritual and voluntary expiation for offences, was the second. To excommunicate the rebellious sinner, or the heretic, was the third; and the fourth, which is common to every association, was to institute rules of discipline.— These rules, at first kept secret, and which were chiefly on the administration of the sacraments, were made public; assemblies on councils were holden. The bishops were the representatives of the apostles; the rest of the clergy were subordinate to them. Nothing was decided without the concurrence of the faithful; so that this was a true democracy. Civil matters were referred to the arbitration of the bishops. The Christians were blamed for having law-suits; and still more for exposing themselves to be brought before the magistrates. It is probable that property was in common, and that the bishop disposed of it at pleasure.

Hitherto every thing was conducted without the interference of the secular power. But under Aurelian, the Christians applied to the emperor for justice against Paul of Samosata. Constantine banished Arius, and condemned his writings to the flames; Theodosius persecuted Nestorius; and these innovations fixed the period of the second state of ecclesiastical jurisdiction: when it had now deviated from its primitive simplicity, and was become a mixture of spiritual power and coercive authority. The faithful, already extremely numerous, in the second century, were distributed in different churches subject to the same administration. Among these churches there were some more or less considerable: secular authority interfered in the election of bishops, and the confusion between these two powers increased. There were some poor and some rich among them, and this was the first origin of the ambition of the clergy. There were indigent believers among them all; and the bishops became the dispensers of the alms; and this is the most ancient source of the corruption of the church.

What a rapid progress hath ecclesiastical authority made since the end of the third century! Proceedings are carried on before the bishops; and they become the arbiters in civil matters.— The judicial sentence of the bishop admits of no appeal; and the execution of it referred to the magistrates. The trial of a priest cannot be carried out of the province. A distinction arises between civil and ecclesiastical crimes, and this gives birth to the privileges of the clergy. The appeal to the sovereign is allowed, if it should happen that the sentence of the bishop should be invalidated at the tribunal of the magistrates.— Long before these concessions, the bishops had obtained the inspection over the police and morals; they took cognizance of prostitutions, foundlings, guardianships, lunatics, and minors; they visited the prisons; they solicited the enlargement of the prisoners; they denounced the negligent judges to the sovereign; they interfered with the disposal of the public money, with the construction and repairing of the great roads, and other edifices. Thus it is, that, under pretence of assisting each other, the two authorities were blended, and paved the way for the dissensions which were one day to rise between them. Such was in the first centuries, in the prosperous days of the church, the third state of its government, *half civil, half ecclesiastical*, to which, at present, we scarcely know what name to give. Was it from the weakness of the emperors, from their fear, from intrigue, or from sanctity of manners, that the chiefs of Christianity conciliated to themselves so many important prerogatives? At that time religious terror had peopled the deserts with anchorites, more than seventy-six thousand of whom were reckoned: this was a nursery of deacons, priests, and bishops.

Constantine transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium. Rome was no more its capital. The barbarians, who had taken it more than once, and ravaged it, were converted. It was the fate of Christianity, which had conquered the gods of the Capitol, to subdue the destroyers of the throne of the Cæsars; but in changing their religion, these chiefs of hordes did not change their manners. What strange kind of Christians were Clovis and his successors! exclaims the author of the history of the church. Notwithstanding the analogy between the ecclesiastical and the feudal government, it would be an illusion to make one the model of the other.— Literature was no longer cultivated; and the priests employed the little knowledge they had preserved, in forging titles, and in fabricating legends. The harmony between the two powers was disturbed. The origin and the riches of the bishops, attached the Romans, who neither had, nor could have, any thing but contempt and aversion for their new masters; some of whom were pagans, others heretics, and all of them ferocious. No man ever doubted of the donation of Constantine; and that of Pepin was confirmed by Charlemagne. The grandeur of the bishop of Rome increased under Lewis the debonaire, and under Otho. They arrogated that sovereignty which their benefactors had reserved for themselves. Like other potentates they founded their claims upon prescriptions. The church was already infested with pernicious maxims; and the opinion, that the bishop of Rome might depose kings, was universally adopted. Different causes afterwards occurred in establishing the supremacy of this see over the rest: The prince of the apostles had been the first bishop of Rome.— Rome was the centre of union between all the other churches, the indigence of which she relieved. She had been the capital of the world; and the Christians were not so numerous anywhere else. The title of pope was a title common to all bishops, over whom the bishop of Rome did not obtain the superiority till the end of the eleventh century. At that time ecclesiastical government tended not only to monarchy, but had even advanced towards universal monarchy.

Towards the end of the eighth century, the famous decretals of Isidorus of Seville appeared. The pope announced himself to be infallible.— He withdrew himself from his former submission to the councils. He held in his hand two swords; one the emblem of his spiritual, the other of his temporal power. Discipline was no more. The priests were the slaves of the pope, and the kings were his vassals. He required tributes from them; he abolished the ancient judges, and appointed new ones. He created