

does not see here, also, the rise of monastic institutions; and the germ of the whole system of *Popish mediation*, from the Virgin Mary, on the one hand, to St. Giles or St. Januarius on the other?

The worship of saints and angels, and the relics of martyrs, we can easily trace to an early and not unnatural veneration for relics, and a desire to gather the bones and dust of confessors, and to deposit them in holy places with peculiar solemnity. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the discovery of such dear remains was a very favourite object of pursuit, and "*holy coats*" wanted not many Arnolds of Treves to recognize and honour them. Practical Christianity being low, a morality, based upon it, gave its willing sanction to easy tales, and the deluded people were in the fittest of all positions to receive them. Plato, long before, had inculcated the expediency of what he calls "*political lies*," and interest could easily recognize in these a most befitting instrument for its purposes. Even Jerome wrote in support of the reverence due to relics; and the name of such a man was sufficient to give currency to his doctrine. Satan seldom employs the worst of men to help his cause; he transforms himself into an angel of light; and subjects to his fell designs some of the most learned and pious of mankind.

Church History teaches us to trace up the errors of Popery to the imitation of Pagan rites. A desire to bring in the heathen to the Church, particularly about the time of the fall of Paganism, led to the scheme of adapting the tales of Ovid and Livy, to the meridian of Christianity, and thus filling the Church with false legends, pretended miracles, and all the mummery of the pantheon. The custom of leaving legacies to the gods was quite common in ancient times; yea, civil law, on more than one oc-

casion, interposed to regulate the practice so as to prevent abuse; and we need no other fountain to which to trace the largesses and the gifts of superstitious devotees.

The errors of the later Platonists, substantially the same in character with those of the Gnostics, throw light on the history of Popery. These revivers of old Platonism, while in their hands it lost much of its sublimity and mystic grandeur, so mixed it up with partial and corrupted views of divine truth, as to bring out a scheme of opinions most gross and pernicious. They applied the *esoteric* and *exoteric* distinctions of the schools to the morality of the Scriptures, and thus provided one rule for the common classes of men, and another for the rich: one standard for the ordinary mass, and another for persons of superior sanctity. They first drew the distinction, since well known to Romanists, betwixt *counsels* and *precepts*; *mortal* and *venial sins*; while they had as their watch-word the doctrine that the *end* sanctifies the *means*—a doctrine to which we can easily trace all the pretended miracles and legends, with all the impudent impostures of the Romish hierarchy. Perhaps the casuistry of the Romish Church, and the whole system of its tortuous moral systems, may be traced up to the admixture of Platonism after the days of John of Damascus in the eighth century, with the metaphysical abstractions of the philosophy of Aristotle.

Popery is fond of the plea, that if Rome has really been corrupted by errors, these errors must have had a beginning; must once have been entirely new; and must therefore surely have been opposed and rejected by the Church, when originally proposed to its ministers and members. The reply is plain to any tyro in Church history; first, that gross errors generally creep in by stealth, and do not show their native grossness at once,