

## A DISSERTATION CONCERNING THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF POPERY

What is generally meant and understood by Popery, is well known. As for the name it matters not from whence and from whom it is, nor when it began to be in use, nor in what sense the word *papa* is used in heathen and ecclesiastical writers. By the latter it was given to Christian bishops in common; as to Cyprian, Athanasius, Austin, Epiphanius, and others; until the bishops of Rome assumed it as peculiar to themselves: but it is not the name, but the thing we are inquiring after; and as things are before they have a name, so Popery was in being before it bore this name. It did not begin at Rome, nor was it always confined there; nor did it cease at the Reformation in the reformed churches; some of its unholy relics continued with them, and still do, and even in Geneva itself. It is commonly believed by Protestants, that the Pope of Rome is Antichrist; and the Roman church, its hierarchy, doctrines and practices, Antichristian; and by Protestant writers and interpreters, for the most part, it is supposed that the same Antichrist is meant in [2Th 2:3-10](#) to whom the description agrees; as, the man of sin, the son, of perdition, who exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; sitting in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God. Now this same man of sin, was then in being in the apostles time, though not arrived to his manhood; to deny this, would be just such good sense as to deny that an infant exists because it is not grown up to man's estate. Antichrist was not then revealed, but was to be revealed in his proper time, when that which hindered his being revealed was taken away, even the Roman empire: he was in being, though he lay hid and concealed till an opportunity offered to show himself. The mystery of iniquity, which is one of the names of mystical Babylon, or the Antichristian whore of Rome. [Re 17:5](#) began to work already, when the apostle wrote the above prophecy, and gave the above description of Antichrist; and so the apostle John says, that the spirit of antichrist, which should come, even now already, is it in the world. {[1Jo 4:3](#)} Antichrist was not only in embryo in the times of the apostles, but was arrived to some bigness, so as to be active and operative. Now Popery may be considered in a twofold respect; both as an hierarchy, and usurped jurisdiction, and tyrannical domination over others; and as a system of Antichristian doctrines and practices: and in both views it will appear, that what is now so called, had a very early beginning.

Popery may be considered as an Antichristian hierarchy, a tyrannical jurisdiction over other churches, gradually obtained by usurpation; and though such an affectation of preeminence and dominion was forbidden, and

condemned by Christ, {[Mt 20:26-27; 13:8,11](#)} and by his apostles, and even by Peter, whom the pope of Rome claims as his predecessor, {[2Co 1:24; 1Pe 5:3](#)} yet this Diotrephesian spirit, or love of preeminence, appeared even in the apostolic age, {[3Jo 9](#)} and though the office of bishop or overseer, and of presbyter or elder, and of pastor, is one and the same, and equal, according to the scripture account, {[Ac 20:27](#)} and there were but two officers in the church, bishops and deacons, {[Php 1:1](#)} yet we soon hear of the superiority of bishops to presbyters, and of the subjection of presbyters to bishops, as well as of deacons to both, and of the people to them all; as appears from the epistles of Ignatius, in the second century; and in the third and following, we read of a great variety of offices, together with others since added, which make the present Antichristian hierarchy; as will be observed hereafter.

The bishops of Rome very early discovered a domineering spirit over other bishops and churches; they grasped at power and exercised it, though they met with rebuffs in it. In the second century there was a controversy about keeping Easter. The Asian churches observed it on the 14th day of the new moon, let it fall on what day of the week it might; but the church of Rome, with other churches, observed it on the Lord's day following. Victor then bishop of Rome, being a fierce, and blustering bishop, threatened at least to excommunicate, if he did not excommunicate, the said churches, for not observing Easter at the same time that he did. Eusebius says, that he attempted to do it; from which Irenaeus of France, endeavoured to dissuade him, though he was of the same mind with him, with respect to the observance of Easter; but Socrates the historian says, he did send them an excommunication; which was an instance of tyrannical jurisdiction exercised over other churches. In the middle of the third century there was a dispute about rebaptizing heretics who repented and came over to the church: the African churches and bishops, as Cyprian and others, were for rebaptizing them, and did; but Stephen, bishop of Rome, violently opposed the baptism of them, and cut off all the churches in Africa for the practice of it; which is another instance of the power the bishop of Rome thus early usurped over other churches: though indeed it was highly resented by the eastern churches, and displays his imperious and imposing temper, as if he wanted to make himself a bishop of bishops.

In the beginning of the third century, in Tertullian's time, the bishop of Rome had the titles of Pontifex Maximus, and of Episcopus Episcoporum. Julius I in the fourth century, took upon him to reprove some eastern bishops for deposing others, and ordered the restitution of them; though they despised his

reproofs, and even deposed him for first communing with Athanasius and others. Platina says, that he reproved them for calling a council at Antioch, without the leave of the bishop of Rome; which he urged, could not be done without his authority, seeing the church of Rome had the preeminence over the rest of the churches: but the same author says, they confuted his claim with a sneer. Adolphus Lampe, in his Ecclesiastical History, observes, that it is thought that Mark, sitting in the Roman chair, A. D. 335 first arrogated to himself the title of universal bishop: and indeed if the letters of Athanasius and the Egyptian bishops to him, and his to them, are genuine, they both gave the title to him, and he took it to himself; their letter to him runs thus, "To the reverend Mark, pope of the holy Roman and apostolic See, and of the universal church." And his to them begins thus, "To the venerable brethren Athanasius, and all the bishops in Egypt, Mark, the bishop of the holy Roman and apostolic See, and of the universal church." And in the former, the see of Rome is called the mother and head of all churches.

Though historians generally agree, that the title of universal bishop was given by Phocas to Boniface III in the year 606, at the beginning of the seventh century, yet an anonymous writer, [i] in an essay an scripture prophecy, p. 104 published in 1724, quotes from Sigonius De occid Imper. p. 106, and 314, two passages, showing, that Valentinian, the third emperor of the west, in A. D. 445 and Marcion, emperor of the east, in A. D. 450 assigned something like an universal power to pope Leo I which was more than a century and a half before the times of Phocas. The title of universal bishop might not be established by authority of the emperor until his time, yet pretensions were made to it, and it was claimed by the bishops of Rome before, and in some instances given. And though pope Gregory I in the sixth century, a little before the time of Phocas, condemned John of Constantinople as antichrist, for taking upon him the title of Oecumenical bishop, because it entrenched upon his own power and authority; yet this humble pope, who called himself servus servorum, asserted, that the apostolic see, meaning the see of Rome, was the head of all the churches; and vehemently inveighed against the emperor, for taking it to himself. And it is certain that this pope claimed a jurisdiction over the churches in Britain, since he appointed his legate, Augustine the monk, metropolitan over the whole island; who endeavoured to bring the British bishops and churches to a conformity to the Roman church, and the rites of it, and to acknowledge the pope's authority. This was before the time of pope Boniface the third, who obtained of the emperor the title of universal bishop.

The primacy of the church of Rome to other churches, with respect to rank and order, which made way for primacy of power, was very early asserted, claimed, and allowed. Several sayings of the ancient writers much contributed to it: from the grandeur and magnificence of the city of Rome, being the metropolis of the empire, an argument was very early used to a superior regard to the church in it. Irenaeus, who lived in the second century, observes, that "to this church (the Roman church) every church should convene (or join in communion;) that is, those everywhere who are believers; propter potentioorem principalitatem; in which always by them who are, everywhere is preserved that tradition which is from the apostles." And Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, calls it the chair of Peter, and the principal church, from whence the sacerdotal unity arises. Jerom, in the fourth century, writing to pope Damasus, calls him his blessedness, and the chair of Rome, the chair of Peter: and Optatus, in the same century, says, the Roman church is the episcopal chair, first conferred on Peter, in which he sat the head of all the apostles, and the chair of Peter: and earlier in this century the council of Nice was held, the sixth canon of which gave equal power to the bishop of Rome, over the bishops of his province, as the bishop of Alexandria had by custom; and by the third canon of the council at Constantinople, A. D. 381, 382, the bishop of Constantinople had the prerogative of honor after the bishop of Rome, because Constantinople was New Rome: and this was confirmed by Justinian the emperor, in the sixth century, who ordained, that the pope of Rome should have the first seat, and after him the archbishop of Constantinople. And what served to strengthen the primacy of the church of Rome, and increase its power, and which the bishops of it failed not to avail themselves of, was the bringing of causes in difference between other bishops and their churches to them, either to have their advice or to be decided by them: and indeed this was done by the order of Constantine himself, who enjoined, that the causes of contending bishops should be brought to the bishop of Rome and his colleagues, and there decided: and this was advised to by some eminent doctors of the church, particularly Ambrose, who calls the Roman church the head of the whole Roman world or empire: and advised Theophilus, that what was committed to him by the synod at Capna, should be referred by him to the priest of the Roman church (the pontiff). And it is no wonder that Leo I in the fifth century, should require such respect and obedience to himself, who claimed the apostolical and episcopal dignity of Peter; and subjection to the see of Rome, as to the blessed apostle Peter: yea, he required of Theodosius the emperor himself, that the writings of the bishop of Constantinople might be sent to him; testifying that he embraced the true doctrine, and condemned those that dissented from it. In his epistle to the

bishop of Thessalonica, he asserts his care of all the churches, and the see of Rome to be the apostolic see; and ordered him, that all matters of difference should be brought to him to decide, according to the pleasure of God. He ordered the African heretics who repented, to send the account of their repentance and faith to him, that it might appear they were catholic. He also assumed a power of calling general councils: and termed Peter's seat, or the see of Rome, universal; and Peter the Praesul of the see of Rome, and the primate of all bishops. In the beginning of the fifth century, during the sixth council at Carthage, which lasted six years, the popes Zozimus, Boniface I and Caelestinus I strove with all their might and main to get some sort of primacy and monarchy over the other bishops, though they failed in their attempt.

The care of the church of Christ at first, with respect both to things temporal and spiritual, lay wholly and entirely in the hands of the apostles; but finding the temporal affairs of the church too burdensome to them, they directed it to choose a sort of officers called Deacons, to take care of them, [Ac 4:1-6](#) and so there were two offices, and two only, as before observed, in the primitive apostolic churches, {[Php 1:1](#)} but they were soon increased, by distinguishing bishops and presbyters, making the latter to be a distinct office from and subservient to the former: and afterwards offices became numerous; and before the bishop of Rome had the title of universal bishop by authority; and were the same which now constitute the hierarchy of the church of Rome, very few excepted; for even in the third century the following orders are ascribed to Caius bishop of Rome, as of his appointment, and as degrees to a bishoprick; first a door-keeper, then a reader, then an exorcist, an acolyte, a subdeacon, a deacon, and a presbyter, and then a bishop: nor is it improbable that such orders and offices obtained as early, since Cyprian, in the same century makes mention of an acolyte often, and of readers; of Aurelius a reader, and of Saturnus a reader, and of Optatus a subdeacon, and of exorcists: and Cornelius bishop of Rome, who lived about the same time Cyprian did, writing to Fabius bishop of Antioch, concerning Novatus, says, That in the catholic church were but one bishop, forty-four presbyters, seven deacons, and as many subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, exorcists and readers, with door-keepers, fifty-two. All these are mentioned together, excepting acolytes, by Epiphanius in the fourth century. And Eusebius observes, that in the persecution under Dioclesian, the prisons were filled with bishops, presbyters, deacons, readers and exorcists: that in the council of Nice there were bishops, presbyters, deacons and acolytes. And Jerom in the same century speaks of a reader, an acolyte, and a psalm singer: and likewise Ambrose, speaking of the qualifications for different offices, one, he says, is fit

to read distinctly; another is more agreeable for singing psalms; another for exorcising evil spirits; and another to take the care of the vestry: all which, he says, the priest should look after, and what every one is fit for, appoint him to that office. Sozomen speaks of an archdeacon in the church of Alexandria, whose office it was to read the Holy Bible; and Optatus calls Caecilianus an archdeacon: and in Persia, Sozomen says, Simeon was archbishop of Selucia and Clesiphon, famous cities in it; and there were patriarchs appointed over provinces by the synod at Constantinople, as Socrates relates; and both he and Sozomen make mention of Peter, an archpresbyter of Alexandria, and of Timothy an archdeacon there, in the fifth century; so that long before Popery arrived to its height, there was much the same popish hierarchy as now: that of Cardinals seems to be the only exception, yet there were of the name, though not of the same office and dignity.

In the fourth century, monkery, celibacy and virginity came much into vogue; the monastic life was much commended in this age by Basil and his father, as may be seen in his works. The first of these Monks, Anchorites and Eremites, is said to be one Paul of Thebes, as Jerom relates; and their disciples, in less than half an age, were so multiplied, that the deserts of Egypt and Arabia were full of them. These indeed were men of more strict and religious lives than those of later ages, who go by the name of monks. Even before the time of Constantine, and in it, there were societies of virgins, professing perpetual virginity, which he had a great regard unto; and such Helena found at or near Jerusalem, in whose company she took great pleasure, and ministered unto them. Arius is said to infect with the poison of his doctrine seven hundred virgins professing virginity. And Ambrose says, the virgins came to Milan from various parts, even from the furthest parts of Mauritania, to be consecrated and veiled: so early were monasteries and nunneries set up, at least the foundation of such institutions were so early laid, and the forms, rules, rites and ceremonies of them prescribed, which now make so great a figure in Popery.

Popery may be considered as a system of Antichristian doctrines and practices, some of the principal of which the apostle Paul has prophetically given notice of in a few words, [1Ti 4:1-3](#). Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgivings of them which believe and know the truth. All which are

notorious doctrines and practices of the Papists, and are here plainly pointed at; and which, with others, are a branch of the mystery of iniquity which began to work in the times of the apostles, and more manifestly appeared soon after their departure. Very remarkable are the words of Hegesippus, an ancient historian, testifying, that "till the times of Trajan (A. D. 100.) the church continued a virgin pure and incorrupt; -but after the sacred company of the apostles ended their lives by various kinds of death, -then the conspiracy of impious error began to take place, through the deceit of false teachers." For this branch of popery, or mystery of iniquity, takes its rise from the heresies of false teachers of the first ages, and from unguarded expressions and errors of those who have been called fathers of the church; and who, in other points, were counted sound and orthodox; and which, by degrees, grew up to that enormous mass of Antichristian doctrines which are the peculiars of popery; and, to begin with those the apostle foretold in the above quoted passage.

Worshipping of angels and praying to saints departed; which are meant by the doctrines of devils, or demons, as Mr. Mede thinks, such. as the heathens reckoned a sort of mediators between God and men; as the papists esteem angels to be mediators of intercession, though not of redemption; and therefore invoke them to intercede for them; and the papists are they who are meant in [Re 9:20](#), said to worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, &c. And this doctrine of worshipping demons or angels, was embraced by a few, even in the times of the apostles; for the apostle Paul warns the Colossians, that no man beguiled them in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels. {[Col 2:18](#)} This was a tenet of Simon Magus, the father of heresies, who held, that the world was made by angels: and this is ascribed to him by Tertullian. And Theodoret reckons it as the notion of Caspocrates, Epiphanes, Prodicus, and the Caiani; and in his exposition of [Col 2:18](#) he says, that this evil notion continued long in Phrygia and Pisidia wherefore the synod which met at Laodicea, the metropolis of Phrygia, forbade by a law to pray to angels; and he says, that to his time might be seen among the people of those countries, and those that bordered upon them, the oratories of St. Michael.

In the latter end of the second century lived the heretics Angelica, so called because they worshipped angels, as says Isidore. Origen, who lived about the same time, and in the beginning of the third century, gives a form of prayer to angels: "Come, O angel, receive one in word converted from his former error, from the doctrine of devils, from iniquity, speaking highly; and receiving him as a good physician, cherish and instruct him; he is a little one, he is born

today, an old man growing young again; and receive, retribution to him, the baptism of the second regeneration; and call to thee other companions of thy ministry, that all ye equally may instruct in the faith, who were sometimes deceived." Austin in the fourth century, and beginning of the fifth, seems to favour the same: quoting [Php 4:6](#) he observes, requests are not to be understood "as made known to God, who knows them before they were made, but as made known by us to God through patience; or perhaps also, they are made known by angels, who are with God, that they might in some sort offer them to God; and consult concerning them, and that they might know what was to be fulfilled; he commanding, as they ought to know, and bring it to us, either openly or secretly;" for which he quotes, Tobit 12:12 The angel said to the man, When thou and Sarah prayest, I offer up your prayer in the sight of the love of God.

Praying to saints was used as early; so Origen directs a prayer to Job, in this manner; "O blessed Job, living for ever with God, abiding in the presence of the king and lord; pray for us miserable ones, that also the terrible majesty of God may protect us in all tribulations and deliver us from all the oppressions of the wicked one, and number us with the just, and write us with them who are saved, and make us rest with them in his kingdom, where we may perpetually magnify him with the saints." And elsewhere, "I think, says he, that all the fathers who died before us, fight with us and help us by their prayers;" and which he confirms by a Doctor of the church senior to him. Cyprian, in the third century, hints the same, when he says, "If any of us go first from hence, through the celerity of time divine worthiness, let our love persevere with God for our brethren and sisters; and let not our prayer for the mercy of the father cease." So Basil, in the fourth century, in his homily on the forty martyrs, has these words; "Here is help prepared for Christians, namely, the church of Martyrs, the army of the triumphant, the chorus of those that praise God: often have ye used means, often have ye labored to find one praying for you: there are forty sending forth one voice of prayer; where two or three are met together, &c. but where there are forty, who can doubt of the presence of God; he who is pressed with any trouble, let him flee to them; he that rejoices, let him recur to them; the one to be delivered from evils, the other to continue in prosperity." In the same century there are instances of Nazianzen praying to Cyprian, and to Basil dead, and particularly to the virgin Mary very early was prayer made, and her intercession implored. Iran-us, in the second century, calls the virgin Mary the advocate of the virgin Eve, which at best is an unguarded expression. Athanasius, in the fourth century puts up a prayer to her in this manner,

**"Hear, O daughter of David and Abraham; incline thine ear to our prayers, and do not forget thy people and us, who are of the family and house of thy father; -unto thee we cry, remember us most holy virgin, who hast remained a virgin from the birth, and reward us for those speeches with great gifts from the riches of thy grace-gift thou art full of-Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee! intercede for us, dame, mistress, queen, and mother of God." And Nazianzen makes mention of one Justina, a virgin, in the times of Cyprian, who was delivered from a temptation by applying to the virgin Mary. Epiphanius speaks of some who made a God of her, and of some in Arabia who offered cakes to her, and celebrated sacred things in her name: and in the fifth century, Petrus Gnaph-us, or the fuller, bishop of Antioch, ordered that the mother of God should be named in every prayer.**

**Another tenet, and which is a popish one, the apostle Paul foretold would be broached in future time, is forbidding to marry, {[1Ti 4:3](#)} so antichrist, as described by the prophet Daniel, is said not to regard the desire of women, . {[Da 11:37](#)} This was a tenet of the ancient heretics; this branch of the mystery of iniquity soon began to operate among them, and was held by them; by the Ebionites, who, as Epiphanius says, magnified virginity, and by the Saturnalians, who said to marry and beget children was of the devil; and that matrimony was a doctrine of the devil; and by the Severians, who said, that a woman is the work of Satan and by the Marcionites, who condemned marriage as an evil and unchaste business; and from these sprung the Encretites, at the head of whom was Tatian, who, as those before called marriages, corruptions and fornications: and if the canons ascribed to the apostles are theirs, persons holding such a tenet were in their days, since the 51st canon runs thus; "If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or whole of the sacerdotal list, abstain from marriage, flesh and wine, not for exercise, but through abomination of them, forgetting that all things are very good, and that God made man male and female; but blaspheming, accuses the workmanship of God, either let him be so corrected (amended or set right); or be deposed, and cast out of the church; and so if a layman." The notion of celibacy, and in disfavor of marriage, began to obtain early among those who were counted orthodox. Dionysius, bishop of Athens, supposed to be the same as in [Ac 17:34](#), is said to write an epistle to the Gnossians, still extant, in which he admonishes Pinytus, their bishop, not to impose as necessary the yoke of chastity or continence upon the brethren; but to consider the infirmity which is in most men; which supposes that such a yoke was attempted to be laid. Athenagoras, in the second century, seems to speak too highly of celibacy; "you will find many of us, says he, of both sexes, who are become old and are**

unmarried in hope of having more communion with God." And a little after, he speaks severely against second marriages, condemning them as adultery, and as a transgression of the law of God. In the third century, not only second marriages were spoken against by Tertullian, Origen, and Cyprian, but marriage itself was slightly spoken of, and continence, celibacy and virginity were highly extolled. Tertullian says, "he preferred continence and virginity to marriage, though not forbid; but gave the preference to a fuller holiness." Origen calls virginity the work of perfection and Cyprian commends chastity (or the single life) as a state of angelic quality, and "virginity, he says, equals itself to angels; yea, if ye diligently examine it, it exceeds, while it strives with the flesh it carries off a victory against nature, which angels have not and again, though marriage is good and instituted by God, yet continence is better, and virginity more excellent, which neither necessity nor command compel to, but the choice of perfection persuades to it." I have observed already how the monastic life, celibacy and virginity, were in great vogue in the fourth century; in the former part of which the council of Nice was held, in which it was moved by some bishops, that those who were married before they were in holy orders, should not cohabit with their wives; upon which Paphnutius, a confessor, rose up and vehemently opposed it, as putting an heavy burden upon them; alleging, that all had not such strict continence, that marriage was honourable, and that to make such a rule might be an occasion of scandal to them and to their wives; and that it was sufficient to observe the ancient tradition of the church, that those who came into holy orders unmarried, should not marry afterwards; but that those who were married before, should not be separated from their wives; to which the synod assented: but then it should be observed, that it had been an ancient tradition that men in holy orders should not marry, if not married before they came into them. Athanasius, in the same century, says many things in praise of virginity and continence, "O virginity, never failing opulence: O virginity, a never fading crown. O virginity, the temple of God and the dwelling place of the holy Spirit. O virginity, a precious pearl, to many inconspicuous, and found by a few only. O continence, hated by many, but known and respected by the worthy ones: O continence, which makes death and hell to flee, and which is possessed by immortality; O continence, the joy of the prophets, and the boast of the apostles: O continence, the life of angels, and the crown of saints; blessed is he that retaineth thee." Jerom has many things in his writings, too numerous to transcribe, in favour of virginity and celibacy, and to the discouragement. of marriage. And Austin, though he in some places speaks well of marriage, yet he was of the mind, that virgins devoted to holiness have more merit with God than believers who are married; opposing Jovinian, who

denied it. It is easy to observe, how much these notions got ground, and monkery obtained, and was established in the fifth and sixth centuries before the man of sin was at his height.

Another popish tenet, foretold by the apostle Paul as a part of the apostasy which would hereafter come upon, is abstaining from meats, {[1Ti 4:3](#)} and observing fasts, such as the Quadragesima or Lent, &c. and which quickly took place: the above mentioned ancient heretics, the Saturnalians, Ebionites, Gnostics, Marcionites, and Encretites, who were against marriage, were also for abstinence from meats; as appears from Iren-us, Clemens, Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Theodoret, in the places before referred to. The Gnostics observed the fourth and fifth days of the week as fast days; and who knew, as Clemens of Alexandria says, the enigmatical meaning of them, the one being called the day of Mercury; and the other the day of Venus; and the Montanists are said to be the first that instituted laws concerning fasting, and who laid the foundation for many Antichristian practices. Quadragesima, or Lent, and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, very early obtained in the church. The former was differently observed by the ancients. Irenaeus, in the second century, says, there was a dispute about Easter day, and of the manner of the fast itself, that is, which was before it; some thought they must fast one day, others two, others more, some forty hours, reckoning a night and day for a day, and this difference was not in this present age, but long before. Socrates relates, that the fast before Easter was differently kept; they at Rome fasted three weeks before it, excepting the sabbath, (Saturday) and the Lord's day; and they in Illyria and in all Greece and in Alexandria, fasted six weeks before it; and that, they called Quadragesima. Others began the fast seven weeks before Easter, and fasted three weeks only, and but five days in a week, nevertheless they called this Quadragesima but, says the historian, to me it seems wonderful that they should disagree about the number of days, and yet call it by the same name: and to the same purpose Sozomen says, "that Quadragesima, in which in the people fast, some count it six weeks, as the Illyrians and the western nations, all Lybia and Egypt, with Palestine; some seven, as at Constantinople, and in all the provinces round about unto Phoenicia; some, out of these six or seven weeks, fast three weeks by intervals; others only three weeks together before the feast; some only two, as the Montanists." And Socrates the historian relates, that "the ancients were not only found to differ about the number of days on which they fasted, but about the food also they abstained from; some abstained from animals entirely, others of animals only eat fish, some with fishes eat fowl also, because they are of the water, according to Moses; some

abstained from fruits of trees, and from eggs; some eat bread only, and others not that." And Epiphanius observes, that the customs of the church were various, "some abstained from all flesh, beasts, fowls and fishes, and from eggs and cheese; some from beasts only, but ate fowls and the rest; some abstained from fowls and used eggs and fishes; others did not eat eggs; and others fishes only; some abstained from fishes, but ate cheese; others did not make use of cheese; others, moreover, abstained from bread; and others abstained from the hard fruits of trees, and from nuts, and from things boiled." Wednesdays and Fridays were kept as fast days in Tertullian's time, by the Catholics, whom he calls Psychici, he being himself then a Montanist. And Origen speaks of those days, and of Lent, as solemn fasts in his time. The canons, commonly called the canons of the apostles, were, according to bishop Beveridge, collected before the end of the third century, and in them is one which runs thus, can. 60. "If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or reader, or singer, does not fast on the holy Quadragesima of Easter, nor on the fourth day (of the week,) nor on the preparation (to the sabbath, Saturday, which preparation was on Friday,) except he is hindered through bodily weakness, let him be deposed; if a layman, let him be separated." In the fourth century, Jerom speaks of keeping Lent as an apostolical tradition; "We fast one Quadragesima, according to the tradition of the apostles, in the whole year, at the time agreeable to us; they (the Montanists) make three Quadragesimas in a year, as if three Saviours suffered." And in another place, he says, "The Lord himself, the true Jonah, being sent to preach the gospel, fasted forty days, and leaving us an inheritance of fasting, prepared our souls for the eating of his body under this number." And elsewhere he observes, "should any say, if it is not lawful to observe days and months, and times and years, we must be guilty of a like crime in observing the fourth day of the week, the preparation, and the Lord's day, and the fast of Quadragesima, and the feast of Easter, and the joy of Pentecost:" To which he makes answer. Austin likewise not only mentions the fast of forty days, but thus reasons for it: "The Quadragesima of fasts has indeed authority both in the ancient books (the old testament,) from the fastings of Moses and Elias; and out of the gospel, because the Lord fasted so many days showing that the gospel does not dissent from the law and the prophets." And a little after, "In what part of the year could the observation of the Quadragesima be fixed more fitly, than near and contiguous to the passion of the Lord?" Ambrose, in the same century, has these words, "It is good at all times to fast, but it is better to fast with Christ in Quadragesima (or Lent); for this Quadragesima the Lord has consecrated to us by his own fasting." And in another place, "The Lord has so ordained, that as in his passion, and the fasts of Quadragesima, we should sorrow; so in

his resurrection, and in the feasts of Quinquagesima, (or Pentecost,) we should rejoice."

Popish festivals were observed very early, long before the Pope of Rome arrived to the height of his ambition. The feast of Easter was kept in the second century, as the controversy between Anicetus and Polycarp, and between Victor and the Asiatic churches, shows; yea in the fifth century, if Polycrates is to be credited, who says, that, "Philip the apostle who died at Herapolis, and, John at Ephesus, Polycarp bishop of Smyrna, Thraseas of Eumenia, Sagaris, who died at Laodicea, Papyrius and Melito, all kept Easter on the 14th day of the month; and the bishops of Rome, before Victor; as well as he, kept it on the Lord's day following; so Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, Xytus and Soter." And so did Iren-us in France; and thus it continued to be observed by the order of Constantine. The vigils of the Passover, or Easter-eve, were very calmly observed; Eusebius makes mention thereof as in the times of Narcissus, patriarch of Jerusalem, in the second century; and Tertullian speaks of the whole night preceding Easter day, as very solemn; and Austin, in the fourth century, mentions Easter-eve as solemn likewise. Pentecost was observed as early as Easter, and is spoken of along with it by Tertullian, by Origen, and by Jerom; and Ambrose says, "Let us rejoice on this holy day as at Easter; on both days there is the same and the like solemnity; at Easter all the Gentiles used to be baptized, and at Pentecost the apostles were baptized," that is, with the holy Ghost.

Christmas-day, or Christ's birthday, was celebrated in the second century, on the 8th of the calends of January; as appears from the paschal epistle of Theophilus. In the times of Dioclesian, and before the council at Nice, Anthimas, bishop of Nicomedia, with some thousands, were burnt, by fire being set to the place where they were assembled to keep the feast of Christ's birthday. Basil, in the fourth century, has a sermon upon it, in which he calls it Theophania, the appearance of God, and says, "Let us celebrate time solemnities of a saved world, the birth-day of mankind." Ambrose has several sermons upon it; and in one of them, sermon ten says, "the vulgar used to call the Lord's birth-day the new sun: and so Chrysostom in the fifth century."

The feast of the Annunciation of the virgin Mary was observed by time ancients. Gregory of Neoc-sarca, called Thaumaturgus, in the third century, has three sermons on the annunciation, and calls it a festival. It is unmentioned by Athanasius in the fourth century, concerning which he says, "This is one of the feasts of the Lord, and is quite venerable; so that according

to the order of things which are preached in the gospel of Christ, it ought to be accounted an holy day, since in it we treat concerning the descent of the Son of God from heaven." Feasts kept in memory of the martyrs, we read of still more early. Origen, in the latter end of the second century, says, "We do memory to the saints, our parents and friends, who die in the faith; -we celebrate the religious with the priests, calling together the faithful with the clergy, inviting the needy and the poor, the fatherless and the widow, filling them with food, that our festivals may be done to the memory of rest to the deceased, whose memory we celebrate." So Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century affirms, "We make oblations for the dead, and for their anniversary birth-days." And Cyprian, in the middle of it, says of some dead, "The days on which they depart are registered by us, that we may celebrate their memories among the memories of the martyrs." And even in a synod in his time, notice is taken "of sacrifices and offerings made for persons after death." In the fourth century it was usual in all churches to observe them. Eusebius relates, that by the order of Constantine, governors of provinces, and those under them, not only observed the Lord's day, but honored the feast days of the martyrs; also the ecclesiastical festivities. Sozomen reports, that the Alexandrians kept with pomp a feast on the day that Peter their bishop was martyred; and Theodoret, that the church at Antioch kept an annual feast to the honour of the martyrs Juveninus and Maximinus. Ambrose has a sermon for the saints throughout the year, and makes mention of the feasts of the apostles Peter and Paul; and in one place he says, "We forget the birth-days of the dead, but the day on which they die we renew with great solemnity;" and again, "Whose life we know not, their deaths we celebrate." And Jerom observes, that according to the variety of countries, different times are appointed in honor of the martyrs.

In the fourth century the relics of the martyrs came much in vogue. Sozomen makes mention of the relics of many saints and martyrs being found, and removed, and laid up with great honour and veneration. And so Ambrose, of the bodies of St. Gervasius and Protesius, in a letter to his sister Marcellina, in which he gives an account of the finding and translation of them, and miracles done; and concludes, "Let us lay up the holy relics, and carry them into temples worthy of them, and celebrate the whole day with true devotion." In the sixth century, part of the wood of the cross on which Christ was crucified was found, and the relics of the martyr Sergius, as Evagrius relates. And in the fourth and following centuries, temples were dedicated to the saints, and images placed in them, with wax candles and lamps burning.

The popish notions of a Limbus patrum, of purgatory and praying for the dead, were embraced long before the pope of Rome was declared an universal bishop. Clemens of Alexandria in the second century, had a notion, that before Christ came none were saved, but those that lived piously were in hell; and Christ, when he came went thither, and preached to them, and so did his apostles; and thereby they were converted and saved; and of the place of the saints after death, Tertullian seems to have such a notion, that they were not in heavenly bliss; "the bosom of Abraham, he says, is not celestial, yet higher than hell; and in the mean while affords refreshment to the souls of the righteous, until the consummation of all things at the resurrection." And a little after he says, "The bosom of Abraham is some temporal receptacle of believing souls." Purgatory was the opinion of Origen in the third century; he was the first, as Theophilus Gale says, that introduced purgatory from the Platonic school at Alexandria into the church of God, and gave a great advance to the whole system of papism or antichristianism. "I think, says he, the saints, when they depart out of this life, remain in some place the divine scripture calls paradise; and as in some place of learning, an auditorium, if I may so say, or a school of souls, in which they may be taught of all those things they have seen on earth." And in some places he gives plain hints of purgatory; "it is certain, says he, there remains a fire, which is prepared for sinners, and we shall come to that fire, in which the fire will prove every one's work, what it is; and as I think we must all come to the fire, even if any one is a Paul or a Peter, yet he must come to the fire; but such shall hear, though thou passest through the fire, the flame shall not burn thee; but if any one, like me, is a sinner, he shall come indeed to the fire, as Peter and Paul, but he shall not so pass through as Peter and Paul." In another place he says, "Whose sin is such that it is neither forgiven in the present world, nor in that to come; he passes on in his uncleanness one and another week, and at the beginning of the third week he is purged from his uncleanness." And in another work of his, he has these words, "To every one of these who have need of punishment by this fire, and together also of healing, it burns, but does not burn them out, who have no matter to be consumed by fire; but it burns and burns them out, who build on a building of actions, words and thoughts, figuratively called wood, hay, and stubble." And he has various hints of this kind in other parts of his writings. Lactantius in the fourth century, says, "When God shall judge the righteous, he shall also try them by fire: them whose sins, either in weight or in number, have prevailed, they shall be touched by the fire, and shall be burnt; but those whose righteousness and virtue are in full maturity; they shall nor perceive the fire." And a little after, "Let no one think, that souls are immediately judged; after death they are all

detained in one common prison, until the time comes, that the great judge shall make trial of the merits of men." Jerom expresses his faith in this point, thus; "As we believe the eternal torments of the devil, and of all deniers and ungodly persons; so we believe a moderate sentence of the judge, mixed with clemency, on sinners and ungodly persons, and yet Christians, whose works are to be proved and purged by fire." Epiphanius, in the same century, delivers the faith of Christians in this manner, "We believe that Christ came to give pardon to these who of old knew him, and did not stray from his deity, though for errors were detained in hell; to them who were then in the world, by repentance; to them that were in hell, by mercy and salvation." And he was of opinion, that prayers made for the dead profited them, though they did not cut off all fault. And of the same opinion was Austin, who says, "It is not to be denied, that the souls of the dead are relieved by the piety of the living; since for them the sacrifice of the mediator is offered, or alms are made in the church; but these are profitable to them, who when they lived merited, that they might be profitable to them afterwards." More of this may be read in another tract of his. Elsewhere he says, "In the old saints the Holy Spirit, was not so, as he is now in believers because when they went out of the world, they were in hell, and it is incongruous that he who goes from hence, having the Spirit of God, should be held in hell." And he seems in one place, to grant a purgatory; "That some such thing is done after this life, is not incredible; and whether it is so may be enquired; that some believers are either found or hid by a certain purgatory-fire, how much the more or less they have loved perishing goods, so much the slower or sooner they are saved." Gregory Nyssene says of children dying in infancy, "What shall we think of such, who so die? shall the soul see the judge? shall it be presented with others before the tribunal? shall it undergo the judgment of those who have lived? shall it receive a reward according to merit? or be purged with fire according to the words of the gospel? or be refreshed with the dew of blessing?" Boetius, in the sixth century, is express for purgatory; his words are, "Are there no punishments after you leave the body dead? The answer is, yea and great ones truly; some are exercised, I think, with a severe punishment, and others with a mild purgatory." Gregory I defended the opinion of purgatory in the same century.

The popish notion of transubstantiation had its rise from the old heretics, and was cherished and strengthened by the unguarded expressions and erroneous sentiments of the ancient fathers, even before the man of sin arrived to his manhood. Mark, the heretic, in the second century, would have it thought that he changed the wine into blood by invocation upon it, just as a popish priest

would be thought by pronouncing some words to change the bread into the body, and the wine into the blood of Christ. Irenaeus, in the same century, has an expression which has too favourable an aspect on this very absurd notion; "when the cup mixed, and the bread broken, perceive the word of God, they become the Eucharist of the blood and body of Christ." In the third century, the phrases of offering the sacrifice of Christ, and of sanctifying the cup by the priest, were used; as by Tertullian, who calls the administration of the supper, offering the sacrifice; and by Cyprian, who speaks of the Lord's sacrifice being celebrated by a lawful sanctification, and of the priest's sanctifying the cup; and says, that "the priest officiates in the room of Christ, and imitates that which Christ did, and then offers up a true and full sacrifice in the church to God the Father." In the fourth century several unguarded expressions were used, as by Athanasius, that there was nothing of the flesh and blood of Christ to be found in the world, but what was daily spiritually made by the hands of priests upon the altar; and by Nazianzen, who speaks of some defiling the altars with blood, which have their name from the most pure and unbloody sacrifice: and Ambrose speaks often of celebrating mass and offering the sacrifice; and he composed some prayers preparatory to it, and he produces examples to prove, that "not that in which nature has formed, but which the blessing hath consecrated, and the greater is the force of blessing than of nature, because nature itself is changed by the blessing." And after many instances of the miracles in Egypt, he observes, that, "if human blessing could do so much, what shall we say of the divine consecration itself, where the words of the Lord the Saviour operate?" And a little after, he has these words "this is my body"; before the blessing of the heavenly words the species is named, after the consecration the body of Christ is signified, he calls it his own blood. Before the consecration another thing is said, after the consecration it is called blood. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "The bread and the wine of the Eucharist, before the holy invocation of the Trinity are mere bread and wine; but when the invocation is made, the bread becomes the body of Christ, and the wine the blood of Christ." Gregory Nyssene says, "The bread is made the body of Christ by sanctification; the bread a little before was common bread, but when the mystery has made it holy, it is made and called the body of Christ; so the mystical oil; so the wine, though of small worth before the blessing, after the sanctification of the Spirit, both of them work differently." And elsewhere, he says, "I rightly believe that the bread sanctified by the word of God, μεταποιεῖται αἶμα, is transmuted into the body of God the Word; for bread was that body, potentially it was sanctified by the indwelling of the Word, which tabernacled in the flesh; thence therefore the bread transmuted in that body, passes into a divine power, by the same now

also become equal.-The bread is immediately transmuted by the Word into the body, as it is said by the Word, This is my body." Chrysostom, in the fifth century, seems to strengthen the doctrine of transubstantiation, when he says, "Do you see the bread? Do you see the wine? do they go as the rest of the food into the privy? God forbid, that thou shouldst so think for as if wax put to the fire is assimilated to it, nothing of the substance remains; so likewise here think that the mysteries are consumed in the substance of the body." In the sixth century, Gregory I says, it appears that they called the Lord's supper a viaticum; and even in the fourth century, it used to be given to dying persons as such. Honoratus of Verceil, gave it to St. Ambrose who as soon as he received it died, carrying with him the good viaticum, as Paulinus in his life relates. And Ambrose himself says, that in his time, travelers and sailors used to carry it with them. Yea, even in the third century, it used to be sent to those who were hindered by sickness from partaking of it; there is even an instance of its being sent by a boy, and put into the mouth of a dying man, upon which he expired.

The first instance of corruption in baptism, as to the form of it, and also as to the mode of it, was made by Mark, the heretic, and his followers; who made a mixture of oil and water, and poured it on the head. And the next instance is in Novatus, who received baptism on a sick bed by perfusion (as the Cinci also did,) if he might be said to receive it, as Cornelius, the then bishop of Rome observes; and when he recovered, and got to be made a presbyter, all the clergy and many of the people, judged it was not lawful, that such an one, who was baptized in that manner, should be admitted among the clergy; nor could such an one be a presbyter, according to the 10th canon of the council of Neocaesarea. An innovation with respect to the subjects began to be made in the third century, in the African churches, and prevailed much in the fourth, through the zeal of Austin in favour of original sin, and for the salvation of infants, which he thought could not be saved without it. This use of chrism, exorcism, signing with the sign of the cross, and other corruptions early introduced, have been observed in some former treatises of mine. Thus we see that the principal things of which the popish hierarchy consists, and the chief principles and practices which are now reckoned popish ones, were held and maintained before the popes of Rome arrived to the full power they had long been aiming at; and which together make up what we call Popery.

## THE COROLLARY

**From all this is, That since it can be no objection to the doctrine of invocation of angels and saints departed, being called a popish doctrine; nor to time prohibition of marriage, and abstaining from meats, and keeping divers fasts and festivals, being called parts of popery; nor to the doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation being popish ones, though they were severally broached and embraced ages before the pope of Rome was declared universal Bishop; it can be no objection to Infant Baptism being called a part and branch of popery, though it was introduced into the churches in the third and fourth centuries, and so before the Roman antichrist arrived to his highest pitch of grandeur; it being a tenet held by the Papists, as founded upon the tradition of the church; and being no more agreeable to the word of God, than the other above tenets held by them are. Truth indeed is most ancient; but error follows closely at its heels, and is nearly as ancient; so that high pretensions to antiquity in matters of faith and worship, are no otherwise to be regarded, but as they have the concurrent evidence and testimony of the sacred scriptures; they only can be trusted to with safety.**

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**[i] In the abstract of the history of popery, p. 1. margin.**