

FOREIGN CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIBERTIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER XII



Samuel Morse

The political duty of American citizens at this crisis.

IN my last number I deemed it a duty to warn the Christian community against the temptation to which they were exposed, in guarding against the political dangers arising from Popery, of leaving their proper sphere of action, and degrading themselves to a common political interest. This is a snare into which they might easily fall, and into which, if Popery could invite or force them, it might keep a jubilee, for its triumph would be sure. The propensity to resist by unlawful means the encroachments of an enemy, because that enemy uses such means against us, belongs to human nature. We are very apt to think, in the irritation of being attacked, that we may lawfully hurl back the darts of a foe, whatever may be their character; that we may "fight the Devil with fire," instead of the milder, yet more effective weapon of "the Lord rebuke thee." The same spirit of Christianity which forbids us to return railing for railing, and persecution for persecution, forbids the use of unlawful or even of doubtful means of defence, merely because an enemy uses them to attack us. If Popery, (as is unblushingly the case,) organizes itself at our elections, if it interferes politically and sells itself to this or that political demagogue or party, it should be remembered, that this is notoriously the true character of Popery. It is its nature. It cannot act otherwise. Intrigue is its appropriate business. But all this is foreign to Christianity. Christianity must not enter the political arena with Popery, nor be mailed in Popish armor. The weapons and stratagems of Popery suit not with the simplicity and frankness of Christianity. Like David with the armor of Saul, it would sink beneath the ill fitting covering, before the Philistine. Yes! Popery will be an overmatch for any Christian who fights behind any other shield than that of Faith, or uses any other sword than the sword of the spirit of Truth.

But whilst deprecating a union of religious sects to act politically against Popery, I must not be misunderstood as recommending no political opposition to Popery by the American community. I have endeavored to rouse Protestants to a renewed and more vigorous use of their religious weapons in their moral war with Popery, but I am not unmindful of another duty, the political duty, which the double character of Popery makes it necessary to urge upon American citizens, with equal force, - the imperious duty of defending the distinctive principles of our civil government. It must be sufficiently manifest to every republican citizen that the civil polity of Popery is in direct opposition to

all which he deems sacred in government. He must perceive that Popery cannot from its very nature tolerate any of those civil rights which are the peculiar boast of Americans. Should Popery increase but for a little time longer in this country with the alarming rapidity with which, as authentic statistics testify, it is advancing at the present time, (and it must not be forgotten that despotism in Europe, in its desperate struggles for existence, is lending its powerful aid to the enterprise,) we may even in this generation learn by sad experience what common sagacity and ordinary research might now teach, in time to arrest the evil, that Popery cannot tolerate our form of government in any of its essential principles.

Popery does not acknowledge the right of the people to govern; but claims for itself the supreme right to govern all people and all rulers by divine right.

It does not tolerate the Liberty of the Press; it takes advantage indeed of our liberty of the press to use its own press against our liberty; but it proclaims in the thunders of the Vatican, and with a voice which it pronounces infallible and unchangeable, that it is a liberty "never sufficiently to be execrated and detested."

It does not tolerate liberty of conscience nor liberty of opinion. The one is denounced by the Sovereign Pontiff as "a most pestilential error," and the other, "a pest of all others most to be dreaded in a state."

It is not responsible to the people in its financial matters. It taxes at will, and is accountable to none but itself.

Now these are political tenets held by Papists in close union with their religious belief, yet these are not religious but civil tenets; they belong to despotic government. Conscience cannot be pleaded against our dealing politically with them. They are separable from religious belief; and if Papists will separate them, and repudiate these noxious principles, and teach and act accordingly, the political duty of exposing and opposing Papists, on the ground of the enmity of their political tenets to our republican government, will cease. But can they do it? If they can, it behoves them to do it without delay. If they cannot, or will not, let them not complain of religious persecution, or of religious intolerance, if this republican people, when it shall wake to a sense of the danger that threatens its blood-bought institutions, shall rally to their defence with some show of indignation. Let them not whine about religious oppression, if the democracy turns its searching eye upon this secret treason to the state, and shall in future scrutinize with something of suspicion, the professions of those foreign friends, who are so ready to rush to a fraternal embrace. Let them not raise the cry of religious proscription, if American republicans shall stamp an indelible brand upon the liveried slaves of a foreign despot, the servile adorers of their "good Emperor," the Austrian conspirators, who now sheltered behind the shield of our religious liberty, dream of security, while sapping the foundations of our civil government.

Let no foreign Holy Alliance presume, or congratulate itself, upon the hitherto unsuspecting and generous toleration of its secret agents in this country.

America may, for a time, sleep soundly, as innocence is wont to sleep, unsuspecting of hostile attack; but if any foreign power, jealous of the increasing strength of the embryo giant, sends its serpents to lurk within his cradle, let such presumption be assured that the waking energies of the infant are not to be despised, that once having grasped his foes, he will neither be tempted from his hold by admiration of their painted and gilded covering, nor by fear of the fatal embrace of their treacherous folds.

End of book, Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States by Samuel Morse

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