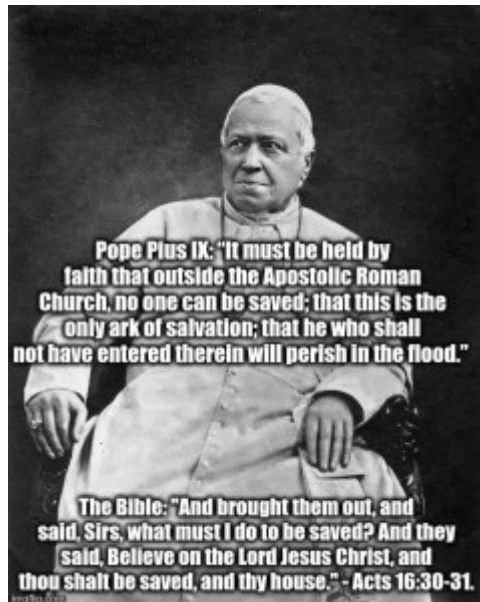


# The Papacy And The Civil Power –

## Chapter III. War against Protestantism

### Part 2



Continued from [Chapter III. War against Protestantism Part 1.](#)

Every reader accustomed to construe the simplest language can see from these extracts, at a single glance, their full import. Therefore, without stopping here to comment upon them, it is sufficient only to say that, besides assailing Protestant Christianity, they are an open and undisguised attack upon the chief cornerstone of our *political* institutions. These not merely secure to every citizen the right of free thought, but recognize it as inalienable. If this great principle had not been maintained, our institutions could not have existed, and the theory of self-government would have been a disastrous failure. But, by these papal teachings, and in direct opposition to this principle, the Roman Catholic citizens of the United States are commanded to regard it as "*absurd*" and "*sinful*," and, therefore, in violation of God's law!—as an odious and intolerable form of heresy, which is offensive to the papacy! They are thus instructed that they may be prepared to perform the *religious duty* of uprooting and eradicating all the Constitutional guarantees designed for the protection of this principle, because "freedom of thought is the soul of Protestantism," and Protestantism has an open Bible "in which infidelity and revolution wrap themselves!" There should, after this, be no further denial of the fact that the papacy does assert for itself, and that its devotees maintain for it, the *divine* power to teach *political* as well as religious truth.

We shall see hereafter many evidences of this, of the most convincing character; but this author does not leave us any room for doubt upon the subject, understanding perfectly well, as he does, that its ultimate ends can be reached in no other way. After asserting that "such freedom" as Protestantism confers will lead "*to perdition*," unless "controlled by the

divine teachings of Christ, and of his Church"—that is, of the pope, through his bishops and clergy—he continues thus:

*"The authority of the Church is a guard over human understanding in whatever directly or indirectly affects religion, which means in every kind of doctrines—religious, philosophical, scientific, POLITICAL, etc."*(Mgr. Segur, part ii., prop. vii., p. 100.)

No apology is offered for these numerous extracts from this book of Mgr. Segur, since it is supposed that the opinions of the author can be better made known by means of them than by briefer quotations, and because, in order to convey a proper idea of what constitutes Roman Catholic literature in the United States, equally liberal quotations must be made from other papal authors. This book is introduced here on account of the great exertions made to secure it a large circulation, and of the most significant fact that it is considered worthy of the special endorsement of the Bishop of Boston, which gives to it the sanction of official authority. But it is by no means sent out alone. A crusade requires a large army, composed of many and disciplined soldiers, and supplied with the necessary weapons of warfare.

The press is an ever-active engine of power; and being free, in this country, without regard to what it teaches, that part of it which moves or halts at the bidding of ecclesiastical authority continues its ceaseless efforts, by day and night, to erect upon the ruins of Protestantism the imperial throne of papal power and absolutism, by keeping up the supply of these necessary weapons.

There is in the city of New York a publication society which sends out thousands, and perhaps millions, of little tracts, of only a few pages, all devoted to the same object—the defense of the papacy—and stamped with this badge of authority: "Printed for *The Catholic Publication Society*—office, 9 Warren Street, New York. Price, 50 cents per hundred; and sold at all Catholic booksellers at the same price."

A package of these tracts, easily procured, was found to contain one numbered *forty-six*, on the subject of "*The Pope's Temporal Power*;" defining what it is, and what the faithful are required to believe in reference to it. It goes out in this modest and unobtrusive way that it may perform its allotted task silently and unseen, unless accidentally, by a single Protestant eye.

Explaining what this power has hitherto been at Rome, it says that all the members of the Church are "*bound* to believe that the Holy Father should enjoy that *political independence* which is necessary for the free exercise of his spiritual authority *throughout the entire world*;" conveying thereby the idea that, as "*political independence*" is necessary to "*the free exercise*" of the pope's authority at Rome, it is, therefore equally necessary, wherever, "*throughout the entire world*," that authority shall be recognized; in other words, that the degree of this independence must be the same everywhere; and as the pope can not maintain his full authority at Rome without it, so he can not in the United States. It then proceeds, in the form of questions and answers, to present the matter practically, as follows:

"How can this independence be secured?

"Only in one way. The pope must be a *sovereign* himself. *No temporal prince, whether emperor, or king, or president, or ANY LEGISLATIVE BODY, can have any lawful jurisdiction over the pope.*

"What right has the pope to be *independent of every civil ruler?*

"He has it in virtue of his dignity as the vicar of Christ. Christ himself is "King of kings." But the pope governs the Church in the name of Christ, and as his representative. His divine office, therefore, makes him superior to EVERY POLITICAL, TEMPORAL, AND HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

"But could not the pope exercise his spiritual supremacy, and yet be the subject of some temporal prince; for instance, the King of Italy?

"Most certainly not. For, as the representative of God, the pope is compelled to denounce whatever injustice and iniquity he finds in the world, *including the acts of grasping and unjust civil governments.*"

Let the reader observe how carefully this language is arranged so as to convey this obvious meaning—nothing more, nothing less—that, as the pope's "spiritual authority" can not be exercised in the papal states without "*political independence,*" and as he must be "*superior to every political, temporal, and human government,*" so that he may "denounce whatever injustice and iniquity he finds in the world," accordingly as *he* shall consider it unjust and iniquitous, therefore he must have the same degree of "political independence" in the United States that he has at Rome, so that his commands shall be as much the law here as there; and that, as he has already denounced Protestantism as heresy, infidelity, and no religion—as "injustice and iniquity," he should have full authority to command that its institutions, both civil and religious, when not approved by him, shall be plucked up by the roots, and all the power necessary to enforce obedience to such a decree!

If any doubt should be entertained on this subject, it will be removed by the perusal of another of the tracts contained in this same package, and numbered *forty-three*, upon "*the duty of obeying the pope.*" Here "the duty of all Catholics to obey the pope" is laid down as the starting-point. All his "*laws*" are represented as "*confirmed by a divine sanction, and are obligatory upon the conscience in the same manner as the laws of Moses were binding on the Jews.*" He is called the "*sovereign judge and lawgiver, from whose decisions and judgments there is no appeal.*" Being "the head of the whole Church, and the father and teacher of all Christians," he requires, therefore, obedience to his doctrinal decisions *and to his laws*; in certain cases, under the penalty of excommunication. All this having been announced, this little tract proceeds to define this extraordinary authority, thus:

"The authority of the pope *to teach and command* the faithful in regard to all things relating to the doctrines which they are to hold or reject, and in regard to *all things relating to religious and moral acts which they are to do or avoid*, has been given him by Jesus Christ."

Thereupon, the faithful are instructed that the popes, exercising the divine

"power of the keys," have "forbidden *certain opinions* to be maintained, and *certain acts* to be done;" and that these commands are "ratified in heaven, and are therefore to be respected and obeyed as *really emanating from Jesus Christ himself!*" Then, passing from this blasphemous comparison of the pope with Christ, it condemns *Freemasonry* as already under the curse of several popes before the present one; denies the right of "*a private person to judge the rulers of the Church,*" thus asserting full official impunity for every member of the hierarchy; endeavors, with an exceedingly thin veil of sophistry, to evade the charge of ecclesiastical interference with political opinions; and defines, with the utmost precision, the comprehensiveness of the papal authority. It would be hard to find more explicit language. It says:

"The authority of the Church extends over *all things relating to morality, over all questions of right and wrong, duty and transgression of duty, justice and injustice, lawfulness and unlawfulness.* As well might one talk of our Lord Jesus Christ interfering with human rights as his vicar or his Church. Man is responsible to God in all his relations, as a child or parent, a subject, citizen, artisan, merchant, lawyer, legislator, or governor. The moral law, the rule of right and wrong, runs through the state, society, the family, and every relation or institution in which man is a free agent, having rights and duties. *The Church is supreme in deciding all moral questions, and the pope is the sovereign minister of God, with power to punish by his spiritual censures all infractions of the divine law>.*"

When it shall become necessary, further along, to examine the doctrines of the Encyclical and Syllabus of Pope Pius IX., and other instructions to his subjects, this extract will furnish a key to his meaning. In the mean time, it should be observed how distinctly and emphatically it is announced, in this American tract, that the authority and jurisdiction of the Church, and of the pope as its supreme head, and of the clergy, as the instruments he employs in the execution of his power, is so full, comprehensive, and all-absorbing, as to embrace the entire man, in all his relations of life, in all the duties he owes to himself, to his family, to society, to the state of which he is a citizen, and to the *government* to which he owes allegiance. Every thought, word, and act; every impulse and passion of the mind; all the affections and hatreds of the heart—must be subordinated to the will of the pope, who, as sovereign lord of the universe—as "*God on earth*"—must acquire a dominion so complete that every society, community, and *government* in the world shall be constructed, regulated, and managed according to the law of God as he shall declare and announce it! If Protestantism is infidelity and heresy, it must be exterminated! If free thought is "*sinful,*" it must be suppressed! If a free press opens the door to revolution or licentiousness, it must be destroyed! If free speech is offensive to pontifical or hierarchical ears, there must be no more of it! If a republican and popular government secures all these privileges and provides for their continuance, it must be overthrown! If the Constitution of the United States prohibits "an establishment of religion," or any impairment of the right of its "free exercise," it must be put out of the way, and papal imperialism take the place of the will of the people which it expresses! If any man, supposing himself to be free, shall dare to consult his own conscience in matters of

religious belief or moral duty, or to interpret the Bible for himself, he must be stricken down by the sword of pontifical wrath, and the papal anathema rest upon his name forever! And then, when all this is accomplished; when mankind shall be compelled to recognize true religion as consisting only in passive obedience to the "laws" of the "King of Rome," the pope, and his bishops, and his priests all stand ready to plunge the world once more into medieval bondage! When Rome was "mistress of the world," none of her despots wore a diadem so imperial as this.

This is not the place for a philosophical disquisition upon the varied qualities of the mind, or its tendency to be impressed by surrounding circumstances. We all know that it may be educated to adopt almost any class of opinions, especially when its higher capacities are left unimproved. The papacy, well understanding this, has been always accustomed to determine and regulate the kind of instruction to be given to the members of the Roman Catholic Church, prescribing the particular books they shall read, and prohibiting the reading of others, under penalty of the pontifical curse. There is at Rome, as an essential department of the papal court, what is called the "Congregation of the Index." To this tribunal are submitted all publications that are, in any degree, under the suspicion of heresy; and if, upon examination, they are found to teach what the pope does not desire to be taught, they are condemned and placed upon the "*Index expurgatorius*;" so that thereafter it shall be regarded as an offense against the Church and against God for any person to read them. Examples of this are abundant; that in reference to the books of Galileo being a prominent one. Galileo taught the Copernican theory of the revolution of the earth upon its axis; and as the Roman Catholic Church taught the contrary—that is, that the earth was stationary, and the sun revolved around it—Pope Paul V. caused his writings to be condemned, and prohibited the reading of them; and Pope Urban VIII. not only repeated this prohibition, but caused the great astronomer to be tried, convicted, and imprisoned during life for having dared to teach such heresy! (\*)

\* Much ingenuity has been recently displayed by papal writers in the attempt to show that Galileo was not condemned by the Church for teaching the doctrine of Copernicus, that the sun is the center of the universe, and does not move, but that the earth moves with a diurnal motion. To do this it has been found necessary to pervert many important facts of history, and to deny others which have been accepted as true by the most learned Protestant and Roman Catholic historians for nearly two hundred and fifty years. Those who have the curiosity to examine this question will find it fully discussed in a late work, entitled "The Private Life of Galileo; compiled principally from his correspondence and that of his eldest daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, nun in the Franciscan convent of St. Matthew, in Arcetri;" published by Nichols & Noyes, Boston. All "the pontifical decrees against the motion of the earth" have also been published in London. From these it is shown to be true, that the Copernican theory was condemned both by the pope and the sacred Congregation of the Index, "as absurd and false in philosophy," and as "*erroneous in faith*."

There are very few popes who have not added to the number of books upon the "Index." The present pope has adopted a more comprehensive method while still

adhering to that of his predecessors—by frequent and general denunciation of all of that class of books which advocate liberalism, Protestantism, republicanism, free thought, free speech, and a free press. Therefore, while such works as are called forth by the progressive and advancing spirit of the present age are condemned as impious and heretical, because their tendency is to weaken and destroy the “*divine right*” of kings to govern mankind, and are kept out of the hands of the faithful, wherever it can, by possibility be done, the hierarchy actively employ their learning and ingenuity in preparing and circulating such books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and tracts as those from which the foregoing extracts are taken, and in the inculcation of the sentiments they contain. They calculate largely upon the indifference of the great body of the people of the United States to such subjects; well understanding, at the same time, that whatever they shall thus circulate in support of papal omnipotence will be impressed upon the minds of their superstitious followers—especially the ignorant portion of them—by the numerous foreign and Jesuit priests who are scattered over the country. These priests are specially prepared for this purpose by previous training at Rome and elsewhere, and are quite ready, at all times, to lay these doctrines before their congregations, and to instruct them that unless they believe and practice them they will assuredly fall under the anathemas of the Church.

As between the institutions of the United States and the papal institutions that existed at Rome before the temporal power of the pope was taken away by the Italian people, these priests prefer the latter; insisting that they are founded upon the law of God, while the former are heretical. Therefore, they work hard to bring about the time when the pope shall “*command*” the people of the United States, they acting as his captains and lieutenants!

It has already been shown how readily Dr. Brownson entered into this scheme to enslave his native country, by devoting his talents to the service of this *foreign priesthood*. Ever on the alert to employ his fertile brain in this inglorious work, he has lately published another book, which was considered of so much importance by the hierarchy, that it appeared simultaneously in New York, Boston, and Montreal. In this book, entitled “Conversations on Liberalism and the Church,” he falsely represents himself as an American Protestant who carries on a conversation with a Roman Catholic priest, and allows himself to be converted by him to Romanism! He calls it “purely imaginary,” but this scarcely relieves him from the charge of disingenuously impersonating a Protestant, and putting only such arguments into his mouth as he supposes necessary to secure an unfair advantage to his own Church and to the papacy.

He defends and justifies the *Spanish Inquisition* as an institution necessary “to ferret out and bring to trial” those who engage in “secret conspiracies” against “the Church and the State.” (Brownson’s “Liberalism and the Church,” chap. viii., p. 105.) He advocates a union between Church and State. (*Ibid.*, p. 110.) He calls liberty a “spiritual right,” not a natural right, or a “civil grant;” and insists, therefore, that it can have no proper foundation except “*on the supremacy of the spiritual order*, which the Church has always asserted and defended.” (Brownson’s “Liberalism and the Church,” pp. 115, 116.) Then, after expressing his regret that, in this country, the

"sovereignty of the people" has been resolved into the "sovereignty of popular opinion," he makes his priest address the American Protestant thus:

"You are losing the sense of the great principles on which your fathers built, and no longer see or understand the deep significance of the providential Constitution of your republic. You are *perverting the Christian to the pagan republic*. Hence your great need of the Church to recall your minds to the first principles of your institutions, and to enable you to inherit the glory of being the first nation that ever fully asserted spiritual freedom."(*Ibid.*)

This sounds well enough, in so far as it pretends to speak favorably of our institutions; but the language of compliment is employed merely to disguise the real object. The whole context of the book shows that it was written under the influence of a single controlling idea; that is, that the Roman Catholic Church, as represented by the papacy, should obtain supremacy over the people of the United States, in order that they may be held to the line of duty to God and the world, as the pope shall understand and declare it. This idea is not altogether concealed in the above extract, but it is more distinctly expressed elsewhere. It is not a little surprising that, with his mind thus impressed, it did not occur to him to inquire, how it has happened that the papacy did not establish the freedom of which he writes, when it had the world at its feet?—and why civil freedom was not fully established, until it grew up, without the aid and against the protestations of the papacy, as one of the legitimate and necessary fruits of the Protestant Reformation?

But it must be conceded to him that his ideas of "spiritual freedom" are very different from those which prevail among the Protestants of the United States. What he means by it—as we shall presently see—is the freedom of the Church—that is, of the pope—to govern the world, to dictate the law of God to all nations and peoples, and to punish disobedience to her edicts. For example: he says that the "dogmas of the Church are, if any thing, *above reason*,"(Brownson's "Liberalism and the Church," p. 128.) and, being "matters within the spiritual order," individuals have "*nothing to do*" with them.(*Ibid.*, p. 131.) He gives the reason elsewhere, by insisting that the word of the Church "is as high authority for what God has revealed as *is the Bible itself*;"(*Ibid.*, p. 163.) and, therefore that "human laws derive all their vigor as laws from the law of God," as proclaimed by the Church, or by the pope as its lawful and divine head.

Under the dominion of such sentiments as these, he undertakes to show wherein consists the necessity of subverting our Protestant institutions, and substituting for them such as the Church, or the pope, shall consider consistent with the law of God. As they do not tend to elevate and advance mankind, and are, in these respects, greatly *behind the Roman Catholic nations*, the latter are, in his opinion, entitled to a decided preference! He says:

"Christian nations alone are living and progressive nations. And never have Christian nations advanced in all that makes the true glory of civilization so rapidly as they did *from the downfall of Rome to the rise of what you call the Reformation*."(*Ibid.*, p. 170.)

Pursuing this train of thought, he insists that, with the exception of the "discovery by Catholics of this Western hemisphere," and the practical adoption of some papal principles, there has been "no real progress of civilization since the epoch of the Reformation." (*Ibid.*, p. 176.) Such sentiments would, of course, lead him to give the preference to Roman Catholic governments over those arising out of Protestant liberality and toleration, and to see, in the Roman Catholic populations, a higher degree of elevation and advancement than is to be found among those of Protestant nations. And to indicate this preference, he applauds the "moral elevation and personal dignity of the Catholic peasantry," which he considers due to the fact that their religion "attaches merit to voluntary poverty," and "regards the poor as blessed and a blessing!" With this estimate of the sweets and blessings of poverty, he denounced the poor-houses which Protestantism has caused to be erected, wherever it prevails, as "*modern Bastiles*," insisting that the poor had better be left in their happy condition of poverty than be "shut up as criminals." He then sums up his conclusions thus:

"You will look ill vain among your non-Catholic contemporaries for that clearness and vigor of intellect, and that moral elevation, force, and independence of individual character, which you meet everywhere in medieval society. If there were great crimes in those ages, they were followed, as the historian of the monks of the West justly remarks, by great expiations. If there was great pride, there was deeper humility, and *always will the period from the sixth to the end of the fifteenth century stand out as the most glorious in the annals of the race.*" (Brownson's "Liberalism and the Church," pp. 181, 182.)

How wonderfully perverted must be the best faculties of an American mind, when it is brought to see in the condition of the world during the Middle Ages, from the sixth to the sixteenth century, that which is preferable to the present state of affairs among the Protestant nations, especially in the United States! Such an effect could only be produced by the unexampled influence which the papacy has been able to exercise over some of the brightest intellects of the world—a strange and mysterious influence, which has brought them in subjection to its ambition, and appropriated all their best energies to itself. But we are concerned now only with the existence of such a fact, rather than with an inquiry into the causes of it.

Dr. Brownson is a distinguished instance of this perverted intellect. His service of the papacy, and his quick defense of all its extravagant claims, have acquired for him a reputation among the papal hierarchy, which may flatter but can not console him. When he recurs to the principles and influences under which his mind was developed into its brilliant maturity, and by means of which it acquired its freedom, the remembrance must be to him like the yearning after a lost treasure. But whether he derives regret or rejoicing from his present position, he must be regarded as expressing, not merely his own, but the sentiments and opinions of the hierarchy of the United States, when he gives the preference to *the condition of Europe during the Middle Ages—when ignorance, superstition, and degradation were almost universal among the populations—*over that in which the people of this country



now are. Blind and passive submission to the priesthood then prevailed throughout all the ranks of society; therefore, the people were abundantly happy! They were so ignorant as not to know that they were in bondage; therefore, they were models of contentment! The masses were in the lowest poverty, while the nobility reveled in wealth and luxury; therefore, they were in a state of blissful humility! They left the popes and their myriads of priestly dependents to do as they pleased, and to bid defiance to all human laws; therefore, they had reached the point of the highest "moral elevation!"

Who can account for such strange hallucination of thought as this? How is it possible for a man to persuade himself, or be persuaded by others, to believe that this country would be improved, and the people carried to higher moral and political elevation, if the existing condition of our affairs were destroyed, and that which existed in the Middle Ages substituted? Certainly, no such thought can dwell long in the minds of any but those whose blind devotion shuts out the light from their reason. And yet, to bring about precisely that result, all the energies of the Roman Catholic Church, in so far as the papacy can direct them, are now assiduously and untiringly directed. Possibly, those who are aiding in this work in the United States are merely laboring under honest delusion, in the conviction that it may be done by peaceful means, or that the people can be persuaded to give up to *foreign dictation* those national blessings which have always constituted their highest pride. But this they must and do know—that what they labor for with so much diligence can only be accomplished by overthrowing our Protestant institutions, destroying our Protestant Christianity, and upheaving, from its foundation, our Protestant form of government.

Continued in [Chapter IV. Papal Hopes of Success in the United States.](#)