The Papacy And The Civil Power – Chapter XI. Pepin

Continued from The Papacy And The Civil Power – Chapter X. Part 2 The Council of Nice.

Introduction by the Webmaster

The Pepin in this article is Pepin the Short, the son of the Frankish prince Charles Martel. Pepin the Short was King of the Franks from 751 until his death in 768. This is confirmed on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepin_the_Short. I got confused with another Pepin that came up first on Wikipedia, Pepin of Italy. The Wikipedia article says that this Pepin is the *son* of Charlemagne, and my article says the Pepin in it was king *before* Charlemagne! At first, I thought the author, Richard W. Thompson, may be in error, but then I realized that the Pepin he is talking about is the son of Charles Martel, not the Pepin who is the son of Charlemagne.

Temporal Power.—None possessed by Peter.—Alliance between Pepin and Zachary.—Double Conspiracy.—The Pope released the Allegiance of the French People.—Made Pepin King.—The Lombards in Italy. —The Pope bargained with Pepin, and was guilty of Revolt against the Empire.—Pepin seized Territory from the Lombards, and gave it to the Pope.—Both were Revolutionists and Traitors.—The Pope usurped what belonged to the Empire.—Pepin did not conquer Rome.—The Divine Right of Kings.—Pepin's Second Visit.—Pope sent Letters to him from the Virgin Mary, Peter, etc.—He re-affirmed his Gift to the Pope.—Charlemagne.—Adrian I.—He absolves the Franks from all Crimes in Bavaria.—Makes Charlemagne Emperor.—He completes the Papal Rebellion against the Empire.—Charlemagne confirmed Pepin's Gift.—He did not grant any Temporal Dominion in Rome.— He dictated the *Filioque* in the Creed.

ALL inquiry into the origin and history of the temporal power of the popes is necessarily attended with difficulty. It often requires a very discriminating judgment to separate fact from conjecture—that which is true from myths and fables. One reason for this is found in the fact that the papal writers are not agreed among themselves, either in reference to its real source, the time of its origin, or the precise occasion and manner of its recognition by the Church. This of itself excites in an intelligent mind a reasonable doubt of its legitimacy; for, however derived, there would be, if it were legitimate, some landmarks to verify its title. If it were divine, as Pius IX. asserts, there would be, undoubtedly, some word or act of Christ, or of his apostles,

or of the primitive Christians during the first centuries, to attest a fact of so much importance, especially as it is now required that it shall be accepted as a necessary part of the true faith. If conferred by the nations, to preserve themselves from anarchy, some distinct historic record would have been made of it, as a guide to future ages.

In the absence of any convincing proof upon these points, the impartial mind will naturally run into the conclusion that its origin was, at least, suspicious. And if it is found that it had no existence in the Apostolic Age, and was not recognized as a part of the early Christian system, this other conclusion must inevitably follow: that it is the product of human ambition, resting upon authority which the popes have wrenched from the nations by illegitimate means, and not upon any divinely conferred upon Peter or the Church of Rome.

When the apostle Peter, in anticipation of the approaching end of his life, wrote to the Christians of Asia Minor, he affectionately admonished the elders or ancients as an equal, not as a superior in the papal sense; and was careful to tell them that, in feeding their flocks, they should not be “lords over God’s heritage”—or, as the Douay version has it, should not be “domineering over the clergy”—but that all Christians, old and young, should be clothed with “humility.” He claimed to be only an *elder* himself, and assumed no authority whatsoever beyond that possessed by other apostles — the authority to counsel and advise those to whom he wrote, that they should not “be led away with the error of the wicked,” or fall from their “own steadfastness.” With this fact kept in our minds, we shall be the better able to understand the history already detailed, and to interpret that which follows.

Glancing, then, at the centuries immediately following the age of Constantine, we find nothing better established than that the thrones of the European nations were disposed of by fraud, violence, and bloodshed. They were at the mercy of those monarchs who had the heaviest legions and were the most skillful in crime, especially those who were adepts in murder and assassination. By these means one line of kings was terminated and another established, as interest or policy dictated, the people all the while being transferred from master to master, with no other change in the character of their slavery than that which arose out of a change of tyrants.

Clovis the Great, who terminated the dominion of pagan Rome in Gaul by the battle of Soissons, in the year 486, established the French monarchy and the Merovingian line of its kings. His descendants, by regular hereditary succession, held the crown for more than two centuries and a half. Childeric III. was the last king of that line; and when we reach the termination of his reign we begin to stand on solid ground in our inquiries into the origin of the temporal power. The incidents connected with that event are inseparably associated also with the growth of the papacy, and in no other way than by an accurate understanding of them can we see how its enormous power has been acquired—how, by the successful union of Church and State, the divine right to govern the nations, and to dispose of crowns and peoples, has been established and perpetuated.

Childeric III. was the legitimate heir to the throne of France, and held it by virtue of the established and recognized law of the monarchy, there having been no break in the regular line of succession from Clovis for two hundred and fifty years. Pepin, son of Charles Martel, held the office of “mayor of the palace,” which placed him next to, but not upon, the throne. For fifty or sixty years his family had furnished to France some of the most distinguished leaders of her armies, and Pepin was in no sense inferior to any who had preceded him.

Childeric was a feeble prince, but he was the lawful king; and Pepin, stimulated by his ambition, conceived the purpose of supplanting him, and placing the crown upon his own head. The plan, however, was more easily formed than executed, as, notwithstanding his effeminacy, Childeric was esteemed on the ground of his being an immediate descendant of the great Clovis. This fact forbade any resort to direct force by Pepin, but his genius enabled him to contrive other effective means — the first of the kind known in history. Like all the descendants of Charles Martel, he was a champion of Christianity, and sympathized with the popes in their efforts to terminate their allegiance to the Eastern emperors; and hence he conceived the idea of bringing to his aid the authority of the Church of Rome to enable him to accomplish his ambitious plans. He therefore sent ambassadors to Pope Zachary, soliciting him to employ this authority to release the people of France from their allegiance to Chlilderic, in direct disregard of the laws of France, and to transfer the crown to him. (*)

* “Milman’s Gibbon’s Rome,” vol. v., p.28; “Latin Christianity,” by Milman, vol. ii., p. 410; “History of France,” by Michelet, vol. i., p. 111; “History of France,” by Parke Godwin, p. 393.

What had the Church of Rome, or its pope, to do with the internal and domestic affairs of France? or with the allegiance of the people of France to the legitimate possessor of its throne? Unquestionably there is no other fair construction to be put upon the conduct of Pepin than that it was an invitation to the pope to become a joint revolutionary conspirator with him against the lawful government of France. And both Pepin and Pope Zachary so understood it, as is manifest from their subsequent conduct, especially from the promptness with which the latter interfered in behalf of the former by the employment of his ecclesiastical power of absolution.

At that time the pope was a subject of the Eastern emperors, the successors of Constantine; and it will appear in the sequel that he the more readily lent his high authority to this end, because he saw in the success of Pepin the promise of erecting a power in the West which he, or his successors, could employ in sundering their own allegiance to the Eastern empire. His reasoning was, doubtless, this: that if Pepin, by his ecclesiastical aid, could make treason against Childeric successful in France, he, by the aid of Pepin, might make his own successful against the empire to which Rome belonged. Whatever the motive, however, the fact is attested by the unanimous voice of history, that Pepin did become king of France only by the aid of the pope’s exercise of spiritual authority, as the head of the Roman Church,

which he unscrupulously employed for that purpose, while he was himself the subject of, and owed temporal allegiance to another monarch.

Seemingly unconscious of the obligation which rested upon him to keep the Church pure and uncontaminated, and not to employ the sacred things of religion for mere worldly and ambitious ends, he entered into the schemes of Pepin with the greatest alacrity (cheerful willingness). Without stopping to count the cost, either to religion or the Church, he complied with Pepin's request in a manner which must have been exceedingly gratifying to him, and which placed him under obligations he was subsequently quite ready to recognize. In violation of the hereditary and legal right of Childeric, and in direct opposition to the established laws of France, he issued his papal brief absolving the people from their allegiance, and transferring the crown to Pepin, the ambitious and revolutionary usurper. And, as if he actually wielded the authority of God himself, he went even one step farther than this, by prohibiting the French people from ever thereafter exercising any freedom of choice in the election of their king, or from ever depriving the Carlovingian princes of the crown– that is, the descendants of Charles Martel.

Gibbon, speaking of this extraordinary use of spiritual power, says: "The Franks were absolved from their ancient oath; but a dire anathema was thundered against them and their posterity if they should dare to renew the same freedom of choice, or to elect a king, except in the holy and meritorious race of the Carlovingian princes;" (*) that is, having thus been brought under the spiritual dominion of the pope to such an extent as to allow him to dictate their domestic policy and dispose of their crown, the curse of God would rest upon them if ever thereafter the French people should dare to repeat the act of electing a king, except in the interest of the papacy and with the consent of the pope!

* "Milman's Gibbon," vol. v., p. 29. "To be crowned king in those days was to have the sanction of religion added to the reality of the earthly power. After that ennobling ceremony the office of king became invested with loftier attributes than merely the reverence of men. It was considered something divine and sacred; resistance to its authority grew to be not only rebellion, but sacrilege; and henceforth, however nearly a great noble might approach the monarch in power, he was immeasurably inferior to him in dignity and rank."–*History of France*, by Rev. James White, p. 26.

A monarchy thus established could not be otherwise than devoted to the pope. Michelet, speaking of it, says: "This monarchy of Pepin's, founded by the priests, was devoted to the priests." (Hist. of France," by Michelet, vol. i., p. 111)

There is no dispute about the main facts thus far. A modern Roman Catholic historian in the United States has put them in a succinct form; and, while he endeavors to convey the idea that it was altogether right and proper for the pope to absolve the French people from their allegiance to Childeric, yet he narrates the circumstances with commendable fairness and impartiality. ("Modern Hist.," by Peter Fredet, D.D., p. 183, and note F., p. 494.)

The ecclesiastical historians are not less distinct in their statements. Dr. Waddington, referring to the usurpation of Pepin, says: “This occurrence is generally related as the first instance of the temporal ambition of the Vatican, or, at least, of its interference with the rights of princes and the allegiance of subjects.” (*)

* “Church Hist.,” by Waddington, p. 148; “Maclaine’s Mosheim’s Eccl. Hist.,” vol. i., pp. 194, 195; “The Old Catholic Church,” by Killen, pp. 389, 390.

Cormenin condemns the pope in decided language, and charges that he sent letters to Pepin, “encouraging him in his ambitious projects, and authorizing him, *in the name of religion*, to depose Childeric III., and to take possession of his crown.” (*)

* “Hist. of the Popes,” by Cormenin, vol. i., p. 188. That the Roman Catholic annalists claimed, in behalf of the pope, that he acted by virtue of “his apostolic authority ” in disposing of the French crown, is shown by Parke Godwin, in his “History of France,” vol. i., p. 394.

This *politico–religious* alliance between Pepin and the pope has most important aspects which cannot escape observation. On the part of the pope, it was the assertion of the divine right to dispose of the crown of France without regard to the wishes of the French people, and to compel them to obey him in the subsequent management of their own affairs. And it was equivalent to the assumption of like authority over all other nations and peoples. This is a claim before which the temporal power in the Papal States is dwarfed into insignificance; and yet the pope did not even possess this at the time of this extraordinary assumption. Manifestly it could not be conceded to him without bringing all the nations at his feet, and without taking away from the people, wherever they possess it, the power to make their own laws, select their own agents to execute them, and regulate their own domestic concerns. And it should not be overlooked, in view of its enormity, that it is precisely this same divine power to which Pius IX. now lays claim. With him there can be no higher or better evidence of right than the exercise of it by one of his infallible predecessors. And there will be no impediment to its universal recognition, whenever mankind shall be brought to the concession that the Church, through her infallible head, defines her own powers and jurisdiction.

The alliance began to bear its legitimate fruits without much delay. The Lombards had seized upon and held a great part of Italy, including the province of Ravenna, the capital of which, as the former residence of the great Ostragothic King Theodoric, and of the Greek Exarchs, had grown into rivalry with Rome. This territory belonged to the Eastern empire, whose emperors, it is alleged by the defenders of the papacy, were either not disposed or too feeble to defend it, and had been held about two years by its Lombard conquerors. But Astolphus, the Lombard king, was not satisfied with these possessions, and threatened to seize upon Rome, which still belonged to the empire. The pope, being unwilling to let Rome be brought under the

dominion of the Lombards, fearing that its ecclesiastical power would be transferred to Ravenna, and the papacy be thereby made subordinate to the Exarchate, inaugurated immediate measures for resistance. Those who justify the exercise of temporal power by the popes, say that he petitioned the emperors to send assistance to Rome, to repel the contemplated attack of Astolphus.

Dr. Fredet, being too candid to deny that Rome then "belonged to the emperors of Constantinople," but admitting that fact, says, "Pope Stephen sent to implore necessary succors from Constantine Copronymus, *in whose name the government of Rome was still exercised*." (Fredet, p. 184.) These succors, if called for, were not furnished; and the same author, in assigning the reason, says that the "emperor was too deeply engaged in warring against the images of the saints to think of sending troops against the Lombards." (*Ibid*)

Whatever the precise facts may have been, the question lay between the Roman people, in whose name the pope acted, and the emperor, to whom, as subjects, they owed allegiance by the existing law of nations. The pope, as a subject, also owed this allegiance no less than the people. His power was exclusively ecclesiastical, and possessing none over temporal and political matters, whatsoever he did in reference to these, he did, necessarily, as a subject. He could not get rid of the obligation of his allegiance by any act short of revolt against legitimate authority. And this relation in which he and the Roman people stood to the emperors must be kept in mind, in order to understand the full bearing of the subsequent events out of which the temporal power arose.

Dr. Fredet, referring to the condition into which the people were thrown by the neglect of the emperors, also says: "In this extremity the Romans embraced the last resource which was left them, that of calling the valiant monarch of the French to their assistance." (Fredet, p. 184.) And upon the same subject he says, at another place:

"Thus, finding implacable enemies both in the barbarians [Lombards] and in their own sovereigns, the people, driven almost to despair, began to sigh ardently after a new and better order of things. The eyes of all were turned toward the pope, as their only refuge and the common father of all in distress. In this state of desolation, the sovereign pontiffs, unable any longer to resist the eagerness of the multitudes flying into their arms for protection and refuge, and destitute of every other means, applied to the French, who alone were both willing and able to defend them against the Lombards." (*Ibid*., note G, pp. 495, 496.)

This statement presents, it is believed, the papal view in the most satisfactory light. And yet the reader cannot fail to observe how distinctly it asserts the *revolutionary* right of the Roman people, under the guidance of the pope, to throw off their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns, the successors of Constantine. And the resort to this remedy is both excused and justified, in the absence of any accusation of misgovernment or oppression against the emperors. They are charged with not having been sufficiently prompt and energetic in defending Rome against the threatened attack of the Lombards; not with having been guilty of any wrong or injustice toward either

the Roman people or the pope. Modern revolutions have been inaugurated as the last and ultimate remedy for grievances which can be endured no longer without an abandonment of all natural rights; and yet it is against these that the fiercest anathemas of the papacy have been launched. Here, however, the pope is justified for having put the temporal affairs of Rome in the keeping of the French king, for the twofold purpose of defending them against the Lombards, and of acquiring the temporal power himself, at a time when the Roman people were not suffering any oppression from the empire.

Rome, for several centuries before that time, had acquired no distinct existence as a nation, and, as Dr. Fredet agrees, it belonged to the territorial possessions of the Eastern emperors. They had never abandoned their claim to it, and had never expressed a willingness to do so. Hence, the right of the Romans to act independently of the emperors, in order ultimately to resist their authority, was purely revolutionary, and cannot be justified, even in the modern view, unless it was a necessary measure of relief against severe and irremediable oppression. How such a right can be defended at all, consistently with the expressed opinions of the present pope and his defenders, it is difficult to understand. Can it be that they regard revolution as justifiable only when it inures to the benefit of the papacy?

The Eastern emperors, at the time referred to, were at war with the Arabs, a fierce and formidable enemy. (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 191.) The fact of having to carry on such a war as this may, in some degree, account for their alleged neglect of the Roman people. But, besides this, it is also true that the controversy between the Eastern and Western Christians, in reference to the worship of images, had much to do in fixing the relations between them, especially those between the emperors and the popes. It is the most probable and plausible view of the matter to say that, on account of this purely religious disagreement, and the violence to which it led on both sides, the pope was very ready to avail himself of the existing condition of affairs to throw himself under the royal protection of Pepin, and thus build up a powerful monarchy in the West, under the shelter of which he could consummate his contemplated revolt against the emperors. In the light of subsequent events this is the most natural conclusion, and several contemporaneous facts contribute to its support.

When the pope invoked the aid of the emperor; the latter instructed him to go to the court of Astolphus, the Lombard king, and to demand the restoration of Ravenna and the other cities he had seized, in the name of the empire; showing thereby that he had no idea of abandoning his authority and jurisdiction over any part of Italy. This imperial order was obeyed by Stephen III., who was then pope,(2) by visiting the court of the Lombard king and making the demand in the name of the emperor, and as his ambassador.

* He is sometimes called Stephen II., but erroneously, as Stephen II. was pope only a few days, and was never consecrated.

It was, however, refused by Astolphuis, who had no idea of willingly surrendering the advantages he had acquired by the possession of Ravenna and

other cities. The pope not only expected this, but had prepared for it by taking other steps independently of the emperor, and without his knowledge. These exercise a controlling influence in deciding upon his motives. He had already addressed him self to Pepin, and had also written to the French dukes, “beseeching them to come to the rescue of St. Peter,” and promising them, says Cormenin, “in the name of the apostle, the remission of all the sins they had committed, or might commit in the future, and guaranteeing to them unalterable happiness in this world, and eternal life in the next.” (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 191.)

He had also made up his mind, before he set out for Pavia, where the Lombard king held his court, that he would go directly to France, and hold a personal interview with Pepin, for the better explanation and understanding of his alliance with Pope Zachary, and of their mutual relations in consequence of it. (*Ibid*.) From these facts it is perfectly apparent that he had deliberated upon his revolt against the empire, and plotted the means of carrying it out before he left Rome.

That he was guilty of both duplicity and perfidy is beyond all question; for, while acting as the official ambassador of his sovereign, he was at the same time engaged in making a hostile treaty with a foreign monarch. He was not deterred by the consideration of any misfortune which might befall the empire. After the refusal of Astolphus, he hastened on to France, and negotiated another alliance with Pepin, without reporting his failure to the emperor. He had set out upon his revolt with resolute steps, and, conscious of the strength of the military power he was invoking, cast his eyes no longer toward Constantinople, except with a view to plan more successfully the measures by which he hoped to sunder his allegiance to the empire. By the laws of nations, as they now exist, this would be treason; but, however it may have been then considered, the pope doubtless sought for his justification in the fact that Constantine Copronymus was an iconoclastic emperor, and Pepin was a faithful son of the Church, and the head of a monarchy which, “founded by the priests, was true to the priests.” It was the most natural thing in the world for him to conclude that, as the papacy had been the means of enabling Pepin to make his own revolt against Childeric III. successful, Pepin would reciprocate the favor by helping him to break off his allegiance to the Eastern emperors. Such combinations among ambitious and aspiring men have been frequent in the world, yet history gives no account of any other that has been followed by so long a train of consequences.

Pepin, no doubt anticipating advantages to himself, readily consented to comply with the request of the pope. He marched his army against the Lombard king, and compelled him to surrender up all the Italian territory occupied by him. And here at this point we see the advantages which the papacy achieved by the alliance; for Pepin, entirely ignoring the claim of the empire, caused the territory to be surrendered *to the pope*, in the name of “the see of Rome!” And the pope accepted the royal present with as little compunctions of conscience as if he were a subject of the King of France, instead of the emperor of the East. The territory thus surrendered included Ravenna, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Pentapolis, all of which, it is said by the papal

writers, was conveyed by “solemn grant,” in order that Rome, with these territories as an appendage to it, should be erected into an *ecclesiastical State*, with the
temporal power to govern it in the hands of the pope. This, it should be observed, was in the year 754—seven and a half centuries after the commencement of the Christian era—and constitutes the only basis of the papal claim to temporal power which has the slightest plausibility about it, or is in any sense defensible. Without stopping now to inquire why, if this power were absolutely necessary to Christianity and the Church, it was so long permitted by Providence to be deferred, there are several questions arising out of the foregoing circumstances too important to be passed by.

Was there any such “grant” as is alleged to have been made by Pepin, conferring title to the surrendered territory upon the pope? One would suppose, if there had been, that it would have been produced before now, in order to settle the many controversies that have taken place on the subject. Its existence has been frequently denied, and its exhibition has been invited and challenged in a variety of ways. The limits of the grant have been often controverted, some popes endeavoring to enlarge and others to contract them. An inspection of it at any time would have settled all these questions. But, although it has been said that it is preserved in the Vatican at Rome, *it has never yet been produced!*

Fontanini, in his defense of the jurisdiction of the pope, “intimates that this grant is yet extant, and even makes use of some phrases that are said to be contained in it.” But, as is well remarked by Dr. Maclaine, this “will scarcely be believed. Were it, indeed, true that such a deed remains, its being published to the world would be undoubtedly unfavorable to the pretensions of Rome.” He refers also to the fact that, in a dispute between the Emperor Joseph I. and the pope concerning Commaehio, the partisans of the latter constantly refused to exhibit the deed; and also to the further fact that Bianchini had given a specimen of it “from a Farnesian manuscript, which seems to carry the marks of a remote antiquity;” and then says: “Be this as it may, a multitude of witnesses unite in assuring us that the remorse of a wounded conscience was the source of Pepin’s liberality, and that his grant to the Roman pontiff was the superstitious remedy by which he hoped to expiate his enormities, and particularly *his horrid perfidy to his master, Childeric*.” (“Maclaine’s Mosheim,” vol. i., p. 195, note.)

It is a rule of law that, when a party pretends—to have in his possession evidence that would explain any matter of controversy in which he is involved, the fact of his withholding it should be construed unfavorably to his pretensions. Therefore, as more than eleven hundred years have elapsed since the conquest of Pepin from the Lombards, and during all this time no “grant” from him to the pope has ever been produced, it is not unreasonable to conclude that none such was ever made. And yet it is true, doubtless, that Pepin did put the pope in possession of the conquered territory, and confer upon him, as far as he could, the authority to govern it, as the head of the Roman Church, but without any attempt to convey it by deed.

If history were entirely silent upon the subject, this much might be inferred from the nature of their relations to each other, they being such as to

create upon the part of each the reciprocal obligation to do anything the other should require. The pope made Pepin a king, and why should not Pepin aid the pope to break his allegiance to the Eastern emperors and become a king also? Whatever would justify the act of revolt in the one case would equally justify it in the other. If the pope had ecclesiastical authority sufficient to legalize the treason of Pepin against Childeric, the French legions had physical power enough to legalize the pope's treason against his lawful sovereign. Therefore, in this spirit of mutuality, and in entire disregard of all legal rights, "the splendid donation was granted, in supreme and absolute dominion, and the world beheld, *for the first time*, a Christian bishop invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince." ("Milman's Gibbon," vol. v., p. 32; "The Temporal Power of the Papacy," by Legge, p. 23.)

It is insisted by many who defend the temporal prerogatives of the popes, that this donation of Pepin only restored to them jurisdiction which they had previously possessed. Even Archbishop Kenrick, in support of this assertion, has been tempted, when speaking of the act of Pepin, incautiously to say:

"This can scarcely be considered a mere donation, since a great portion, if not all, of the territory *had already belonged to the pope;* whence Stephen IV., in the year 769, urged the French princes, Charles and Carloman, as a mat ter of duty which they owed to St. Peter, to see that *his property*, usurped by the Lombards, should be fully *restored*." (Kenrick's "Primacy," p. 261.)

The mind of the learned archbishop must have been some what confused when he wrote this. He first states as a fact the ownership of territory by the popes *before* the donation of Pepin, in the year 754, during the pontificate of Stephen III., and, to establish this, cites the action and claim of Pope Stephen IV.,in the year 769—fifteen years afterward! This is neither logical nor satisfactory. But the important question at last is, whether or no the statement of fact is to be relied on. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile it with the historical narrative, if, indeed, it is not positively contradicted. Dr. Fredet, manifestly, does not believe it; on the other hand, he directly contradicts it. He insists that the donation of Pepin was "a solemn grant to the see of Rome of that part of Italy which is, on this account, called the Ecclesiastical State, and has ever since composed the temporal dominion of the popes." But he immediately says, "*Before that time they* [the popes] *had been subject, in civil matters, to the Roman or Greek emperors*." (Fredet, p. 185.)

And such is, undoubtedly, the fact, as history abundantly attests. This is conclusive upon the subject: that the authority and jurisdiction of the Eastern emperors over Rome never absolutely ceased until Charlemagne was made emperor of the West, in the year 800—nearly half a century after the alleged donation of Pepin. It took the popes all this time to sunder entirely the ties of their allegiance to the East, and it was only then accomplished by the strength of the French armies. The prowess of Charlemagne made their usurped jurisdiction over civil matters secure; and until then, both by the laws of the empire and the law of nations, the popes were the subjects of the emperors, and owed to them the duty of allegiance and fidelity.

History does not inform us that there was any *political* quarrel, or cause of quarrel, between the government at Constantinople and the people of Italy or Rome. So far as their civil affairs were concerned, everything was satisfactory and harmonious. The whole existing disagreement arose out of the question of the worship of images, and was therefore entirely religious. (*)

* The iconoclastic controversy began under the pontificate of Gregory II. (715–731), and while Leo the Isaurian was emperor. It was carried on with great violence. There is great discrepancy among the Eastern and Western historians in regard to its earliest stages. The former charge Gregory II. with having immediately proceeded to the extremity of organizing a revolt against the empire, and of releasing the Italian people from their allegiance. This is denied by the latter. Du Pin does not credit it.—Eccl. Hist., vol. vi., p. 132. Dean Milman omits any reference to the charge. — *Latin Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 293–327. But Cormenin treats it as true, and records many alleged outrages committed by the pope, such as seizing the envoys, who were the bearers of conciliatory letters from the emperor, and putting them to death.—CORMENIN, vol. i., pp. 178, 179.

Upon this subject the difference was radical and irreconcilable; and there can be no reasonable doubt that this was the primary and inciting cause of the pope’s action. He could readily foresee his own weakness as the subject of an iconoclastic emperor, and the strength he would acquire by a close alliance with the French kings, and the establishment of a strong monarchy in the West, devoted to the Church and, more especially, to the papacy. Hence, the only legitimate inference from his whole conduct is, that he employed the influence of religion and of the Church to excite the minds of a superstitious and ignorant population against their civil government, in order to obtain from a foreign king, to whom he owed no allegiance, the concession of his temporal power, that he might thereby be enabled to break off his own lawful allegiance to the empire. Every step taken by the different popes who participated in these movements justifies this belief, and the result confirms it. Rome needed only that her popes should possess temporal power to make her superior to Constantinople; and for this prize the contest was carried on with unabated zeal until the final victory was won.

How could Pope Stephen III., while occupying the relation of subject to the empire, acquire title to territory or temporal power, by the donation of Pepin, a foreign prince? Was it within the power of Pepin to release him from his lawful allegiance? Did not all the rights transferred to him by Pepin inure to the benefit of the empire? Can a rebel, by treaty or alliance with a foreign power, acquire any legitimate rights against his government or his lawful sovereign?

It is necessary that these questions shall be decided in order to understand the nature of the donation from Pepin to the pope—whether or no any temporal power was rightfully acquired by means of it, even if it be conceded to have been to the full extent claimed by the papal writers.

It is believed that the law of nations has undergone no change in reference to these matters, from the earliest ages of Christian civilization. By its provisions a rebel can ac quire no rights in his own behalf as against his

own government; for whatever he may do, whether by himself or by foreign aid, is considered only as resistance to lawful authority. A successful revolt is another and different matter. In that case, rights are obtained and held only by revolutionary force, and when they become accomplished facts, are, in the judgment of modern nations especially, entitled to the highest consideration.

The American idea is, that the best nations in the world have been the result of revolution; which is justified or not, according to the degree of wrong and oppression it is designed to resist. But those who defend the temporal power of the popes derive no assistance from this doctrine; for one of the most prominent features in the papal teaching is the doctrine which denounces revolution and resistance to legitimate civil authority. If the conduct of Pope Stephen be measured and judged by these teachings, he undoubtedly brought himself, not only in open hostility to the law of the empire, but to the law of nations and of God. Nor will the papacy be aided by what is called the doctrine of accomplished facts, for it has invariably taught that no rights are conferred by them when they grow out of resistance to lawful authority, no matter how long they may be enjoyed; as the pope shows in his Encyclical of 1864, and as will abundantly appear hereafter.

The conclusion is unavoidable, that the popes acquired no rightful authority by the donation of Pepin. The territories donated were held by the Lombard king only by conquest, and had only been so held since the year 752—but two years. (“Fall of the Roman Empire,” by Sisniondi, p. 312; “History of the Church,” by Fry, p. 186, London.)

The superior title of the empire had not been abandoned, but still existed. If Pepin had taken them from the emperor, then his title might have been defended; and in that event he could have disposed of them as he pleased. But he took them from the Lombards, not from the empire, which left the title of the empire a subsisting and valid claim, which could only be extinguished by force or treaty. Neither of these modes having been resorted to, they could be taken by the pope only as a subject, not as an independent prince; having no right, by the law of nations, to acquire such title as Pepin attempted to confer upon him. He could only hold them in trust for his sovereign. Therefore, as he owed lawful allegiance to the empire, the title conferred upon him by Pepin inured to the empire. If he claimed, or attempted to exercise, power independently of the empire by virtue of it, he was, by the law of nations, guilty of usurpation. And hence it follows that the temporal power of the popes derived from the donation of Pepin was not legitimately obtained, but was usurped by a flagrant violation of the law of the empire, and the law of nations.

The controversy about the worship of images was used as a pretext for its acquisition, but the real motive is exposed by the whole transaction. It was to build up a civil power in the West, with the pope as a temporal prince, which should make the West more powerful than the East, and restore to Rome her old pagan distinction of “Mistress of the World.” And such is the “truth of history,” when it is extracted from the mass of contradictions.

Dr. Fredet was too sagacious not to have seen the force of the suggestions here made, and he has endeavored to counteract their influence. He is

compelled to admit that, at the time of the defeat of the Lombards by Pepin, the emperor, Constantine Copronymus, continued to maintain his claim to the territory embraced in the donation of Pepin. He says:

"At this juncture two ambassadors arrived from *Constantinople, to claim for the emperor the restitution of the cities and provinces which had been usurped by the Lombards*." (Fredet, p.185.) But then, in order to avoid the force of the argument that, as these territories were held by the Lombards by usurpation, their recapture inured to the nationality to which they legitimately belonged, he says also, at another place:

"It is a principle laid down by civilians, and founded on the law of nations, that he who conquers a country in a just war *not undertaken for the former possessors, nor in union with them*, is not bound to restore to them what they would not, or could not, protect and secure." (*Ibid*., note (g), p.496.)

But if it be conceded that this is the statement of a just principle, it is broad enough to disprove the claim of temporal power based upon Pepin's donation. The reconquest of the territory held by the Lombards was, in the eye of the law of nations, "undertaken for the former possessors." The emperor, it is true, did not solicit aid from Pepin; but the pope, *who was his subject*, did. Pepin was bound to know, and did know, that the pope was in revolt against his sovereign. Consequently, there were but two aspects in which he could have viewed his interference—either that he was acting in behalf of the emperor, at the solicitation of his subject, or was acting in behalf of a rebellious subject against his lawful sovereign. If the former, then, by the law of nations, his donation inured to the empire; if the latter, he violated that law by becoming a party to an armed rebellion. But, in point of fact, Pepin did not render assistance to the pope, *as against the emperor*, but moved his army against the Lombards, and left the pope, after his donation, to settle the question of his treason with the emperor. Therefore, his donation to the pope was made to him as a subject, not as a prince; and, consequently, as a subject can take no title to territory which had once belonged to his sovereign after its recapture, the donation of Pepin inured to the empire, and not to the pope.

If, thereafter, the pope was enabled to maintain his title to it, he could only have done it by successful revolution, which would bring it within the doctrine of accomplished facts, now repudiated by the papacy. In any view of it, we cannot escape the fact that whatever temporal power the popes acquired by these proceedings was obtained by usurpation.

Why did the French king make a donation of territory, with the authority of temporal government, to the pope? This was about the middle of the eighth century, and for more than seven hundred years the Church had existed without a temporal ruler, without a king, and without a crown to place upon the brow of a king. There had been, up to that time, six ecumenical councils of the Church,(*) and by none of them had it been declared, as an essential part of Christian faith, that the pope was infallible, or that his temporal power was necessary to the successful government of the Church, or to the successful propagation of the truths of the Gospel.

* The first Council of Nice, A.D. 325; the first Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381; the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431; the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451; the second Council of Constantinople, A.D. 553; and the third Council of Constantinople, A.D. 682.

Why, therefore, this gift of a temporal crown? Manifestly, it was the reward which Pepin paid to the pope for enabling him to maintain his treasonable resistance to the King of France, by means of which he hoped to destroy a rival political power in the East, and transfer the scepter of universal dominion to the West. It was the legitimate fruit of the alliance between the king and the pope, by which the former gave political power in exchange for the ecclesiastical protection of the latter. The king made himself a party to the treason of the pope, and the pope made himself a party to the treason of the king. They were joint conspirators against lawful authority; one against his lawful king, the other against his lawful emperor—both against their national allegiance. Each had a worldly object alone—the acquisition of princely power; and therefore they both stand condemned by every just principle of international law, as they would do were their conduct now to be adjudged by the unbiased judgment of all the leading nations.

During the late rebellion in this country (America) ten of our States held possession of all their territory, by military force, for several years— more than twice as long as the Lombards held Ravenna. They excluded the authority of the National Government, defied its power, and erected a government of their own. Suppose Napoleon III., the "favorite son of the Church," had marched his army from Mexico into these States, taken possession of them, and turned them over to the temporal government of Pope Pius IX., whose throne he was then holding up, then the pope would have had precisely the same temporal power over all these ten States as Pope Stephen III. acquired by the gift of the King of France! The statement of such a proposition sufficiently refutes it; and yet there are those who habitually exhaust argument and eloquence in supporting the validity of a title thus acquired. Toleration does not require that these things shall be passed over in silence, nor is its spirit violated by their arraignment at the bar of public opinion.

But there is a view of the question of temporal power, designedly passed over until now, which is of sufficient importance to be considered. Suppose it be conceded that the pope did acquire temporal power by the donation of Pepin, what, then, was its extent? We have already seen, what all readers of history know to be true, that this donation only included the Italian territory held by the Lombards, and taken by Pepin from Astolphus, the Lombard king. This was Ravenna, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Pentapolis— *but not Rome*. The Lombards did not hold possession of Rome. Pepin did not have any authority over Rome, for he made no conquest of it; nor did he pretend to donate it, or any temporal authority over it, to the pope. If he had the authority, and did confer temporal power over the territory he took from Astolphus, then he made the pope prince over that territory alone, *and not over Rome*. In Rome he remained a subject to the emperor, and could derive no right there from the donation of Pepin. Whatever temporal power, therefore, he acquired in Rome must rest upon some other foundation than the donation of Pepin. As the

papists pretend to assign no other, it is necessarily the result of usurpation.

It has been remarked that the motives of both Pepin and the pope were worldly—that they had reference alone to *temporal dominion*. This is a legitimate inference from all the facts. The faith or creed of the Church, as it had come down from the Council of Nice, was in no way involved in any of the pending matters of controversy, except as it was connected with the disagreement about the worship of images. There were no prevailing heresies calculated to disturb the harmony of the Church. (*)

* There is nothing to be found in the proceedings of the first six ecumenical councils favoring the worship of images. The Emperor Leo, therefore, when he attempted to put a stop to it, did not violate any expressed article of faith. A council of three hundred and thirty—eight bishops was held in Constantinople, in the year 754, which condemned it. But this council was repudiated by the Roman Christians.—Du PIN, vol. vi., p. 133. The second Council of Nice was held under the pontificate of Adrian I., in the year 757, and is called ecumenical, although the number of bishops who attended it were less than those who assembled at Constantinople. It condemned the council at Constantinople, anathematized those who repudiated the worship of images, and authorized that kind of worship, by introducing it for the first time into the confession of faith.—Du PIN, vol. vi., p. 139.

The heresy of Macedonius, which denied the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, had been disposed of by the first Council of Constantinople, in 381; that of Nestorius, which affirmed that there were two distinct persons in Jesus Christ, by the Council of Ephesus, in 431; that of Eutyches, which denied the two distinct natures, divine and human, in Jesus Christ, by the Council of Chalcedon, in 451; and the Monothelite heresy, which asserted Jesus Christ to have no human will separate from the divine will, by the third Council of Constantinople, in 682. Harmony, therefore, pervaded the Church in all its religious departments. Its faith was unagitated, its creed unassailed.

But the pope, looking out from the midst of this internal peace and concord upon the troubled political elements in France, had his own ambition excited, and did not stop long to consider of the means of gratifying it. The step taken by him was as fatal to true piety, as it has in the end, after centuries of agitation, proved to be to the papal power he so ambitiously acquired. By it, he pulled down the Church from her high mission of saving souls, dragged her sacred robes in the muddy pool of earthly politics, and put her upon a career of corruption which has caused her own children to afflict her with mortal stabs. He declared to Pepin that it was *the will of God* that he should take the crown from the head of Childeric, and put it upon his own head! Pepin needed no other persuasion than this to make him a devotee of a religion so favorable to his ambition. It was the very faith which of all others suited him the best. He was easily persuaded to aid a pope who taught a doctrine so palatable to him, and to make it the religion of France, because it confined all subsequent kings to his own line! He staked all his fortunes upon the hazard. And he won the prize; while the venerable Church, which was thus turned away from her peaceful paths, and

made to enter upon an ignoble mission, received a cruel and paralyzing blow. Centuries have passed since then, during which she has experienced the most varied fortunes, but she is yet reeling under that blow.

We have but to look at the manner in which the popes employed their spiritual authority in order to promote temporal and secular ends, to see how the Church was made to violate the injunctions of its founder, the example of the apostles, and the peaceful teachings of the early Christians. The retrospect reflects no credit upon those who became the active agents in these measures, but is made necessary by the enormous pretensions now set up in behalf of the papacy. And it will serve to show, also, *how necessary it is for the best interests of mankind that the nations shall not again suffer the Church and the State to be united.* (Emphasis the Webmaster's)

As perfidy seemed to be a common vice in those days among both popes and kings, Pepin had scarcely retired with his army from Italy, before Astolphus, the Lombard king, made preparations to break his treaty by threatening to retake the provinces he had surrendered and lay siege to Rome. Pope Stephen III. again had recourse to Pepin, urging him in the most imploring terms to return to Italy and defend his "donation" to the Holy See. With him the great question was the possession of the exarchate of Ravenna, supposing that, unless that were destroyed, it would become, in the hands of the Lombards, who were Arian Christians but defended the worship of images, too formidable as the ecclesiastical rival of Rome. It is quite certain that this was the chief ground of quarrel between the pope and Astolphus; and that, "if the pope had allowed the Lombards to occupy the exarchate, they would have been loyal allies of the pope." ("Latin Christianity," by Milman, vol. ii., p. 424, note 1.)

The pope, therefore, could not keep his anxiety within moderate bounds, and addressed several letters to Pepin. In one of them, according to Cormenin, he says: "I conjure you by the Lord our God, and his glorious mother—by the celestial virtues and the holy apostle who has consecrated you king—to render to our see the donation which you have offered it;" (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 193.) thus again invoking the aid of religion in securing temporal power to himself. But Pepin was not so ready as before to embark in an enterprise which offered no further prospect of gain to himself; and, indicating some indifference to these appeals to his religious sentiments, the pope was driven to a still more desperate expedient—that of sending him several letters purporting to have been written by the Virgin Mary, angels, martyrs, and saints, and one by St. Peter himself, all of which, it was alleged, *had been sent down from heaven for the purpose!* The translation of that from Peter is thus given by Dean Milman:

"I, Peter the Apostle, protest, admonish, and conjure you, the most Christian kings, Pepin, Charles, and Carloman, with all the hierarchy, bishops, abbots, priests, and all monks; all judges, dukes, counts, and the whole people of the Franks. The mother of God likewise adjures you, and admonishes and commands you, she as well as the thrones and dominions, and all the hosts of heaven, *to save the beloved city of Rome from the detested Lombards*. If ye hasten, I, Peter the Apostle, promise you my protection in this life and in the next, will prepare for you the most glorious *mansions in heaven*, and will

bestow on you *the everlasting joys of paradise*. Make common cause with *my people of Rome*, and *I will grant whatever ye may pray for*. I conjure you not to yield up this city to be lacerated and tormented by the Lombards, *lest your own souls be lacerated and tormented in hell, with the* devil and his pestilential angels. Of all nations under heaven, the Franks are highest in the esteem of St. Peter; to me you owe all your victories. Obey, and obey speedily, and, by my suffrage, our *Lord Jesus Christ* will give you in this life length of days, security, victory; *in the life to come, will multiply his blessings upon you, among his saints and angels*." (*)

* "Latin Christianity," vol. ii., p. 424. Cormenin gives this same letter, in a somewhat different translation, but one which does not make the sense materially different from the above. The original Latin, taken from Labbe, may be found in "The See of Rome in the Middle Ages," by Reichel. London ed., p. 65. For Cormenin's translation, see "History of the Popes," vol. i., p. 193. Du Pin refers to this letter as "in St. Peter and Stephen's name," but does not publish it. Du Pin's "Ecclesiastical History," vol. vi., p. 108. He attributes it to Pope Stephen II., when the transaction occurred during the pontificate of Stephen III.

Archbishop Kenrick, although he alludes to the relations between Stephen III. and Pepin, does not directly mention this letter, neither admitting or denying it; yet he gives a quotation from a letter which could scarcely have been any other than this.—*The Primacy of the Apostolic See,* by Kenrick, part ii., p. 261.

We can account for this letter and its contents only upon the supposition that its author considered himself as standing in the place of God on earth, or that he was entirely indifferent to the means employed, provided they produced the result he sought for. The ignorance and superstition of the age was such as to encourage this mingling together of divine and temporal things; and Stephen III. was the kind of pope to avail himself of it, notwithstanding the impious and blasphemous character of the act. He understood the temper and position of Pepin, and knew that he considered himself indebted to Pope Zachary for his crown, and to the priests of France for the encouragement of that popular superstition which enabled him to maintain it under pretense of "divine right." And he did not miscalculate. Whether Pepin believed that the letter came from heaven, and directly from St. Peter, or that the pope, as God's vicegerent, had the prerogative right of committing so palpable a forgery, it is of no present consequence to inquire. He yielded to the entreaties of the pope, and again advanced into Italy with his army; acting, doubtless, from the conviction that, if he did not, the clergy would persuade the people of France that he was defiant to the commands of the apostle, and deserved the anathemas of the Church. This time, however, his movements were attended with no other immediate consequences than the re-surrender of Ravenna to the pope, and probably the confirmation of his former donation.

Cormenin speaks of the subsequent deposit of his "deed of gift" upon the confessional of St. Peter, by Fulrad, the counselor of the French king; (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 193.) but we have already seen that the probabilities are against the existence of such a document, and that the gift of Pepin was

only verbal.

Astolphus, the Lombard king, did not long survive these events. He died in the year 756, when a controversy arose about the Lombard crown between Didier, Duke of Istria, and Ratchis, a monk. The latter gained Pope Stephen to his support by promising not to disturb him in his possession of Ravenna, and that he would make large donations “to enrich St. Peter”—an object of which the popes have never lost sight. But Pepin did not favor this arrangement, and took the side of Didier. The pope then, from policy alone, abandoned the cause of the monk, and recognized Didier as the lawful sovereign of Lombardy. He was not disposed, however, to change sides so readily without some reward, and succeeded in obtaining from Didier a concession of the city of Fuenza and the duchy of Ferrara, and some other places—so true was he to the purpose of enlarging the papal domains and the establishment of the temporal power. He soon after died, in the year 757, and was succeeded by Paul I. The events of the three next pontificates have no special bearing upon the question we are considering, except as showing that the controversies about the worship of images between the popes and the emperors continued, and that Didier still cherished the purpose of seizing upon the exarchate of Ravenna. All the plottings and political intrigues of him and the popes had reference to that object, each being resolved to possess it at every hazard.

Pepin died in the year 768, and left the kingdom to his two sons, Carl and Carloman, the former of whom, at the death of his brother, became the sole possessor of the crown, by the name of Charlemagne.

In the year 772, Adrian I. became pope. During his pontificate, which last ed twenty—three years, the *politico—alliance* between the papacy and the French king bore other fruits, not less conducive than those already borne to the advancement of papal power.

When Charlemagne became king he found all the nations of Europe in a state of comparative decrepitude; and, inheriting the sentiments and courage of his father, resolved upon making the French monarchy the controlling and all absorbing power in the West. Not satisfied with the possession of France and Western Germany, he extended his dominion into Italy, Spain, and other parts of Germany; which of necessity brought him into immediate intercourse with the popes. Fully informed of the advantages his father had derived from their employment of the ecclesiastical power in his behalf, he readily saw that his interests required him to make a similar use of them. He therefore gathered about his court distinguished “foreign priests” from all the leading nations; who, besides being men of great learning, were “the light of the Church” and the kinsmen “of bishops and of saints.” (Michelet, vol. i., p. 114.)

He professed strong attachment to the Roman Church and its religion, and there is no reason for supposing that he was insincere. But, as he understood it, the Church and its teachings were designed as aids to his political power. Beyond this, it is probable that he cared but little for either. With these opinions, he was readily induced, by the influences around him, to strengthen the ecclesiastical power in France. “Being,” says Michelet, ” sure of the pope, whom his family had protected against the Greeks and Lombards,”

he displayed his great sagacity as a statesman by these movements, designed as they were to bring all the authority of the Church to bear upon the measures of his reign.

Two measures were specially conspicuous. He “confirmed the institution of tithes,” which required that one–tenth of all the taxes levied upon the people should be paid to the churches and the priests. He also freed the Church from secular jurisdiction –that is, made it independent of the State–by a law, found in his Capitularies, in these words:

“It is our pleasure that neither abbots, nor presbyters, nor deacons, nor sub-deacons, nor any priest whatsoever, be brought before the public and secular tribunals, but be delivered for trial to their bishop.” (Micbelet, p. 115, note.)

His munificence (benevolence) toward the clergy was unbounded. “Hie augmented their wealth, he enlarged their privileges, he confirmed and extended their immunities; and, were it not that he was one of the greatest and wisest princes who ever reigned, some writers would not have hesitated to place him among the weakest of mankind.” (Waddington, pp. 149, 150.)

And his direct dealings with the pope were not less distinguished for their liberality. He was a consummate statesman–far the greatest of his age–and was quite willing to leave the popes to the gratification of their ambition when it did not interfere with the success of his own measures. One object he was specially desirous to accomplish; this was, to sustain the popes in their defiance of the Eastern emperors, that thereby the seat of empire might be transferred from the East to the West.

Besides his wars with the neighboring nations, Charlemagne had a quarrel with the Duke of Bavaria, which furnished him an opportunity of availing himself of the alliance between the pope and his father, aid of making religion serve the purpose of promoting both his own and the pope’s ambition. Pope Adrian I., in full sympathy with his purposes and plans, took his side against the Duke of Bavaria, and launched a terrible bull of excommunication against him and all his subjects–not for any offensive act against religion or the Church, but on account of objects entirely temporal. It is necessary to observe the character of this bull, in order to understand the progressive steps toward the acquisition of temporal power, and to see with what little remorse of conscience sacred things were mingled with political controversies, and made subservient to ambitious ends. If, in order to make an act *infallible*, it must concern the faith alone, and be addressed to the Universal Church, then it would be unjust to say that this bull was stamped with that character. But if, when the pope speaks in the name of God, he speaks *ex cathedra*, then Adrian I. was infallible when in this bull he declared “that the Franks were ab solved in advance from all crimes they might commit in the enemy’s country; and that *God commanded them*, through his vicar, *to violate girls, murder women, children, and old men, to burn cities, and put all the inhabitants to the sword*.” (*)

* Cormenin, vol. i., p. 204. Such a bull as this would seem almost incredible, if

it were not found in the history of a Roman Catholic author. But this is the pope who absolved Offa, King of the Mercians, in England, from the crime of killing Ethelbert, the king of the East Angles, upon the condition that he should allow Peter-pence to be collected in England. The same author says that "avarice was his ruling passion," and that "he displayed remarkable political skill in the management of the Church, His supple and adroit spirit knew how to bend before power, in order to augment the authority of Rome, and extend her rule over the people."—*Ibid*., p. 207.

The obligations between the pope and the king were, of course, reciprocal, and required each to serve the other—the one with the thunders of excommunication, and the other with the thunders of artillery. The pope had a quarrel with the Duke of Beneventum, because the duke refused him permission to make money levies upon his subjects for *increasing the revenues of St. Peter*; and Charlemagne, in return for the sanction which the Pope had given, in God's name, of all the enormities his army might commit in Bavaria, despoiled the duke, by force, of five of his best cities, and *added them to the domains of the pope*! The alliance now began to bear richer and more abundant fruits, which had become so ripened as to be ready for plucking by either party, accordingly as temporal interest or ambition stimulated him.

Adrian I. died, however, before they were all gathered, and left it to his successor, Leo III., to compensate Charlemagne for his munificent gift. This was done by Leo in a manner well calculated to gratify the vanity of a less ambitious king than Charlemagne. He sent to him "the keys of the confessional of St. Peter, the standard of the city .of Rome, and magnificent presents," and urged him to send some French lords to Rome, who should receive the oath of *temporal fidelity* from the Romans; (Cormenin, p. 207.) for, as yet, notwithstanding the donation of Pepin, the pope had not ventured to make any pretensions to the rights of a temporal king.

It had not then been revealed to him that the law of God made this necessary for the protection of Christianity and the Church! The presence of weaker and feebler kings than Pepin and Charlemagne was necessary to such a revelation as this. Charlemagne did not, of course, object to being made emperor, for that was one of his cherished objects; but, bad as the times were, he had so just a sense of shame, that he desired the vices of the Roman clergy to be first reformed. These were so flagrant that he considered it a reproach to Christianity that they should be tolerated under the very eye of the pope, and so wrote to Leo III., urging the application of corrective measures. Leo, unwilling to take issue with him upon the subject, indicated a wish to make the desired reform. But whatever efforts were made in that direction proved abortive on account of the opposition of the clergy of Rome, who organized a conspiracy against the pope.

Two priests, aided by the monks, made an attempt to take his life, seized him in the street, dragged him by the beard, sought to break his skull with stones, to put out his eyes, and pull out his tongue; and at last plunged him into a dungeon. He was, however, released, after several days of confinement; when, fearing a renewal of the attack, he invited Charlemagne to visit Rome, that he might more certainly secure his protection. The invitation was accepted, and the great king entered Rome in December, 800, when the pope,

placing a crown upon his head, turned over to him that part of the empire with as cool impudence as if it were his to bestow, declared him emperor, crowned as such "*by the hand of God*!" Two objects were accomplished by this stroke of policy—the pope's treason to the empire was made effectual, and Charlemagne was made "Emperor of the Romans," which placed the diadem of the Caesars upon his brow. (Fredet, p. 191; Cormenin, vol. i., p. 209.) The Eastern emperors were now supplanted at Rome, and the King of France was placed at the head of a great Western empire!

Of course he could do nothing less, in return for the crown given him by the pope, than confirm the donation of Pepin, his father, to the Church; which it is said he did without hesitation. By this means he acquired the title of "the favorite son of the Church," which title has been ever since applied to all the monarchs of France who have remained true to the Church and the papacy. He was also repaid by the pontifical blessing, and furnished with a copy of the canon laws of the Church, from which it was designed he should learn the nature and extent of his obligations of obedience to the pope, and the necessity of preserving the union between the State and the Church. (*)

* Du Pin says that "Adrian gave to Charlemagne the code of Dionysius Exiguus;" with additions "*favorable to the pretensions of the Court of Rome*." These, he says, however, were "forged when the False Decretals were made, and perhaps by the same author."—Du PIN, vol. vi., p. 115.

Most unfortunate has it been for France that this code of canon laws was ever assented to by her great king, or taken by him into her dominions. It tied her fast to the car of the papacy, and through tribulation, anguish, revolution, bloodshed, and every form of suffering, it has at last pulled her down into the abyss. The magnificence of her scenery, the grandeur of her cities, the fertility of her soil, the beauty of her climate, the bravery of her armies, the genius of her children, all combined, could not excite in the minds of her people a sufficient sense of their own manhood to save her. With her fate sealed to that of the papacy, she and it have sunk into a common grave. When her day of resurrection shall come, she must clothe herself in new robes, leave the papal wreck to decay amidst the debris of fallen and lost nations, construct with her own hands a new grandeur, and place her people where they yet deserve to be—far forward in the ranks of those who know what it is to shelter and protect themselves by institutions of their own creation, without the aid of kings or popes, or any other of the medieval forms of tyranny.

It is important to know, in this connection, the extent of the territory granted by Charlemagne to the pope, in order that the precise extent of the papal domains may be ascertained. Fredet confines it to the provinces granted by Pepin. Speaking of the popes becoming independent of secular princes, he says:

"This independence they obtained through the instrumentality of Pepin and his successor Charlemagne, who conferred on the popes such an extent of temporal power as might enable them freely to exercise their spiritual authority." (Fredet, p. 185.)

At another place he says, “Charlemagne manifested his attachment to the Apostolic See by ratifying and augmenting the donation which Pepin had made in its favor;” but he does not state in what the augmentation consisted. (*Ibid.*, p. 187.) He does not speak of any additional grant made in the year 800. Cormenlin is not more specific, although he speaks of large donations given to several churches in Rome. Waddington says “he renewed and even increased the grant” of Pepin. (Waddington, p. 149.) Reichel says he “ratified the donation of his father, Pepin, by ceding to the pope the exarchate and the Pentapolis.” (Reichel, p. 69.) Dean Milman is more satisfactory, and limits the grant to those cities which afterward paid homage and delivered their keys to the pope — Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Cesena, Sinigaglia, Iesi, Forlimpopoli, Forli, with the castle Sussibio, Montefeltro, Acerra, Monte di Lucano, Serra, San Marino, Bobbio, Urbino, Cagli, Luciolo, Gubbio, Comachio, and Narni, taken from the Duke of Spoleto. (Milman’s “Latin Christianity,” vol. ii., p. 427.)

Thus we are enabled to see that neither by Pepin nor Charlemagne was there any grant of temporal power *in Rome* made to the popes. If it was designed by either of them to make them temporal princes at all, their authority, by the very nature of the concessions, was limited to the provinces taken from the Lombards and from the Duke of Spoleto, and held by conquest. There was no conquest of Rome by Pepin or Charlemagne. After the grant of Pepin, the pope was left a subject of the Eastern emperor, still in rebellion. But after that of Charlemagne, his relations were changed, and he became a subject of the “emperor of the Romans.” It is perfectly manifest, from all the history of those times, that Charlemagne did not intend to leave a king in any part of his dominions with superior authority to his own, or even with equal authority. When the iron crown was placed upon his brow by the pope, he became the sovereign of the Western empire, which included Rome.

Mr. Hallam, referring to this sovereignty, says: “Money was coined in his name, and *an oath of fidelity was taken by the clergy and people*.” (Hallam’s “Middle Ages,” p. 22: Harper & Brother’s ed.) Undoubtedly, there was a considerable jurisdiction and authority conferred upon the popes, but it was subordinate to the jurisdiction and authority of the emperor. It was not temporal power in the sense claimed by the papacy. If so, the oath of fidelity would have been taken by the Roman people to the pope, and not to Charlemagne. It may be assumed, therefore, as a well—attested historic fact, that up to the time of Charlemagne's death, which occurred in the year 814, the popes possessed no such temporal power in Rome as conferred upon them the right to prescribe the laws, administer the government, or exact civil allegiance to themselves. Whatever power they exercised, beyond that necessary for the mere protection of the property of the Church, was usurpation. And when they carried this usurpation to the extent of uniting the Church and the State in the territory since known as the Papal States, they impaired the spiritual strength of the Church, retarded the progress of true religion, and laid the foundation for that series of unfortunate measures by means of which the people were held in ignorance, superstition, and civil bondage for hundreds of years, until they were rescued by the great reformation of the sixteenth century.

That the popes were both ready and willing to usurp temporal authority, is abundantly shown by history. In all the proceedings here recorded there was nothing of a religious nature—nothing that concerned the Christian faith—nothing to remind one of the devotion and simplicity by which the apostolic times were so much distinguished. They were the mere schemings of ambitious and selfish politicians, whose sole object was to concentrate temporal power in their own hands, as the means of bringing the people in subjection to themselves. They differ from similar acts of other despots only in this, that they were accompanied by an almost total disregard for the teachings of Christ and the apostles, while at the same time the name of God was constantly invoked to sanction every form of oppression and outrage. The popes even allowed the creed of the Church to be changed by the emperor, (*) in exchange for the privileges he conferred upon them.

* The controversy between the Eastern and Western churches in reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit—whether it proceeded from the Father alone, or from the Father and the Son—was carried on in an acrimonious spirit for many years. The Roman Church, while maintaining the latter doctrine, refused to permit the creed to be sung with the addition of the "Filioque." Charlemagne, however, convened a council at Aix la Chapelle, in the year 809, to decide the question; and afterward commanded Pope Leo III. to confirm its decision, and to allow the "Filioque" to be added to the creed and to be sung with it. The pope, though "not pleased with this addition," yielded to the dictation of the king, being afraid to incur his displeasure. —Du Pin's *Eccl. Hist*., vol. vii., p. 114; *History of Doctrines*, by Hagenbach, vol. i., pp. 468, 469.

Wealth and power seemed to be the only objects worth striving for, and corruption became almost universal. The papacy was at once elevated beyond anything known in its previous history, and immediately commenced to interfere in temporal affairs. The popes, separating themselves from the Eastern empire, assumed to direct the domestic affairs of nations, impiously claiming that whatever power they had derived from Pepin or Charlemagne was the *gift of God*, and that, therefore, God had appointed them to rule the world in his name! They accordingly entered upon the career of territorial conquest, and succeeded in further extorting from Louis le Debonnaire, the son and successor of Charlemagne, the right of sovereignty over Campania, Calabria, Naples, Salerno, and the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily, although Sicily did not belong to France by any title known to the law of nations, even in those days of lawless conquest. By these and other kindred means the popes acquired their temporal power, and used it so ambitiously, and with so little regard for the rights of others, as at last to reduce all the sovereigns of Europe into obedience. Cormenin says:

"The sovereigns of the West placed armies under their command, ruined empires, exterminated people *in the name of St. Peter*, and sent the spoils of the vanquished to increase the wealth of the Roman clergy, and to support the monks in idleness and debauchery." (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 213.)

Influence and power thus acquired were used, of course, for selfish and sinister ends; for men in all ages have been in this respect the same. And it was so used by the popes that the government over the Papal States became

altogether ecclesiastical. It was conducted entirely by the popes, by the assistance of their cardinals and priests, all of whom were created by the popes, and were the mere slaves and creatures of their will. The people were treated as if born only for the purpose of being ruled, and of contributing to the pride and elevation of their rulers. The popular degradation during the Middle Ages contributed to this; and, in order that there should be no change in this condition of affairs, and that the people should be kept so ignorant as not to aspire to any higher position, they were either deprived of all opportunity of education, or, if educated at all, it was only in ecclesiastical matters, and under the special direction of the priests, who took good care to see that their first and last lesson was obedience. Everything was ecclesiastical; and the power of excommunication, which was held in great dread by the ignorant population, was so perverted from its original meaning and design, that it was employed as the means of exacting submission to the papacy in all matters connected with the Government as well as the Church, and in the most common and trifling affairs of life. (*)

* “Very few of these exertions of the supreme authority of the Vicar of Christ have any bearing on the interests of religion. The political intrigues of the day, the temporal possessions of the Church, or the subordination of the hierarchy are, in almost all instances, the objects of the anathema. How the awful authority over the souls of men was degraded to the level of the pettiest interests is seen when some audacious scoundrels stole the horses of the pope during his progress through France. He promptly excommunicates the unknown thieves, unless the beasts shall be returned within three days; and he takes advantage of the opportunity to include in the curse some knaves who had previously pilfered his plate while staying at the Abbey of Flavigny—as he shrewdly suspects, with the connivance of the holy monks there.

That bishops were not disinclined to follow the example of their chief, and to use their control over salvation for their personal benefit, is apparent from the treatment of royalty in Wales about this time. Tewdwr, King of Brecknock, profanely stole Bishop Libian’s dinner from the Abbey of Llancore, when the angry prelate excommunicated him, and exacted an enormous fine as the price of reconciliation; and when Brockmeal, King of Gwent, and his family were anathematized by Bishop Cyfeiliawg for some personal offense, the fee for removing the censure was a plate of pure gold the size of the bishop’s face. A power so persistently and so ignobly abused requires something more than merely moral force to insure respect and obedience.”—*Studies in Church History*, by Henry C. Lea, p. 324.

The popes, having achieved success by tempting the ambition of kings, and conferring crowns and kingdoms upon them, on the condition that they should acknowledge the gift as made in accordance with the divine command, had no difficulty in making an ignorant and superstitious population believe that all the laws they prescribed were equally a part of God’s laws; that obedience paid to them was obedience to God; and, therefore, that any act of disobedience would not only deprive them of the protection of the Church in this life, but consign them inevitably to eternal tortures in the next.

And thus the Church and the State were completely united—the State obeying

the Church. The Church, in fact, became the State by holding it in subordination. The people alone were punished; the ecclesiastics never. They were an exclusive and privileged class, who considered all others as mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for their superiors, of whom they were the chief. The great and controlling object was to make Rome what she had been in pagan times, the "mistress of the world;" so that the pope, as her *pope–king*, might make and unmake other kings, build up and destroy governments, and thus subject all mankind to his dominion, under the impious and shameless pretense that God had so provided in his law!

The foundation of the whole structure of government was this: that the pope was ordained king by Almighty God, and ruled by divine authority; and consequently, the subject was bound to passive obedience; and, not rendering this, offended God and committed a sin for which he deserved punishment at the hands of the Church! This is precisely the kind of government which Pope Pius IX. defends in his Encyclical and Syllabus, and which he prefers to any of those constructed after the modern forms, and especially to that of the United States. It is the kind of government which he requires his followers to defend as a necessary part of their religious faith; and it is the kind of government which his hierarchy in this country would substitute tomorrow, if they had the power, for the popular institutions under which our nation has grown to its present greatness and distinction.

Continued in The Papacy And The Civil Power – Chapter XII. The Ninth Century