

# The Papacy And The Civil Power –

## Chapter XVI. Henry VIII. Part 2



Continued from [Chapter XVI. Henry VIII. Part 1](#)

Although Henry VIII. manifestly designed to build up an independent Church in England, with himself as its head, which should be freed from the spiritual and temporal authority of the pope, and the influence of the new doctrines of English and German Protestantism, yet it is undoubtedly true that he gave important, though undesigned, aid to both. By his persecutions he demonstrated that neither could be suppressed by that means. But as he had learned these from Rome—whose dogmas have, since the False Decretals, long before the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council, always embraced, as a part of the faith, the doctrine that the Church was bound to maintain its organization and power by force, if necessary—he continued them throughout his reign, seemingly unconscious that the papal power was too strong to be immediately broken, and that, while he could torture the bodies of the Reformers, he could neither take away from them the right to think, nor subdue their courage.

The immediate assistance he gave to Roman Catholicism was rendered by maintaining the leading principles of its faith. The English people, as we have seen, had been sufficiently subdued by the power of the hierarchy to become passively submissive to all their commands. Being deprived of the use of the Bible, and shut out from all the advantages of intellectual culture, the masses, though clinging to their ancient liberties with intense affection, had not yet acquired that sense of personality which is absolutely necessary both to the establishment and preservation of popular liberty. They remained, therefore—many from choice, but a larger number from fear—still submissive to the dictation of Rome; while the nobility vacillated from side to side, accordingly as their interest and safety dictated. Those remote from the cities—where the papal exactions were not so directly realized—were the most submissive, because they were the most ignorant, and were kept under the more immediate influence of the monks. Mr. Hallam says that the citizens of London and other large towns “had begun to acquire some taste for the Protestant doctrine;” and continues:

"But the common people, especially in remote countries, had been used to an implicit reverence for the Holy See, and had suffered comparatively little by its impositions. They looked up also to their own teachers as guides in faith; and the main body of the clergy were certainly very reluctant to tear themselves, at the pleasure of a disappointed monarch, in the most dangerous crisis of religion, from the bosom of Catholic unity." ("Con. Hist. of Engl.," by Hallam, vol. i., p. 93.)

Upon the minds of this class Henry VIII. made but little impression favorable to his new theories. The belief very properly entertained by them, that the divorce was sought only for the gratification of his passions, rendered them disinclined to acknowledge his supremacy. And the monks, taking advantage of this, were able to keep them comparatively steadfast in their fidelity to the pope. The king having thus left the fundamental features of their religious faith undisturbed, they remained at the close of his reign still under the influence of the monks; while the nobility and many of the higher clergy remained as before, ready to take the strong side—whether papal or Protestant. And thus Henry VIII. did not do to Roman Catholicism half the injury that its advocates pretend; for it cannot be disputed that he left it possessed of great vigor and strength.

What he did for Protestantism may be briefly summed up. He taught the nation that the papal scepter could be broken, and that the power and influence of the hierarchy could be checked, if not terminated, by compelling it to submit to the civil laws of the kingdom, as all other citizens were required to do. He put a stop to the enormous accumulation of wealth in the monasteries, which had so long kept the people in poverty and dependence. He opened the way, without intending it, for the further introduction of German influence and of free thought. He inaugurated measures which led to placing the English Bible in the hands of the people. He taught the people the necessity of not forgetting that they were Englishmen, and entitled to an English nationality without being passive subjects of the "King of Rome," either by temporal or divine right. And he established a system of measures which, in the end—how ever designed—steadily led them forward to a point of national greatness never surpassed by any people upon earth, ancient or modern.

Protestantism gained strength by these measures, and ultimately gave rise to many of the most cherished and important provisions of the British Constitution. It still holds the people of England true to their own national fame and greatness; and if they have not yet marched fully up to the side of the people of the United States in demanding the control of their own affairs, they have advanced so far toward it, that they no longer fear to threaten royalty with their power, to hold the lash of public rebuke over their aristocracy, and to assert their right to that full and complete protection which now belongs to every free-born Englishman, whether he be a peer in Parliament, a mechanic in his workshop, or a laborer in the field.

But a little while ago, the leading newspaper in England, and of the world, expressed this thought: "There can be no union between the people and the possessors of unjust privileges, and the fight between them must go on until the people have won." (*London Times*, October 29th, 1871.)

It is the right to utter sentiments such as this that Protestantism has vindicated, and to which the policy of Henry VIII., unconsciously to him, has led. To this extent, then, has he been made the instrument in the hands of Providence of serving England and the nineteenth century; and because of this his memory should not be held wholly in execration. The elements of character were singularly mixed up in him. His training and education as a papist led him into errors, excesses, and vices which we may condemn, even while crediting him with whatever of good he did. Providence often permits beneficent results to be educes from the evil designs of men. Protestantism would have lived and grown without Henry VIII.; but God raised him up within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, so that, becoming familiar with its policy and persecutions, he might the more effectually employ its own weapons to destroy its power to harness down the freedom of religious thought.

But Protestantism in England had to gain strength by the gradual progress of the Reformation, which at every step was resisted by the papists with desperate energy. During the reign of Edward VI., son and successor of Henry VIII., several measures were adopted which aided materially the cause of reform, and proportionately weakened that of the papacy. They were far in advance of any existing at the death of Henry. Masses were abolished, and the cup was given to the people in communion. (Ralpin, vol. viii., p. 33.) The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts was abridged. (*Ibid.*) Priests were allowed to marry. (*Ibid.*, p. 47.)

But these and other kindred measures only incensed the papists to greater violence; and, to avenge themselves, they engaged actively in stirring up insurrections against the Government. The insurrectionists in Devonshire, moved by the priests and monks, set forth their demands in fifteen articles, and insisted upon the consent of Edward to them. In these they required—what is now required of the people and Government of the United States—"that all the general councils and the canons of the Church [of Rome] should be observed;" the immediate object of which was to restore the temporal power of the pope. They also desired that the mass should be in Latin; that images should be set up; that the priests should pray for souls in purgatory; and that "*the people should be forbidden to read the Bible!*" (*Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.)

All these demands being refused, the rebels marched upon and besieged Exeter, which was relieved by the king's troops, under Lord Russel, when the insurgents were dispersed. (*Ibid.*, p. 60.) Another rebellion was also begun by the papists in Northampton, which was suppressed by the Earl of Warwick. (*Ibid.*, p. 62.)

Edward VI. did all in his power to promote the cause of the Reformation by promptly resisting all these revolutionary measures of the papal party; and so far succeeded that the celebrated Confession of Faith—consisting of forty-two articles—which was the foundation of the present Church of England, was drawn up by Cranmer and Ridley during his reign. (Ralpin, vol. viii., p. 85.) This, says the historian, was the last mortal wound given to the *old* religion.

To Edward VI., therefore, justly belongs the honor of having been the *first Protestant King of England*; and all true history assigns to him such honesty

in the administration of affairs, and such purity of personal motive, that, although he died at the early age of sixteen, and reigned but seven years, he was enabled, by his consistent policy, to leave an illustrious record of his virtues; and it must ever be spoken to his praise, that, youthful as he was, he succeeded in holding in check the bad passions which had held their carnival during the reign of his father, and in putting his foot firmly upon the monster of persecution. The rack and the thumb-screw—infernal instruments of the papal Inquisition—were cast aside, and papists were allowed to maintain their religious faith without fear of torture or the scaffold.

Although religious differences may have led to the conviction and execution of his maternal uncle, the Duke of Somerset, yet the young king was constrained to consent to his death because, upon the record of his trial, he appeared guilty of the design to seize upon his own person and the administration of the Government, and for these purposes to raise an insurrection in the city of London. (*Ibid.*, p. 92.)

When he placed his signature to the death-warrant of the Anabaptist Joan Bocher—who was convicted of heresy—he did so with tears in his eyes, yielding rather to the persuasions of Cranmer, who had been trained in the school of Henry VIII., than to his own convictions. And it may be fairly inferred that his assent to the subsequent execution of Van Pare for heresy was obtained by the same influence. But of these executions the papists did not complain on their own account, saying merely that “the Reformers were only against burning when they were in fear of it themselves,” (*Ibid.*, p. 55.(note)) and availing themselves of them to stir up disaffection and insurrections against the Government. (\*)

\* Lingard admits that the Reformers were persecuted under Henry VIII., and charges against Edward VI. only that he prepared to burn the papists, but not that it was actually done. He says: “It might perhaps have been expected that the Reformers, from their sufferings under Henry VIII., would have learned to respect the rights of conscience. They had no sooner obtained the ascendancy, during the short reign of Edward, than they displayed the same persecuting spirit which they had formerly condemned, burning the Anabaptist, and preparing to burn the Catholic at the stake, for no other crime than adherence to religious opinion.”—LINGARD’S *Hist. of Eng.*, vol. v., p. 227, sixth London ed.

If they remain as blots upon his reign, they still leave it white as snow compared with that of his Roman Catholic father, and only go to prove that in times so stamped as those were with the intolerance of Rome, the principles of Protestantism were necessarily of slow growth; that they had to contend against such combinations as, without providential protection, they could not have resisted; and that when in the end they did supplant the antagonistic principles of Romanism, they removed the most crushing weight of tyranny which has ever rested upon mankind since the beginning of the Christian era.

Edward VI. was supposed to entertain some fears that his sister Mary—daughter of Henry VIII. by Catherine of Arragon, and heir to the throne—would, after his death, lend her influence to the papists, on account of her mother’s influence upon her education. The Duke of Northumberland, taking advantage of

this, and probably being the first to suggest it, induced him to set aside the succession of both Mary and Elizabeth—also daughter of Henry VIII. by Anne Boleyn—by the formal assignment of the crown to Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, who, by the will of Henry VIII., was made next in succession after Elizabeth. This act was manifestly without authority of law; and while it resulted from the ambitious desire of the Duke of Northumberland to get the control of the Government during the minority of Jane Grey—who was his daughter-in-law—the motive, on the part of Edward, was to save the Reformation from overthrow. (Rapin, vol. viii., p. 106.) The result, however, was not what either anticipated.

Lady Jane Grey was one of the most accomplished women in England of her age, only sixteen. She was wholly without ambition, and devoted exclusively to her studies and domestic pursuits. At first she declined the crown with befitting modesty, but finally yielded to the entreaties of the Duke of Northumberland, and suffered herself to be proclaimed queen. This was not considered a triumph by the Protestants, who had no confidence in the duke, he being, as they supposed, influenced entirely by his personal ambition, (Rapin, vol. viii., p. 119.) and ready to rejoin the papists if he could thereby promote his temporal interests. And, besides, he was unpopular with the people, on account of his agency in procuring the death of the Duke of Somerset, who was greatly esteemed. And besides, also, there existed a general impression that the assignment of the crown by Edward was illegally made. The papists, of course, took advantage of all this, and zealously pressed the claims of Mary, on account of her known devotion to the pope and her support “of the most extravagant things in the Romnish religion.” (*Ibid.*, p. 121.)

Mary was proclaimed queen at Norwich, and was furnished with troops by the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, to maintain her right. Many, if not a large majority, of these were Reformers who, before they espoused her cause, obtained from her a solemn promise that, while she would reserve to herself the liberty of professing her own religion, she would leave the religion of the kingdom as she found it, that is, as it was at the close of the reign of Edward VI. (\*)

\* Mr. Froude refers to the same promise made by Mary, through Renard, the ambassador of Charles V., a promise of which Renard considered it necessary to remind her before she reached London, in order to defeat her purpose of having the funeral ceremonies of Edward VI. conducted according to the Roman Catholic forms. In his letter to Mary, Renard says: “The country dreaded any fresh convulsions, and her majesty should remember that *she had instructed him to tell the council that she was suspected unjustly, and had no thought of interfering with the existing settlement of the realm.*”—FROUDE’S *Hist. of Eng.*, vol. vi., p. 53.

Whatever may have been her secretly cherished design, they know but little of the history and teachings of the papacy who do not know that it has always regarded such promises as carrying with them no obligation of obedience, but as absolutely void. Innumerable instances are recorded where popes have violated their most solemn promises upon the flimsiest pretexts, and authorized others to do so, alleging, by way of apology, that the interest of the Church demanded it, and that no covenants injurious to that interest were

binding.

We have seen this in the cases of the kings who swore to obey Magna Carta. The Council of Constance disregarded the promise of "safe-conduct" given by the emperor to John Huss, although the pope, by the strongest implication, knew of and assented to it. The Third Lateran Council, in one of the canons enacted by it, declared that "*they are not to be called oaths, but rather perjuries, which are in opposition to the welfare of the Church and the enactments of the holy fathers.*" (\*)

\* Letter from Bishop England (Roman Catholic), late of Charleston, South Carolina, to Rev. R. Fuller, in their published controversy, entitled "Roman Chancery," p. 159. This frank concession of Bishop England would seem to render any additional evidence of this statement unnecessary. But there is abundantly more. These are the words of the canon law:

"An oath contrary to the utility of the Church is not to be observed.

"These are to be called perjuries rather than oaths which are attempted against ecclesiastical utility."—*Decret.* Gregory IX., vol. ii., p. 358, lib. 2, tit. 24, cap. xxvii., *apud* CUMMING, in his *Lectures on Romanism*, p. 72.

That Queen Mary yielded her royal assent to this doctrine is beyond all question. Whether she did it of her own volition, or in obedience to the universal sentiments of the partisans of the papacy, is of no consequence; it is the fact alone that is important. Her first step in that direction was a proclamation qualifying her promise by declaring that she should use no force to compel the adoption of the Roman religion "till all was regulated by the authority of Parliament;" thus indicating the purpose of shielding herself behind that body. (Rapin, vol. viii., p. 134.) This proclamation excited the apprehensions of the people to whom she had made the promise, and they immediately sent to her a petition, praying her "to remember a promise which she had made them with her own mouth." (*Ibid.*, pp. 137, 138.)

The manner in which this petition was received shows not only the perfidious character of this queen, but how completely she was controlled by the unprincipled hierarchy of Rome, and the low state of morals which prevailed among them. It was haughtily rejected as offensive to royalty, because it reproached the queen with failure of her word! The petitioners were told that "subjects were not to control the action of their sovereigns;" and Dolbe, one of the number who had borne the petition, was set in the pillory. (Rapin, vol. viii., p. 138. Lingard fails to give any account of this transaction probably from prudential motives.)

The mask was then unblushingly thrown aside, and from that time the reign of this false queen was distinguished by some of the most bloody and cruel acts of persecution of which English history gives any account. She did not even spare the innocent Jane Grey, whose head fell beneath the axe of her executioner, for what others had done in her name. A Protestant judge was fined a thousand pounds sterling for ordering the justices of Kent to conform

themselves to the laws of Edward, not yet repealed. (*Ibid.*, p. 139.) The prisons were filled with the victims of papal vengeance, and it was soon made apparent that they were to be forced to disavow their Protestantism. Steps were taken, without delay, to provide for the abrogation of "all laws which had been made in favor of the Reformation, and to restore the ancient religion." (*Ibid.*, p. 142.)

With a view to this, it was resolved to prohibit a free election of the Commons, in order to prevent the return of a majority of Reformers; and thus to avoid any Parliamentary action which should reflect the will of the people. The whole power of the queen was employed for this purpose, and, says Rapin, "all sorts of artifices, frauds, and even violence, were put in practice to carry the election in favor of the court." (*Ibid.*, p. 142.) Protestant magistrates were removed and Romanists put in their places. The people were intimidated "by menaces, by actions, by imprisonments on the most frivolous pretenses." (*Ibid.*) Protestants were not allowed in some places to participate in the election assemblies; false returns were made without scruple; and thus a majority of the Commons favorable to the queen and the pope was obtained.

It did not, of course, take a Parliament thus elected long to repeal all the laws of Edward, and to legalize the persecutions against the Protestants. This accomplished, the queen, through the intrigues of Charles V., was afterward married to Philip of Spain, his son, in order to put the throne of England in a more complete state of dependence upon the pope, and to introduce the system of persecution so long practiced by the Spanish Inquisition, and with which the English people had not yet become familiar. The sequel proved that the real object was, not to convert the Protestants, but to overwhelm and *exterminate* them. (Rapin, vol. viii., p. 212.)

The whole reign of Mary was, consequently, one of blood. In the last year before her death thirty-nine Protestants suffered martyrdom; and four of these about a week before she died! It is difficult to arrive at a true estimate of the number of her Protestant victims—it being variously stated at from two to eight hundred! (*Ibid.*, p. 213, and note.)

That the object of Philip in becoming the husband of Mary was to obtain control of the English Government, so as to subject the people to the complete dominion of the papacy, there is no earthly doubt. His ruling passion was ambition, and there was no surer method of gratifying it than to become master of England. ("Hist. of Eng.," by Hume, vol. iii., p. 410.) "He inherited his father's vices, fraud and ambition," and "united to them more dangerous vices of his own, sullen pride and barbarity. England seemed already a province of Spain, groaning under the load of despotism, and subjected to all the horrors of the Inquisition. The people were everywhere ripe for rebellion, and wanted only an able leader to have subverted the queen's authority. No such leader appeared." ("Modern Europe," by Russell, vol. ii., p. 346.)

And why did no such leader appear? All candid historians give the answer. The nobility had become so corrupted that they cared for nothing but to retain their power, which they were ready to do by conforming to the royal will, no

matter at what sacrifice of character or conscience. The few of them who dared to maintain their independence, or to defend the right of the people to adopt their own form of religious belief, paid for it with their lives, or escaped miraculously. The bishops who had favored the Reformation were removed, and Romish bishops put in their places; and these last, in a short time—true to the papal policy—became “a power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself.” They were the fit tools of the papacy—fully prepared and ready, not only to dictate to Philip and Mary the bloody work which Rome required to be done, but to do it with untiring alacrity.

A few years before, during the reign of Henry VIII., the pope, Paul III., had entered into an alliance with the emperor, Charles V., the father of Philip, for the extermination of heresy in Germany; or, “in other words,” says Mr. Russell, “for oppressing the liberties of Germany, *under pretense of maintaining the jurisdiction of the Holy See.*” (Russell, vol. ii., p. 296.) This league—one of the most infamous and accursed in all history—was understood by both the contracting parties to involve the necessity of applying *force* to put down the hitherto unresisting Protestants, to totally destroy them! That the pope so understood it, is shown by the fact that it bound him to furnish the emperor with twelve thousand foot, five hundred horse, and two hundred thousand crowns, for carrying on the war. He also gave the emperor one year’s revenue of the benefices in Spain, with power to alienate a hundred thousand crowns’ worth of Church lands, to defray his expenses! (Rapin, vol. vii., p. 684; Fox’s “Book of Martyrs,” Philadelphia ed., pp. 602, 603.)

Trained in such a school as this, and with such examples for his imitation, no wonder that Philip felt himself charged with the obligation to inaugurate a reign of terror in England—one transcending all the outrages and enormities of Henry VIII. Under the pressure, therefore, of such a system, far the larger part of those who were concerned in the management of the Government and Church in England sunk into ignominious subjection to the joint power of the crown and the papacy; and the people, without some master spirit to guide them, were compelled to submit to the same degradation. Those from whom they had a right to expect encouragement and protection either suffered death at the hands of the public executioner, or were engaged in contriving plans for their greater humiliation. These latter, both peers and bishops, labored “how to qualify and mold the sufferance and subjection of the people to the length of that foot that is to tread on their necks; how rapine may serve itself with the fair and honorable pretense of public good; how the puny law may be brought under the wardship and control of lust and will.” (Milton’s Prose Works, vol. i., p. 17. ) And their efforts were successful, according to the most sanguine anticipations of the pope, of Charles V., of Philip, and of all those who were thirsting for Protestant blood, and were ready to engage in exterminating its possessors.

Cardinal Pole, who had been driven out of England, and had received the protection of Charles V., and who was thoroughly devoted to the papacy, was recalled, and placed in such relations to Queen Mary that he was allowed to mold her policy in reference to both temporal and ecclesiastical affairs. He was governed by instructions from Rome, which, of course, required him to



reduce England to the low condition of becoming again a papal province.

In an oration, delivered before Philip and Mary and the whole Parliament, this cardinal, as legate of the pope, spoke of the great love of the pope for England, on account of its having been the first island converted to Christianity; reminded them that this affection was so strong in the mind of Pope Adrian IV. that he gave to King Henry II. "the right and seignioly (the power, rank, or estate of a feudal lord) of the dominion of Ireland, which pertained to the See of Rome;" referred to his conference with the Emperor Charles V., who, he said, "hath travailed most in the cause of religion;" and avowed the purpose of his mission to be the bringing of England into unity with Rome. This, said he, required that all should adhere to the pope as "vicar of God," who derives his power not from man or the consent of governments, but "from above;" and whose power is both "imperial and ecclesiastical!" And he told them that, in order to bring the nation into subjection to the pope, they must "revoke and repeal those laws and statutes which be impediments, blocks, and bars to the execution of my [his] commission!" (Fox's "Book of Martyrs," pp. 309–312.)

"The pope never interferes with temporal affairs!" constantly declare his followers. But here he stood before the whole nation of England, in the person of his legate, who spoke by his command, and directed such legislation by Parliament as should concentrate all dominion in his hands! Not interfere with temporal affairs!—when he causes his legate to tell the people of England that they ought to become his slaves, because his predecessor, Adrian IV., had given Ireland to them, and made the Irish people their slaves! Not interfere with temporal affairs!—when he points out the very acts and statutes which are to be abrogated and repealed! Not interfere with temporal affairs!—when this great legate, at one of the most critical points in English history tells the king, queen, and Parliament that the power of the pope over the nation comes directly from God, and that it is therefore "imperial and ecclesiastical," and that it will be for the welfare of their "souls and bodies" that they should obey him!

The legate was obeyed; the pope had his own way; the obnoxious statutes were all repealed; the people were subdued by threats, persecution, and bloodshed; and Philip and Mary did all they could to carry out the infernal league between Charles V. and the pope. No matter what else a man did, if he acknowledged the supremacy of the pope, he was rewarded by royal and papal favor. No matter how faithful a Protestant was to all the obligations of citizenship, his religion was crime enough to subject him to torture or death. Philip had brought with him from Spain the passion for torture which the Inquisition had incited there; and the war of extermination was carried on with a thirst for blood such as fills alike the mind of an untutored savage and an intolerant pope.

John Rogers and other martyrs were burned to ashes for the crime of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, and calling the Church of Rome the Church of Antichrist. (Fox's "Book of Martyrs," p.330.) When Bishop Hooper was carried to the stake, the process of burning was so tardy that he died by slow degrees of torture, knocking his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off, and then with the other till it stuck fast to the hot iron!

(*Ibid.*, p.350.) Latimer and Ridley had to be burned to gratify the vengeance of that "papistical monster," Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England. (*Ibid.*, p. 382.) And so horrible were the innumerable cruelties practiced upon the multitude of papal victims, that the blood almost curdles as we read, at this distance of time, the narratives of them. As they stand without example in all history—except in the pagan persecutions of the early Christians, and the Romish persecutions in the valleys of the Vaudois—so there is nothing to save them from universal execration. All that even Lingard can say for them is that "it was the lot of Mary to live in an age of religious intolerance, when to punish the professors of erroneous doctrine was inculcated as a duty no less by those who rejected than by those who asserted the papal authority " (Lingard, vol. v., p. 227.)—overlooking the important facts that up to the reign of Mary there had been no persecution in England in behalf of Protestantism; that Henry VIII. had persecuted both papists and Protestants, and was never a Protestant in religious faith; and that no single drop of Roman Catholic blood had been shed during the Protestant reign of Edward VI.!

But we have already learned that the persecutions of Protestants in England did not begin with either Mary or Henry VIII. The examples heretofore enumerated show that it was learned by both of them, not alone from some of their Roman Catholic predecessors, but from the direct teachings and faith of the Church at Rome, which were supported by the False Decretals and the additions made to them from time to time, after the adoption of the original forgeries. But these forgeries merely conferred the power to persecute when necessary for the Church: the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council made it a duty, and fixed a penalty for its non-performance. This was manifestly the interpretation given to it by Pope Gregory IX. in his subsequent attempt to execute this canon with all the terrible vengeance it invited. With a view to the extortion of money, he exacted, in England, a tenth part of all the movable goods of the kingdom. (Rapin, vol. iii., p. 303; Cormenin, vol. i., p. 409.) Because the Emperor Frederick hindered the persecution of the Albigenses, and for other reasons, he excommunicated him, and released all his subjects from their allegiance;" (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 471.) which proves incontestably that the duty to persecute and exterminate heretics was not only a part of the canon law, but of the doctrinal faith of the Church!

To give the utmost possible strength to the injunction, this same pope, Gregory IX., announced (infallibly[!], of course) the impious doctrine, that "Christians should not regard the sanctity of an oath toward him who is the enemy of God, and who tramples under feet the decrees of the Church!" (Cormenin, vol. i., p. 470.) Claiming, as he did, in the most unequivocal manner, the right to govern the world, temporally and spiritually, by virtue of power derived from God, it is not to be doubted that when he sent the code of canon laws into England, during the reign of Henry III., the decree of the Lateran Council constituted a part of it; and that, interpreted by the persecutions of the Albigenses, it was designed to place *the duty of exterminating heretics* upon the ground that he who did so would thereby serve God and will his way to heaven! It was so understood by Henry IV. more than a hundred years after Gregory IX., when he assured a convocation of the papal clergy, in London, that he was ready to join them in whatever means should be

judged proper to extirpate heresy and punish obstinate heretics!(Rapin, vol. v., p. 15.)

Now, when it is considered that this Lateran decree became the canon law in England three hundred years before Luther; that it was enforced against the Lollards more than a hundred years before that time, and when those in favor of reform in the Church were too feeble to attempt persecution in any form; and when it is remembered that it became the law of the Church of Rome by the solemn action of the Twelfth Ecumenical Council and the approval of the infallible pope, Innocent III., and was expressly recognized by another infallible pope, Gregory IX.;(\*) and that the Church of Rome requires every act thus performed to be held as unerringly right as if done by Christ himself; then the whole responsibility for the introduction of religious persecution into England unquestionably rests with the popes of Rome and their ecclesiastical and royal subordinates, all of whom, under the influence of such teachings, learned to rejoice when the muscles of their victims cracked under their torture, and their bodies were consumed in the flames!

\* By the highest Roman Catholic authority it is said: "In the Fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215, held by his [Innocent's] authority, the discipline of the Church was regulated by seventy wholesome decrees, or canons, very famous in the canon law."—BUTLER'S Lives of the Saints, Sadlier & Co.'s ed., vol. x., p. 56 (note).

And thus we see that the persecution of Protestants became legitimated and sanctified in the eyes of the popes, princes, and hierarchy of the Romish Church; and thus did that Church give its high sanction to the persecutions of Mary. And it will ever stand so written in history, whatsoever ingenuity may be resorted to, or falsehood employed, to deny or disguise it. The canons of the Lateran Council still remain the law of the Roman Catholic Church! The pope who made the infamous compact with Charles V. was infallible (!), and therefore could not err! The recent decree of infallibility makes all that he did, and all that every other pope has done in the domain of faith and morals, as unerring as if done by God himself! But the nineteenth century has reason to thank God that there are no more such rulers upon the thrones of Christendom as Charles and Philip and Mary. If there were, the Encyclical and Syllabus of Pius IX. would soon find bloody work for them to do in their dominions.

No royal marriage ever occurred in England more fatal to the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom than that of Philip and Mary. That it was plotted by the pope and Charles V., and that they employed Cardinal Pole to accomplish it, there seems no reason to doubt. It was in manifest opposition to the wishes of the English people, who desired the marriage of their queen to a native prince. It could never have been accomplished, for there was no pretense of affection about it, had not Mary been completely under the control of the papacy and the papists. She was a religious bigot, to so great an extent that she had no will of her own in opposition to the commands of the pope or other authorities of the Church. She may have been sincere in the conviction that it was best for the people that they should be governed in obedience to these authorities, rather than by laws of their own making; but, however this was, she did govern them as if England still remained a Roman

province. She permitted the pope, by his legate, to dictate what should and what should not be done. No law was enforced against the wishes of the pope, and everything commanded by him was blindly and faithfully executed. He governed England as if he were the occupant of its throne.

Cardinal Pole was an Englishman, it is true, but the papacy never had a more zealous defender of all its usurpations and oppressions than he was. As the presiding, genius and guiding spirit of the court, he was the papal manipulator of all who had anything to do with the affairs of the Government. He represented the pope directly and immediately, kept him regularly advised of whatever transpired, and obeyed all his edicts with a fidelity and zeal that challenged the admiration of Rome. So that by means of his and the influence of Philip over Mary, her reign was as completely papal, in all its leading features and characteristics, as if the English crown had lawfully rested upon the head of the pope. In all this she was unjust to the nation, and must ever be regarded as a betrayer of its trust. ("History of England," by Froude, vol. vi., p. 489, etc.)

There is no reason for disguising the fact that Elizabeth, after the death of Mary, persecuted the papists. She, too, had been educated and trained under Romish influences, and before the commencement of her reign had professed the Roman Catholic religion. It is hard to get rid of the influences of education, especially when they have produced intolerance; and in such times as she lived, when everything tended to extremes, but few endeavored to do so; and these few were hidden in the multitude, who floated along with the current, rather than assert any counteracting principles.

If Elizabeth had any special ideas of the duties of a sovereign, beyond those which involved the simple administration of the Government, she acquired them as a sort of family inheritance from her father, and by immediate personal intercourse with Mary. If she had any conception of church discipline or church organization, or of a system of religious faith, it was likewise acquired in the same way. Having learned by such means as these, with the influence of the papal clergy super-added to them, that it was the duty of the custodians of any religious organization to maintain it by *force* when necessary; this, in other words, being an essential part of the Romish system of religion, when she reached the throne it is not to be wondered at that whatever she felt it her duty to do was done under these influences and according to these principles.

She had to deal with ambitious and proud ecclesiastics, whose hands were yet red with some of the best blood of England, and who had inculcated the necessity of exterminating heretics, according to the Lateran decree, in order to secure the protection of the Church in this life, and eternal happiness in the next. And if, when she found them to be her own enemies and the persecutors of those of her subjects with whom she sympathized, and saw them relaxing none of their efforts to keep the crown of England subject to the disposal of the pope, she struck back at them with their own weapons, what is there very surprising about it, considering all the circumstances and the times? She did persecute papists, cruelly and wrongfully, but she persecuted Protestants also, like her father. She found the papal system relying for its chief strength and support upon the State; and had not

advanced so far toward the results designed by the best Protestant reformers as to understand how a new system could be established without the preservation of this principle. Like the papal advocates of the old system, she, too, derived the right to govern directly from God, and not from the people; and, in common with them, desired the union between the Church and the State to be preserved, in order that imperialism should not be endangered. And hence, led on by existing complications, and by motives thus engendered, she aimed her blows at all the enemies of her civil as well as ecclesiastical authority—at Protestants as well as papists. If, therefore, there are victims of her cruelty who will rise up in judgment against her when they shall meet her at the final bar, she can say, as can also Henry VIII., that, unlike the persecutions of her sister Mary, they were not all of one Church— that both Roman Catholics and Protestants fell beneath her royal vengeance!

Let the true distinction be observed. She persecuted Roman Catholics because they denied her ecclesiastical supremacy, and endeavored to snatch the scepter of the kingdom from her hands and lay it at the feet of the pope. She persecuted Protestants because they denied both her ecclesiastical supremacy and her divine right, and inculcated a doctrine which she and her courtiers saw, at a glance, would ultimately dispense with the agency of kings in the management of public affairs. And she entered, with her strong will and unconquerable resolution, upon the task of building up a new system and a new Church, which, while it should gather up the fundamental principles of the old British Christians—almost buried beneath a load of oppression which had existed for nearly a thousand years— should, at the same time, preserve enough of modern Romanism to keep the people in complete subjection to the dominion of kings.

Hence it is easy to see that her persecuting spirit antedated all the Protestantism she had, and was the natural fruit of the papal intolerance to which she had, all her life, been accustomed. She was trained, by both precept and example, in the religious belief that it was ordained of God that the Church and the State should remain united; and, as the undoubted Queen of England, she demanded the recognition, by all her subjects, of her right to govern both. She did not intend that their fealty should be divided between her and the Pope of Rome, or the army of foreign ecclesiastics he had imported into her dominions; but, woman as she was, resolved that the crown should rest exclusively upon her own brow, and that the scepter of absolutism should be grasped by her own hand. When she began her persecutions against the papists, she, like Henry VIII., might have been reconciled to Rome but for the question of supremacy.

But between her and the Puritans there was no point of reconciliation, for the plain reason that their Protestantism struck directly at the foundation of her royal right to govern the conscience and hold it in passive obedience to authority. The Protestantism she desired to build up was mere antagonism to the papacy, mere resistance to the right of the pope to govern England. She understood it to involve, necessarily, the existence of an English episcopacy,—hierarchical, but not Roman—and the maintenance of a Church organization attached to the State, but, unlike that of Rome, subordinate to

its laws. Upon these questions there was no common ground of union between her and the Protestantism then struggling for existence, which was striving to unshackle the conscience, and to establish, upon the basis of the old English liberties, the right of free thought and free speech. She, possibly, might not have been disposed to quarrel with the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Puritans, or Lutherans, upon many of the fundamental principles of their faith, had they been willing to concede her ecclesiastical as well as temporal supremacy; but with her the denial of this was an unpardonable violation of obedience to the crown, although she knew that it had led to the separation from Rome.

In so far as she was influenced by religious motives at all, her chief object was to re-establish the National Church organization of Edward, either upon the basis of the articles then adopted, or such new ones as should give it strength and efficiency enough to cope successfully with its powerful antagonist, the papacy. Her courage, more than her piety, was tried at every step. Multitudes of difficulties and embarrassments crowded into every hour of the controversy. Those immediately around her—with some honorable exceptions—by whom her ecclesiastical policy was directed, were, in the main, governed by inordinate selfishness, and were ready to sacrifice even religion itself to obtain the possession of wealth, power, and station. In these respects they were no improvement upon the Romish hierarchy, to whom the most of them had belonged. They were papists or Protestants, according to circumstances; passing from one to the other with the ease and facility of time-serving politicians. They were Protestants under Edward, papists under Mary, and again Protestants under Elizabeth.

Surrounded by such influences, it is altogether probable that Elizabeth might have been prevailed on by her clergy to accept either a Roman Catholic or a Protestant creed, accordingly as their own personal fortunes were advanced; and that the creed adopted, in so far as herself and her courtiers were concerned, was assented to from no higher motive. As with Henry VIII., so with her—the question of supremacy merged all others; which shows her persecutions, even more than his, to have grown naturally out of the times and the affairs of her kingdom, as they had been molded by the policy of the papacy. She fell back behind the reign of Mary upon the issue made by Henry VIII. with the papacy; and this led her to abrogate everything that Mary had done concerning religion. And as Henry VIII. had not gone so far as to deny the fundamental principles of the Romish faith which she could not preserve without defeating the project of a National Church in England—she adopted that form of religion which had been established by law during the reign of Edward VI. This was merely Protestantism in an imperfect and undeveloped form; not that which Luther and his adherents had established in Germany, nor that which the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Puritans, and other non-conformists maintained in England, nor that which now exists in England, Prussia, and the United States. It was a religious system established by law, like the papal system it was designed to supplant, in opposition to the liberalizing tendencies of true Protestantism—of that which has been since developed. It was, in a word, an attempt to constitute a system of *imperial Protestantism*, constructed after the model of *imperial Romanism*, its authors being seemingly unconscious of the fact that it contained elements altogether

too incongruous for reconciliation and harmony.

Not only, therefore, did Elizabeth strive hard to throw off all the influences left upon the country by the reign of Mary, but she strove equally hard to prevent all those who desired a further and fuller development of Protestantism from disseminating their doctrines among the people. Having to maintain her own supremacy against the papists, and her divine right to govern against the more advanced Protestants, her persecutions, consequently, embraced both these classes. She found ready at hand a system of persecution regularly organized by the hands of the papists, after the Roman and Spanish methods, which came to her as a family inheritance from her sister Mary. And she employed this more furiously, it is true, against the papists than the Protestants, because they were her most powerful and formidable adversaries, and were supported by a Church which had made itself almost omnipotent by ruling the nations and peoples of Europe with imperial grandeur for hundreds of years.

Such a contestant could not be successfully resisted, except by hard blows; and as this Church had made itself great by employing such blows against all its antagonists, Elizabeth did not hesitate to retaliate upon it with its own weapons, to employ its own instruments of torture, to light the fagots around the bodies of its children with the same torch which it had set on fire when the body of William Sawtre was burned under the reign of Henry IV. Hence, her persecutions of the papists were precisely such as were practiced by the papists themselves against the Reformers under Mary and some of her papal predecessors. Hence, also, her persecutions of the non-conforming Protestants were less excusable, because less provoked, and were therefore cruel and merciless. By the former she broke the papal power, and provided thereby for not only the triumph, but the subsequent elevation, of her kingdom, and to that extent was a public benefactor. By the latter she failed to destroy the courage and true nobility of character which belonged to the English people, or to eradicate from their minds the principles of Anglo-Saxon liberty. These principles were providentially preserved, until a system of fully developed Protestantism, as it now exists in the United States, has grown out of them; and this, reacting upon the English mind, is rapidly leading, in that country as it has done in this, to an abrogation of the divine right of kings, and a full recognition of the right and capacity of the people to govern themselves.

Continued in [Chapter XVII. Coercive Power of the Church](#)