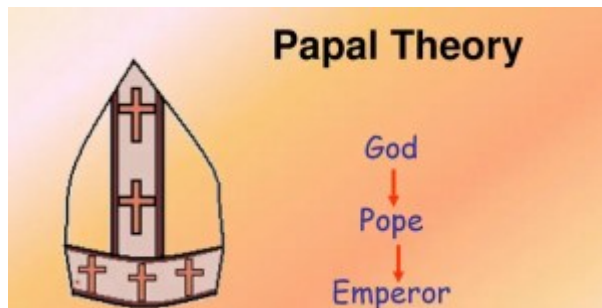


The Papacy And The Civil Power –

Chapter XXIII. The Papal Theory of Government



Continued from [The Papacy And The Civil Power – Chapter XXII. The Papacy Always Exclusive.](#)

The Papal Theory of Government.—The Kind of Christian State it requires.—The Laws of Theodosius and Justinian.—The Ordinances in France in the Times of her Kings most in Favor at Rome.—No Other Religion than the Roman Catholic allowed.—Heresy made a Crime against the State.—Modes of punishing Heretics.—These Laws required by the Church. The State Heretical without them.—The Protestant System.—Separates the Church and the State.—Is in Obedience to the Example of Christ and the Apostles.—The Harmony they established between the Spiritual and Temporal Powers disturbed by the Popes.—The Consequences of disturbing this Harmony.—Papal Doctrines in the United States.—They subject the State to the Government of the Pope.—How far they do this.—In All Temporals which concern the Faith or Morality.—The Government cannot stand if this Doctrine prevail.—The Extent to which it is carried. It is based upon the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII.—"Temporal Monarchy" claimed as Necessary for the World.—Harmonious Condition of the First Christians.— Churches planted in Asia before those in Europe.—The Work well done by the Apostles.—Jerusalem the "Mother Church."—"No Necessity for Another at Rome.—The Consequences of Opposition to the Apostolic Plan.—They lead to the Reformation.—Effect of the Reformation.—Present Efforts of the Papacy to turn the World back.—The Contest in the United States.—Conclusion.

PROTESTANT no less than Roman Catholic Christians assign to the spiritual and temporal powers a common foundation in the order and appointment of God. But they differ with them essentially in the application of this general principle to the civil affairs of government.

The papal theory of government, taking this principle as the starting-point, reaches the following results: that the Church and the State, having this common origin, are bound to extend mutual aid to each other; that the Church, belonging to the spiritual or higher order, is bound to see that both the State and individuals conform, in their laws and conduct, to the law of God; and that, as the two powers are thus united in the common end of obtaining order and holding society together, they should also be so united in their action that the Church, as the superior, may always be in a condition to command obedience from the State, as the inferior. As it regards all those things which do not concern the law of God or the moral well-being of society, the State is left to deal with its citizens, collectively and individually, without any interference from the Church. This is its separate and independent sphere of action. But whenever questions arise which involve

conformity to the law of God or of morality, then the Church is bound to interfere and prescribe the rule of conduct both to the State and the individual. This is called the separate and independent sphere of the Church. Correlative obligations arise out of these relations. The chiefest of these is, that when the Church commands what the law of God and morality require, the State is bound to obey, just as each individual is. And if it does not obey, it, like the individual, is subject to whatsoever penalty the Church may prescribe for disobedience. (*)

* "Politics, or the science which treats of the State, its rights, duties, and relations, presents from its ethical character many points of contact with revealed truth. The principles on which it is based flow from the natural law. They can never, therefore, be in real contradiction with the precepts of the divine and positive law. Hence the State, if it only remains true to its fundamental principles, must ever be in the completest harmony with the Church and revelation. Now, so long as this harmony continues, the Church has neither call nor right to interfere with the State, for earthly politics do not fall within her direct jurisdiction. *The moment, however, the State becomes unfaithful to its principles, and contravenes the divine and positive law, that moment it is the Church's right and duty, as guardian of revealed truth, to interfere, and to proclaim to the State the truths which it has ignored, and to condemn the erroneous maxims which it has adopted.*"—*When does the Church speak Infallibly?* by Thomas Francis Knox, of the London Oratory, London ed., pp. 70, 71.

In looking through the history of such governments as have been constructed upon the papal plan, we find many illustrations of the manner in which these principles have been practically applied, especially in reference to the infliction of such penalties as the Church has from time to time imposed for the violation of its laws. The codes of the emperors Theodosius and Justinian contain many laws relating to religion, enacted only in obedience to the command of the Church; merely, says Domat, in his great work on the Civil Law, "to enforce the observance of the laws which the Church herself, and the spiritual powers to whom God has committed the care of her, have established, and to protect and maintain the execution of those laws."

Referring further to these emperors, thus obedient to the Church, and to those kings of France under whose reigns ordinances on religious subjects were passed of the same nature, this same author says,

"They add to the authority of the laws of the Church that which God has put in their hands; enjoining, as to what concerns the articles of faith, their subjects to submit themselves to the doctrine of the Church, prohibiting all persons to preach or to teach anything contrary thereto, and enacting punishments against heretics." ("The Civil Law," etc., by Domat, London ed., 1737, vol. ii., p. 507.)

These are not called laws of the Church, and, strictly speaking, they are not, because they are not enacted by the spiritual, but by the temporal, authority. They are passed, however, because the Church obliges the State to enact them as a necessary protection to its religion and what it calls its "free exercise," and holds the State to be heretical if it does not do so. If the laws are passed according to its dictation, then the civil power, being

Christian, must be obeyed; but if they are not, then the Church releases all citizens from the obligation of obedience to it, because it is sinful to obey an heretical power. And this is called rendering "unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

In France, when the papal power was sufficiently predominant to exact obedience to the laws of the Church, it caused the temporal power to be so employed in matters relating to the Church, that sundry laws were enacted which exhibit, in a strong light, the real spirit of the papal system of government. Domat, in defining the policy which prompted them, says it requires "that Catholic princes prohibit within their dominions divisions touching matters of religion, schisms, and the exercise of any other religion except the Catholic alone, and exclude all heretics from it, by inflicting penalties against them as there is occasion." (*Ibid.*, p. 515.)

Again, speaking of the obligation resting upon the civil magistrate, he says: "It is likewise his duty to employ his authority for enforcing the observance of the laws of the Church, in so far as they contain rules about manners which may regard the public order." ("The Civil Law," etc., by Domat, London ed., 1737, vol. ii., p. 516.)

And the same obligation is said to rest upon princes. (*Ibid.*, p. 517.) And then, as a consequence necessarily resulting from this superiority of the Church and inferiority of the State, he says "that no person has a right to revenge the encroachments which the ministers of the Church may make on the rights of temporal princes;" (*Ibid.*, p. 519.) thus exempting the pope, in administering the affairs of the papacy, from responsibility to any earthly power, and extending or limiting his jurisdiction only as his own discretion shall dictate.

One of these ordinances was in these words: "Heresy is a crime of high treason against the Divine Majesty, whereof one is guilty when he abandons the true Catholic faith, and obstinately maintains an error which the Universal Church hath condemned." (*Ibid.*, p. 524.)

And another: "They who will not hearken to the Church, which is the pillar of truth, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, ought to be treated as heathens and publicans." (*Ibid.*, p. 625.)

The following modes whereby the progress of heresy was required to be hindered are particularly pointed out: take from heretics the places where they assemble for worship; forbid them from assembling in private houses; remove their ministers into distant parts; "take care that the children of heretics be educated in the schools of the orthodox;" prevent heretics from holding any public office or any honorable employment, or from exercising reputable professions, such as advocates, physicians, or professors in colleges; subject them to corporal punishment; and, finally, put them to death. (*Ibid.*, pp. 625, 626.)

And those guilty of blasphemy were thus dealt with: they were fined for the first offense, but, in the event of frequent relapses, their lips are pierced with a hot iron, their tongue is cut out, and they are condemned to

the pillory, to banishment, or to the galleys," and, at last, " even to death itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 627.)

These ordinances were enacted in France during the reigns of those kings who are held in the highest estimation by the papacy, as the most beloved and honored sons of the Church, on account of their obedience to its commands and their devotion to the cause of religion. By means of them, and others of like nature, they caused themselves to be esteemed in Rome as foremost among Christian princes, and placed France in the very front rank of Christian states.

The nation presented to the world a model form of government, according to the papal plan. If it had not passed these laws in obedience to the dictation of the Church, it would have been heretical, and not Christian. And if those who exercised the temporal power had not caused them to be vigorously executed, they would have subjected themselves to the anathemas of the Church. Thus we see the nature and character of the civil institutions for which we are now asked to exchange our own—in other words, what the papacy and its defenders mean by a *Christian* state!

Why are Roman Catholic states required to exhibit their obedience to the Church by enacting such laws as these? Manifestly, because they concern the faith, and the principles involved in them are considered necessary to be believed as a part of it. They are laws for the advancement and protection of religion—rules prescribed by the Church to the State, whereby the State and its citizens are to be held in the line of religious duty, and thus maintain their Christian character. The obligation of obedience on the part of both is the same—the measure of punishment differing from necessity. As the above-named ordinances cannot reach the State, which has no corporeal body to be punished or soul to be damned, it becomes equally heretical with the individual by its act of disobedience, and thereby forfeits its right to exist as a state—because the Church considers it as much a violation of the laws of God for a state to commit heresy, as it does for an individual to commit it. And those who administer its affairs forfeit their right to do so, because they are guilty of treason against God. Consequently, the Church—that is, the pope—releases the citizens of the heretical State from any further obligation to obey its laws or its heretical governors, and supplies it with such other laws and governors as shall put it back again upon the Christian path!

The Protestant system of government draws a marked and palpable line of distinction between religion and civil policy—between the Church and the State; and while recognizing also their common foundation in the order and appointment of God, it so separates them in their respective spheres of action that neither shall trench upon the jurisdiction of the other, and therefore leaves no question of submission by the temporal to the spiritual authority, and, consequently, none about punishment of the State for disobedience to the laws of the Church. It leaves religion to its influence upon the hearts of individuals, so as to form good dispositions within each one, in order that society may be influenced by the love of justice and right, and the government be enabled, under these influences, to secure the public tranquility.

In this it follows, with strict exactitude, the example of Christ Himself. Before His appearing, the Jewish commonwealth consisted in a union of Church and State the subjection of the temporal to the spiritual power. But He came upon earth to undo this old order of things, and to establish His spiritual kingdom. In order to do this so that it should stand out prominently before the world as something distinct from what had ever existed before, He expressly abstained from exercising His own spiritual power over temporal things, or over any of the affairs of existing governments. So far from doing so, whatever He did was directly opposite to the grandeur and power of a temporal kingdom—of such a kingdom as the papacy afterward built up at Rome. He did not take a single mark of temporal power. He exercised no single function of it. On the contrary, when appealed to by one brother to cause another to divide the inheritance with him, He refused to act the part of judge. (Luke xii., 13, 14.)

To show that it was necessary to His spiritual kingdom that it should exist apart from the temporal power—be separated entirely from it—He left the temporal princes to exercise the latter, and He himself paid strict obedience to them. As God, He caused his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, to go up to Bethlehem, to be taxed, under a decree from Caesar Augustus; (Luke ii., 1–5.) thereby making even His birth to depend on His obedience to a law of a heathen prince. In order to demonstrate the absolute necessity of disuniting His own spiritual kingdom from the temporal kingdoms of princes, He taught his disciples to render unto the temporal power what belonged to it; and exhibited the manner of doing this by requiring Peter to pay tribute—money at Capernaum, when none was due, and by working a miracle for that purpose. (Matthew xvii., 24–27.) He pointed out the distinction between his spiritual kingdom and the temporal power of princes, by declaring, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John xviii., 36.)

When He was delivered up to be crucified, He told Pilate that He could have had no temporal power at all against Him, except it were given him from God, (John xix., 11.) and yet did not employ His own supernatural power to release Himself from His enemies and persecutors. When He made His disciples the ministers of His spiritual kingdom, He prescribed to them rules for the government of their conduct, and defined the boundaries of the power He entrusted to them, He did not give them a single iota of power over temporal affairs. And they, obedient to His commands, neither claimed nor exercised any temporal power. On the contrary, they obeyed it, as He had done.

And although the temporal princes opposed them in their ministry, and persecuted them under temporal laws, they practiced obedience themselves and taught it to their followers, performing all the duties of their sacred ministry, without attempting, in any single instance, to break down the authority of the temporal power or to subject it to the spiritual power which Christ had given them. “Taken from among men,” and “ordained for men in things pertaining to God,” (Hebrews v., 1.) they exercised their ministry in spiritual things, without intruding themselves upon temporals, inculcating at the same time, on the part of those who exercised the temporal power, the necessity of their not encroaching upon spirituals. And thus, while they recognized both powers as established by the hand of God, the harmony between

them consisted in the performance by each of its own distinctive functions; the spiritual purifying the heart of man and fitting him for all the duties of life, and the temporal conforming to his wants and necessities arising out of the discharge of those duties.

There would have been no disturbance of this harmony but for the establishment and introduction of the canon law of Rome. Nor would even this have done it, had its operations been confined to the temporal things within the territories known as "the States of the Church" of Rome. When, however, the provisions of this law were carried beyond these territories by those kings who held their crowns from the popes and their governments to be "fiefs of the See of Rome," collisions between the two powers immediately began, and did not end until ignorance and superstition became almost universal, as in the Middle Ages, and the temporal power was subjugated by the spiritual. The same spirit of ambition which incited these popes to stretch out their arms beyond the limits of their Italian possessions influenced them to the effort of making the world a grand "Holy Empire," with themselves its rulers; and when they so far succeeded as to cause governments to be framed according to the papal (or what they called the Christian) plan, mankind became subject to such laws as we have seen embodied in the ordinances of France, when, under their dictation, that Government was held up as a model for all Christian states!

Thus we see the radical and irreconcilable difference between these two opposing systems of government—the Protestant and the papal. And it is impossible to escape the conviction that the substitution of the former for the latter was not only accordant to the principles recognized by Christ and the apostles, but absolutely necessary to elevate and improve the condition of mankind. So long as but one form of religious faith was tolerated, and all else was regarded as treason against God, popes and princes kept mankind in degrading servitude, by the infliction of the most terrible punishments. *Charity, love, and the mild Christian virtues, so beautifully exemplified in the lives of Christ and the apostles, were dethroned by hatred and revenge.*

And now, when the established, fully developed, and tolerant Protestantism of the United States has carried us forward to the very front rank of the nations, we have those among us who impudently tell us that every step of our prosperity is marked by treason to God, and that they are the chosen and selected vicegerents of the Almighty to bring us back to the obligations of Christian duty. If we rebuke them ever so mildly for their insolence, and protest against their destroying the work of our fathers, they call it persecution, because it denies to them the liberty of striking down whatsoever the pope shall command to be destroyed. If we insist that they shall obey our Constitution in consideration of the protection they receive from it, they tell us that the pope is, to them, a domestic prince, who steps in between them and it, bids defiance to its injunctions, and sets aside its obligations whensoever he shall deem it necessary to the ends and aims of the papacy to do so.

Even if there were no principle in the Constitution the pope might desire to set aside, the assertion of the right and power to do so should command our most serious attention. But when he fixes his pontifical curse upon the very

fundamentals of our Government, and marshals his forces to assail them, it is as much our duty to resist him as it is to defend our lives.

We have sufficiently indicated, in the previous chapters, wherein he has done so, and there is no authority in the Church—whether hierarchical or lay—entitled to gainsay what he has declared. There is no single man in the United States, no matter how high his position in the Church, who has authority to define the principles or declare the purposes of the papacy. He may avow what would seem best to him, under any given state of circumstances; but in doing so he speaks for himself alone. Whenever he speaks for the Church, his individual opinions are of no value, since by the dogma of the pope's infallibility he is required to surrender his will and conscience into the keeping of the pope. The pope is the sole exponent and interpreter of the law of the Church, which he may abrogate or change at his pleasure; and however much he may tolerate, for a time and from prudential motives, the expression of individual opinions contrary to those set forth in the Encyclical and Syllabus of 1864, and other pontifical briefs, from these alone can we derive a just and accurate understanding of the faith and doctrines of the Church. Let us take a single illustration out of the many which are exhibited almost every day.

A late number of *The Catholic World* contains an eloquent article on "Religion and State in our Republic," evidently from the pen of the learned and distinguished editor. Referring to the time when, by possibility, the Roman Catholic population of the United States may "become an overwhelming majority," and endeavoring to remove any cause of alarm among Protestants on that account, he says, "They will never seek to tyrannize over their fellow-citizens, to establish their religion by force, or to compel any one to do those things which are required only by the Catholic conscience." (*The Catholic World*, February, 1875, vol. xx., pp. 624, 625.)

Such assertions as these are not worth the value of a rush-light in showing what the pope would require to be done in the United States if he had an obedient majority to control the Government. Whatever the author of them may think for himself, and however hearty the response they may meet in the minds of intelligent laymen, they utterly fail of any other effect than to delude those laymen and such Protestants as accept them. Measured by the papal standard, they are heretical. By the constitutions of popes, the decrees of councils, the repeated action of Roman Catholic governments, and by the avowals of the present pope, the law of the Church is held to enjoin upon its authorities the duty to extirpate heresy, to destroy every other form of religion than the Roman Catholic, to compel obedience to it, in faith and morals, and to do all this by force, by uniting the Church and the State together, and requiring the State, as in the case of France under her obedient kings, to pass such statutes as shall bring these results about. *And it can only mislead the incautious and unwary to pretend that different results would be sought after in this country, if the policy of the Government were directed by the pope.* The form of Government which the papacy dictated when it had the power to enforce obedience, and none other, would, if it had that power in the United States, spring up upon the ruins of our Protestant institutions. What was a Christian government in France,

acceptable to popes, would furnish the model for the construction of the new government here.

And this writer, perhaps unwittingly, concedes as much in the very next sentence, when he says that "the difficulty lies chiefly in respect to those laws which forbid certain things as contrary to the divine law." (*The Catholic World*, February, 1875, vol. xx., p. 625.)

Certainly, the difficulty lies just there; because out of it grows the whole controversy about the spiritual and the temporal powers. At that point exists the radical disagreement between the Protestant and the papal systems of government; between the United States Government and that of France when it was a Christian state after the papal model. This difference has been pointed out sufficiently to show wherein the principles of our Government are "contrary to the divine law," as the pope interprets it; and he must be exceedingly ignorant who does not see that if these were destroyed the Government would fall. All the talk about the necessity of giving to the law an ethical standard is a mere pretext for keeping governments as well as individuals within the circle of moral duty which the pope may choose, from time to time, to mark out.

When he shall prescribe that duty in anything, whether it concerns civil policy or the intercourse of individuals with each other, whatsoever is done to the contrary, by the Government or the individual, becomes heretical, and therefore sinful. In such a case, to which command—that of the Government or the pope—does the doctrine of the pope's infallibility require the papist to render obedience? This writer in *The Catholic World* answers just as all other ultramontanes do. Setting aside, with entire frankness, all mere "private versions or modifications of Catholicity" as counting for nothing, and going directly to the pope as the fountain-head of all authority in the Church, he says:

"For ourselves, we are purely and simply Catholic, and profess an unreserved allegiance to the Church which takes precedence of, and gives the rule to, our allegiance to the State. If allegiance to the Church demanded of us opposition to political principles adopted by our civil government, or disobedience to any laws which were impious and immoral, we should not hesitate to obey the Church and God. We should either keep silence and avoid all discussion of the subject, or else speak out frankly in condemnation of our laws and institutions, if we believed them to be anti-Christian, or, which is the same thing, anti-Catholic, in their principles." (*The Catholic World*, February, 1875, vol. xx., p. 621.)

The reader need not be again reminded of the many important principles of our Government, already pointed out, whereby our civil institutions have become, in the view of the papacy, "anti-Christian" and "anti-Catholic." The avowal here is distinct and emphatic, that to none of these does the papist owe allegiance. If he acquiesces in them for the time being, it is only that strength enough may be acquired, by prudential and cautious movements, to aim effective blows at them when the open battle shall begin.

Dr. Brownson again brings his powerful pen to the support of this theory, and

expresses himself with his accustomed boldness and indifference to consequences. Binding us all to an acceptance of the law of God, as the infallible pope shall announce it, he says:

"Under this supreme law the State holds, and this law is the ground and limit of this authority, or of its rights and its obligations. This law is, therefore, the ground and limit of civil allegiance. The civil power holds all its authority from this supreme law, and, consequently, it has no authority to do or command anything that it forbids, or that is contrary to it. Hence it follows that, if the civil power commands anything contrary to the law of God, its commands do not bind the subject or citizen, and are not only not obligatory, but are to be treated as null and void from the beginning, simply because the civil power has no right to issue them, and the law of God forbids them. Here is the limit of civil obedience, or my allegiance to the civil powers." (*)

* *Brownson's Quarterly Review*;" apud *New York Tablet*, January 23d, 1875, p.546. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Savannah, Georgia, has thought fit to throw his official influence against Mr. Gladstone's late pamphlet. His letter to J. G. Bennett, Esq., which appeared in the *New York Herald* of December 20th, 1874, is, to say the least of it, a curious production. Starting out with the wonderfully profound principle of constitutional law, that "our own Federal constitution" declares "unconstitutional any law infringing on the consciences of the people!!" he lays down the papal rule to be that, as "in questions concerning conscience" the Church is always present "to tell her children how far Caesar [the State] may go without usurping to himself the things that are God's," therefore the Roman Catholic citizen of the United States owes no allegiance to any principle of the Government which is condemned by the Church or the pope! If, according to him, the courts were to pass upon a law involving a question of conscience, the pope would furnish the only proper rule of decision!—*New York Tablet*, December 26th, 1874, p. 485.

There is abundant evidence to show, besides what has been embodied in the preceding chapters, that these are the doctrines of religious faith set forth by the recognized authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, both in the United States and in Europe. A single additional reference, however, must now suffice, leaving the inquiring reader to search out others, if he desires them, for himself.

A work, considered exhaustive, has recently appeared in reply to "Janus;" the main object of which is to support and justify the claim of the present pope of power over the government of civil society. He quotes from a letter of Pius IX. to show that the Church "requires of those clothed with political power that they should conform to those laws [of morality], and, indeed, such as she proclaims them. Were she to abandon this postulate, she would then renounce her very mission." ("Anti-Janus," by Hergenrother, p. 37.)

He justifies the doctrines set forth by the Syllabus of 1864, in a whole chapter; and thus denounces that principle of our Government which treats all churches with an equal degree of respect: "To prescribe an equal respect for another religious community [not, observe, for the persons of its members] is to require that the doctrines of the true Church should be placed on the same

level with the opinions of other religious bodies." (*Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.) He says, "The pope can do nothing against the divine law." (*Ibid.*, p. 42.) He insists upon a union of Church and State. (*Ibid.*, p.44.) He admits that the powers of the pope have heretofore been enlarged by "forgeries," and yet asserts them to exist to the same extent as those forgeries were designed to stretch them. ("Anti-Janus," by Hergenrother, ch. iv., p. 144.) But these are comparatively immaterial by the side of his justification of the bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII., the doctrines of which have been already shown to be the necessary consequence of papal supremacy.

The distinctive principles proclaimed by this bull, and now a part of the canon law of the Church, he sets down as follows: first, "it is necessary to salvation that every man should submit to the Roman pontiff;" second, "this is a necessary consequence of the dogma of the papal supremacy;" third, "it condemns the assertion by the State of any power over 'church property;'" fourth, "the temporal power of Christian princes does not exempt them from obedience to the head of the Church;" fifth, "the material sword is drawn for the Church, the spiritual by the Church;" sixth, "the material sword must co-operate with the spiritual and assist it;" seventh, "the secular power should be guided by the spiritual as the higher';" eighth, "the spiritual has the preeminence over the material;" ninth, "the temporal power is subordinated to the ecclesiastical, as to the higher;" tenth, "the temporal power, if it is not good, is judged by the spiritual;" eleventh, "to the ecclesiastical authority" (that is, to the pope and his hierarchy) "the words of the prophet Jeremiah apply, 'Lo! I have set thee this day over the nations and over kingdoms to root up, and to pull down, and to waste, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant;'" twelfth, when "the temporal power goes astray, it is judged by the spiritual;" thirteenth, "for obtaining eternal happiness, each one is required to submit to the pope;" fourteenth, "the supremacy of the pope, even in temporal things;" and, fifteenth, the popes "recognize human authorities in their proper place, till they lift up their will against God." (*Ibid.*, pp. 203-209.)

This book has upon it the imprint of "The Catholic Publishing Society," of New York, and is extensively circulated in the United States, for the enlightenment and instruction of the faithful. Its general character is recommended by an "Introduction," wherein it is said that "the spiritual royalty of Christ's vicar will ultimately tend to consolidate anew temporal monarchy, and all its concomitant institutions." ("Anti-Janus," by Hergenrother, Introduction, p. xl.) And the preference entertained by papists for a monarchical over a popular or democratic form of government is thus unequivocally avowed, "The Church, it is truly said, needs not kings and emperors; but civil society in great states needs them; and this is especially true under the Christian dispensation, which, by the abolition of slavery, has indefinitely multiplied popular suffrages, and therefore aggravated the difficulties of popular government." (*)

* *Ibid.*, p. 47, note e. Reference is not here made to the abolition of slavery in the United States, but to the elevation of the masses of the people in Europe.

We have here the deliberate sentiments and purposes of the papacy, that is, of the only legitimate authority of the Church. No individual opinions weigh a feather's weight in the scale against them, although uttered by one or a thousand prelates or laymen. Every man who has any connection whatever with the Church must accept them without change or modification as a necessary part of the faith. If he shall accept them, and is intelligent enough to understand them, he must be regarded as prepared to take all the consequences which must necessarily follow if they are pressed, as now seems inevitable, to their legitimate results. But if, like the "Old Catholics" of Europe, the Roman Catholic population of the United States shall sternly and manfully rebuke these politico-religious teachings of the papacy, they will yet retain the power to save their honored and venerable Church from open antagonism with the Government which shields them so effectually from harm, and carry her back to those smooth and pleasant paths of peace and quiet and Christian concord, where she once stood so proudly, and where they, side by side with other Christians, may dispense the cheerful and benignant influences of pure, tolerant, and apostolic Christianity.

How beautifully and harmoniously were unity and diversity blended in the churches of the early Christians—diversity in discipline and economy—unity centering in Christ as the rock upon which it was built. Then, the bishops of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Alexandria, of Corinth, of Rome, and elsewhere, presided over the clergy and people of their respective churches and provinces, with the internal policy and economy of each so conducted as should best promote the advancement of Christianity, leaving its external policy under the superintendence of the whole Church, not as it concerned discipline and government, but only the prime and essential part of religion, the preservation of the Christian faith. ("Antiquities of the Christian Church," by Bingham, vol. i., bk. ii., ch. v., p. 33.)

Neither Christ nor his apostles made provision for any form of church imperialism. He did all things perfectly. He established this simple plan of a perfect Church, leaving the apostles to rear the superstructure. They, with inspired wisdom, built the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch, and other cities of Asia, before a Christian was ever known to be at Rome, and their work was also well and perfectly done, so well and perfectly that it was scarcely needed to be repeated at Rome in order to establish the true Church of Christ.

There was everything to recommend this plan of the Master and the apostles. The city of Jerusalem, in the midst of the fallen columns of "the temple of God," and near Calvary and Gethsemane and Bethlehem, and where Christ had first disputed with the learned doctors of the Jewish law, and whose streets had been trodden by his feet; this "Holy City" was a far more fitting place for planting the first Christian Church than the old pagan and imperial city of the Caesars, where God's providence had been defied for centuries; where the name of Christ was cast out with derision and reproach; where Christianity was held to be a pernicious and dangerous superstition; (Tacitus, bk. xv., xlv. "*Exitiabilis superstitio*" are the words of Tacitus.) where the demon of persecution first held his bloody orgies; and where vice and corruption were consuming all its pagan glories, and leaving it, wrapped

in clouds of life-consuming miasma (toxic air), to become the place where the curse of God would surely rest, as it had once rested upon the old Babylon of the Euphrates.

As the first churches of Asia were established, under the express commission of Christ before the Church of Rome, it was manifestly against the divine plan for the latter Church to set up the false claim that she was the "mother and mistress" of all the churches. Besides the presumption and vanity of the assumption, it was untrue in point of fact—for the Church at Jerusalem is conceded on all hands to have been the "mother Church." On this account the apostles assembled there to settle the differences which had arisen among the Christians at Antioch. (*)

* Acts xv. Roman Catholics claim that at this "first council" of the apostles the primacy of Peter over the other apostles was recognized—in other words, that he was then regarded as "the prince of the apostles." This is not warranted by the recorded facts. Peter, on account, probably, of his advanced age and great wisdom, was the first whose speech is recorded; but it must be observed that he uttered no opinion or decision to bind the others. On the contrary, he merely opened the discussion, and was followed by Barnabas and Paul. And after them, James, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, spoke, manifestly with the authority of a superior position. He desired all present to "hearken" unto what he said. And when he had set forth his views, he said, "Wherefore *my sentence* is," etc. (ver. 19). This shows that if there was any precedence, it belonged to James, who must have presided. In the Douay Bible this verse reads: "Wherefore *I judge*," etc., following the Latin Vulgate, *ego judico*. But the word *judico* does not mean a mere individual opinion. It means a judgment, sentence, or decision, announced by authority. Hence, the conclusion that James possessed official superiority in this council cannot be escaped.

The Roman Church was, therefore, the *daughter* of the older Asiatic churches—not the mother. They preceded her in the order of time so far that Christianity was planted by means of them, before she had a beginning—or before it had reached any part of Europe. These Asiatic churches possessed, undoubtedly, all the external authority which Christ designed should be conferred upon his Church; for, being presided over by the apostles and specially cared for by them, it is an impeachment of them to say that, in this or in any other respect, they failed in obeying the divine injunction to establish the Church rightfully. While the system they organized continued, everything worked well and harmoniously. If there were differences, they were adjusted by conference, as at Jerusalem; and nothing occurred to plant discord among them until the Church at Rome endeavored to bring them all to her feet.

At every step she took in that direction, she struck fatal blows at this original system of church organization, and never rested from her work of demolition until the columns of all the ancient churches had fallen to the ground. To add to the efficacy of her measures, she snatched from the State the imperialism of temporal power, which she employed as the means of achieving her universal dominion; and thus, *by uniting Church and State, she has afflicted both herself and the world with incalculable calamities. As usurpation and imposture have their reward, as well as virtue, these have*

been visited upon her in terrible abundance, since she sought to place the triple crown upon the brows of her bishops, and to gild her papal palaces with gold.

Ever since the time of Constantine and the Nicene Council, she has been dealing in various modes of compulsion, with multitudes of her rebellious and heretical children—born within her fold and nurtured upon her bosom. The most formidable resistance she has encountered has been invited by the vacillations of her faith, or has been produced by the tyranny and persecutions of the papacy. The hardest blows under which she has reeled and staggered—and under which she is now reeling and staggering—have been struck by those who have been compelled to strike them, in order to assert and vindicate their manhood by breaking the fetters with which she had manacled their limbs.

Before the Reformation, the Roman Church had some good popes, many bad ones, and some who were almost monsters of impiety and vice. The seventy years of papal residence in France had created a rivalry in crime and prostitution between the two pontifical cities, Rome and Avignon; and whenever the one excelled the other, it was only because of the larger number of cardinals and priests, and of the courtesans who followed them. Of course, reformers grew up in formidable numbers—for there were many good men in the Church, belonging to every class—but anti-reformers existed in greater force, composed of those who held the chief authority in the Church. Of the first, there were those who believed, in all Christian sincerity, that the Church could be reformed within herself, and thus her life and purity be preserved. Of the latter, there were those who either supposed that corruption had done its work so thoroughly that the disease was beyond the reach of remedy, or preferred the wealth and power which her vast revenues produced, and the ambition it gratified, to the preservation of her purity.

And when the great Council of Trent placed the Church in a condition to become an engine of mischievous power and bad ambition in the hands of the Jesuits, it made Protestantism an absolute necessity for the world—because, without it, the terrible pressure under which both Church and State were rapidly sinking into a common grave could never have been removed. Protestantism, therefore, finds both its truth and its philosophy in the history of those times. God was its author. He did not design it to exterminate, but to preserve; to support the cause of truth, and to resist error. There was yet good enough in the Roman Catholic Church to have secured the complete triumph of divine truth, but for the perverseness of those who seemed to defy all the providences of God. It needed only the winnowing process of reform to separate the good from the bad—the genuine grain from the chaff—so that this venerable Church could drift back again into the calm and placid current along which it had moved so beautifully and majestically in the days of her primitive purity.

The Reformation was not the result of impulse and passion. Preceding events had convinced the leading nations of the necessity of taking care of their own affairs, which it was evident they could not do without resisting the aggressions of the papacy. These aggressions had become so repeated and flagrant that some of the governments were entirely subordinated to Rome.

With the imperialism of princes and of popes, the people were almost crushed, as it were, between the upper and the nether millstone. The necessity of self-protection and self-existence compelled them to seek out other paths.

France was the foremost in the movement of resistance ("History of the Popes," by Ranke, Introduction, p. xxvi.)—as we have seen how soon as a Christian nation, according to the papal standard, her very life would have been crushed out. Germany followed, and then England; and finally the United States rose up in the New World, clothed in fresh robes, to prove how benignant are the influences which spring from popular government and Protestant toleration. These influences are now reacting upon the older nations, and one by one they are moving into the same paths. As the light from each increases more and more—just as it is almost ready to break out in meridian brightness—the papal sword is unsheathed, and they are commanded, under the impious pretense that God has spoken through the voice of an infallible pope, to turn back into darkness and slavery and imbecility again.

There are many Roman Catholic laymen in the United States, who, if they could be prevailed upon to investigate these matters for themselves, and to abate somewhat their unbounded confidence in their ecclesiastical superiors, would see—as many of their brethren in Europe have done—that there is a broad and manifest distinction between their Church as it existed in its original purity in the days of the early fathers, and that enormous papal structure into which ambitious and designing men have since converted it, with power to domineer over princes and tyrannize over peoples. It would be impossible for them not to know that, in order to restore and maintain the pretensions now set up in behalf of the papacy, its emissaries would be guilty of infractions upon the rights of all existing governments, especially those where the people are the rulers; and that their own continued acquiescence in these excessive demands of the pope and his priesthood must, in the end, lead them into opposition to the most essential principles of our own Government, and especially to that which makes the people themselves included—the true and legitimate source of all civil authority. It is impossible to suppose that they desire to forget the sacrifices many of them have made for the cause of popular government, or that they can become willingly insensible to the precious interests they have wrapped up in its continuance.

Whatsoever they may decide, however—whether they shall resolve to become the guardians of their own civil rights, or leave them to the guardianship of an army of papal hierarchs, irresponsible to all human authority and above all human laws—the American people, as a whole, will not be likely to remain passive and unresisting under these continued threatenings. And when they shall be brought to realize—a point they are rapidly reaching—that their popular form of government is actually and insolently threatened; that opposition to some of the most highly prized features of their civil institutions is already inaugurated, with the view of substituting the power of the papacy for their own constitutional authority, and of subordinating their fundamental laws to the decrees of the pope, as a foreign king and despot—when the great body of the American people shall become fully apprised of all these things, they will then understand what remedy to apply, and how to apply it.

They will not find this remedy in the violation of any of the cherished principles of their Government; by the abandonment of its liberal or tolerant spirit; or by any act unworthy a Protestant nation pledged to maintain free thought, free speech, and a free press. They will not find it in any form of wrong or oppression; either by withdrawing from the Roman Catholic religion any part of that protection they give to Protestantism, or by excluding any who think proper to profess that religion from the shelter of their civil institutions. They will not find it by imitating the example set them by those Roman Catholic governments that have allowed coercive measures to be employed to prohibit every form of religion but that of Rome. But they will find it by maintaining at every hazard, and in the face of all consequences, their right to enact their own laws, to preserve their own constitutions, and to regulate their own affairs according to their own sovereign will, and without foreign dictation; by perpetuating their popular form of government as the rightful inheritance of their children; by resisting to the last the "divine right" of kings or popes to rule over them; by firmly refusing to permit the canon laws of the Roman Catholic, or of any other church, to take the place of those of their own enacting; and by teaching the Roman hierarchy and all others who shall willingly become subservient to the schemes of the pope, that, while citizens of the United States, they can enjoy unimpaired all the rights of citizenship secured to themselves; but that, in order to this, they must render the same obedience to all existing laws which others are required to render; and that they call enjoy no exclusive privileges, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which shall put it in their power to violate the principles of American liberty—to impose unwilling restraint upon a single conscience—or to endanger the existence of a single fundamental principle upon which they have erected their civil and religious freedom.

Continued in [Appendix](#)