

The Papal System – VII. The Pope Claims to be Lord of Kings and Nations – Part 3. The Excommunication of Queen Elizabeth



Continued from [The Pope Claims to be Lord of Kings and Nations –Part 2. Pope Innocent III Abolishes the Magna Carta.](#)

When Elizabeth ascended the throne of England, she wrote to Sir Edward Carne, the English Ambassador at Rome, to notify his holiness of her accession to the throne. But Paul told the ambassador that England was a fief of the Holy See, that Elizabeth had no-right to assume the crown without his permission, that she was not born in lawful wedlock, and could not therefore reign over England, and that her safest course was to renounce all claims to the throne, and submit herself entirely to his will, then would he treat her as tenderly as possible. But if she refused his advice he would not spare her.

She declined it, and his hatred was genuine. So was the dislike of each successor of Paul during her reign. Sixtus V. promised Philip II. of Spain a million of scudi to aid in equipping his "Invincible Armada," to destroy the throne of Elizabeth, and the only conditions he made in the bestowment of his gift were that, "He should have the nomination of the English sovereign, and that the kingdom should be a fief of the Church." The Armada came to the coasts of England freighted with strange instruments of torture to cure the heresies of the subjects of Elizabeth, and with papal benedictions; but the storms of heaven, and the valor of Protestants, sent the boastful fleet to destruction on the coasts of Spain, never again to trouble Elizabeth.

Rome seldom hurled a fiercer excommunication than that launched by Pius V. at this queen, a woman with the intellect of a hundred ordinary kings; but papal thunders then were nearly as harmless as they are now, and yet, as a specimen of the Romish system, it ought to be inserted here:

"Pius, bishop, servant to the servants of God; for a perpetual memorial of the matter.

"I. He that reigneth on high, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, committed *one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation*, to one on earth, namely, to Peter the prince of the apostles, and to Peter's successor, the Bishop of Rome, to be

governed in fullness of power. Him alone he made prince over all people and all kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, scatter, consume, plant and build, that he may retain the faithful that are knit together with the bond of charity, in the unity of the spirit, and present them spotless and unblamable to their Saviour. In discharge of which function, we, who are, by God's goodness, called to the government of the aforesaid Church, do spare no pains, laboring with all earnestness, that unity and the Catholic religion, which the Author thereof hath for the trial of his children's faith, and for our amendment, suffered to be exercised with so great afflictions, might be preserved incorrupt.

"II. But the number of the ungodly hath gotten such power, that there is now no place left in the world, which they have not assayed to corrupt with their most wicked doctrines. Amongst others, Elizabeth, the pretended queen of England, a slave of wickedness, lending thereunto her helping hand, with whom, as in a sanctuary, the most pernicious of all men have found a refuge; this very woman having seized on the kingdom, and monstrously usurping the place of the supreme head of the Church in all England, and the chief authority and jurisdiction thereof, hath again brought back the said kingdom into miserable destruction, which was then nearly reduced to the most Catholic faith and to good order. For having by strong hand inhibited the exercise of the true religion, which Mary, the lawful queen of famous memory, had by the help of this see restored, after it had been formerly overthrown by Henry VIII., a revolter therefrom, and following and embracing the errors of heretics; she hath removed the royal council, consisting of the English nobility, and filled it with obscure men, being heretics, hath oppressed the embracers of the Catholic faith; hath placed impious preachers, ministers of iniquity, and hath abolished the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, fastings, the distinction of meats, a single life, and the Catholic rites and ceremonies; hath commanded books to be read in the whole realm, containing manifest heresy and impious mysteries and institutions, by herself entertained and observed, according to the prescript of Calvin, to be likewise observed by her subjects; hath presumed to throw bishops, parsons of churches, and other Catholic priests out of their churches and benefices, and to bestow them and other church livings upon heretics, and to determine of church causes; hath prohibited the prelates, clergy and people to acknowledge the Church of Rome, or obey the precepts and canonical sanctions thereof; hath compelled most of them to condescend to her wicked laws, and to abjure the authority and obedience of the Bishop of Rome, and to acknowledge her to be sole lady in temporal and spiritual matters, and this by oath; hath imposed penalties and punishments on those who obeyed not, and exacted them of those who persevered in the unity of the faith, and their obedience aforesaid; and hath cast the Catholic prelates and rectors of churches into prison, where many of them, being spent with long languishing and sorrow, have miserably ended their lives.

"III. All which things, seeing they are manifest and notorious to all nations, and by the gravest testimony of very many so substantially proved, that there is no place left at all for excuse, defense, or

evasion; we seeing that impieties and wicked actions are multiplied one on another, and moreover, that the persecution of the faithful, and affliction for religion, groweth every day heavier and heavier, through the instigation and means of said Elizabeth; because we understand her mind to be so hardened and indurate, that she hath not only condemned the godly requests and admonitions of Catholic princes concerning her healing and conversion, but also hath not so much as permitted the nuncios of this see to cross the seas into England; are forced of necessity to betake ourselves to the weapons of justice against her, not being able to mitigate our sorrow, that we are constrained to take punishment on one to whose ancestors the whole state of Christendom hath been so much bounden.

"IV. Being therefore supported with his authority, whose pleasure it was to place us, though unequal to so great a burden, in this supreme throne of justice, we do, out of the fullness of our apostolic power, declare the aforesaid Elizabeth being a heretic, and a favorer of heretics, and her adherents in the matter aforesaid, to have incurred the sentence of anathema, and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ.

"And moreover, we do declare her TO BE DEPRIVED OF HER PRETENDED TITLE TO THE KINGDOM AFORESAID, AND OF ALL DOMINION, DIGNITY, AND PRIVILEGE WHATSOEVER. And also the nobility, subjects, and people of the said kingdom, and all others who have, in any sort, sworn to her, TO BE FOREVER ABSOLVED FROM ANY SUCH OATH, AND ALL MANNER OF DUTY, DOMINION, ALLEGIANCE OBEDIENCE; as we also do by the authority of these presents absolve them, and do DEPRIVE THE SAME ELIZABETH OF HER PRETENDED TITLE TO THE KINGDOM, and all other things above said. And we do command and interdict all and every the noblemen, subjects, people and others aforesaid that they presume not to obey her or her monitions, mandates, and laws; and those who shall do the contrary, we do innodate with the like sentence of anathema. And because it were a matter of too much difficulty to convey these presents to all places wheresoever it shall be needful, our will is, that the copies thereof, under a public notary's hand, and sealed with the seal of an ecclesiastical prelate, or of his court, shall carry altogether the same credit with all people, judicial and extrajudicial, as these presents should do, if they were exhibited or showed.

"Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1570, the fifth of the Calends of May, and of our popedom the fifth year."

Had the power of Pius V. been equal to his extravagant claims, Elizabeth would have been driven from her throne to obscurity, or an untimely and cruel death, the brightest page in British history would have been torn out, the England of today might have been like modern Spain, a country splendid in memories of the past, but for the time being clothed in rags, steeped in ignorance, and covered with a dense cloud of superstition. While North America, the glorious daughter of Britain, instead of standing forth a miracle of light and progress, unmatched in the history of our race, would

have appeared like Mexico, a country of beggars, bandits and priests, with the richest resources, and the most restless and improvident population that ever wasted the bounties of a generous climate and soil. But fortunately for the nations, happily for the liberties of the world, the "Virgin Queen," notwithstanding her undoubted defects, had a hold on the English heart which the pope and all his allies could not shake; and her triumph over her enemies not only made her strong, but overwhelmed them with confusion and disgrace.

That the Pope is above Kings is the Doctrine of the great Expounders of Papal Rights.

Sixtus V. was probably as well informed about the claims of the Bishop of Rome as any of his predecessors or successors; and on the 22d day of March, 1590, he told Olivarez, the ambassador of Philip II., that

"The pope is appointed by God as THE SUPERIOR OF EVERY OTHER SOVEREIGN."

Innocent IV., in the Council of Lyons, July 16th, 1245, issued a decree against Frederic, Emperor of Germany, in which he says:

"We hold on earth THE AUTHORITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, . . . and we do hereby declare the above named prince, who has rendered himself unworthy of the honors of sovereignty, and for his crimes has been deposed from his throne by God, to be bound by his sins, and cast off by the Lord, and deprived of all his honors, and we do hereby sentence and deprive him, and all who are in any way bound to him by an oath of allegiance, we forever absolve and release from that oath, and by the apostolic authority, strictly forbid any one from obeying him, or in any way whatever attempting to obey him as Emperor or King; and we decree that any who shall henceforth give him assistance or advice, or show favor to him as Emperor or King, shall be ipso facto excommunicated; and those in the empire upon whom the election of an emperor devolves, MAY FREELY ELECT A SUCCESSOR IN HIS PLACE."

And such was the reverence with which this act was regarded that the German princes elected Henry, landgrave of Thuringia, to the throne from which Innocent had expelled Frederic, and at his death, William, Count of Holland.

Gregory VII., with a rare grandeur of intellect, a towering ambition, a daring spirit, an unrivaled power of penetration, exhibits the claims of the popes in the boldest light. He thunders forth:

"For the dignity and defense of God's holy Church, in the name of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I DEPOSE FROM IMPERIAL AND ROYAL ADMINISTRATION, King Henry, son of Henry, some time Emperor, who too boldly and rashly hath laid hands on thy Church; and I absolve all Christians subject to the empire from that oath whereby they were wont to plight their faith unto true kings; for it is right that he should be deprived of dignity who doth endeavor to diminish the majesty of the Church.

"Go to, therefore, most holy princes of the apostles, and what I said,

by interposing your authority, confirm; that all men may now at length understand, if ye can bind and loose in heaven, that ye also can upon earth TAKE AWAY AND GIVE EMPIRES, KINGDOMS, AND WHATSOEVER MORTALS CAN HAVE: for, if ye can judge things belonging unto God, what is to be deemed concerning these inferior and profane things? And if it is your part to judge angels, who govern proud princes, what becometh it you to do toward their servants? Let kings, now, and all secular princes, learn by this man's example, what ye can do in heaven, and in what esteem ye are with God; and let them henceforth fear to slight the commands of holy Church; but put forth suddenly this judgment, that all men may understand that, not casually, but by your means, this son of iniquity doth fall from his kingdom."

Gregory declared that kingly and papal government might be compared to the sun and moon. The pope's government is like the sun, filling the world with its power and glory; the dominion of monarchs is like the moon, diminutive in its light, and derived exclusively from the mighty sun of the "Seven Hills." His doctrine is:

"That royal authority is ordained of God, and should remain within its proper limits, SUBORDINATE TO THE PAPAL POWER, WHICH IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL."

Gregory put forth prodigious efforts to persuade the sovereigns of Europe that their kingdoms were fiefs of St. Peter, and that they owed obedience to the Roman pontiff, his successor; and, with boundless zeal and commanding eloquence, and, we must add, undoubted sincerity, he tried to subject the entire affairs of kings and chief magistrates, and the concerns of the whole world, to a congregation of bishops meeting annually at Rome, of which, of course, he was to be master. His celebrated Dictates claimed power for the popes such as Jehovah alone possesses.

One is inclined to smile when he reads that Alexander VI., who, as vicar of Christ, owned all countries inhabited by infidels, gave to the crown of Castile the territories of all unbelievers which its servants should discover and subdue. And, lest this grant might conflict with his "deed of gift" to the Portuguese, he decreed that a line, supposed to be drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues westward of the Azores, should serve as a boundary between them. In the exercise of his world-wide sovereignty, he gave the countries east of this line to Portugal, and those west of it, to Spain.

"In 1254, the pope," says Matthew Paris, "gave the kingdom of Sicily to Earl Richard; but Earl Richard told Albert, his legate, that, 'unless the pope would give hostages from his own family as security for his good faith, aid an expedition with money, and deliver up some of his frontier fortresses to protect his army in case a retreat was necessary, his gift looked very much as if some one said: I give or sell you the moon; climb up and take it' The gift of Alexander bore the same features, and showed the same presumption.

But the claims of the bishops of Rome to universal temporal monarchy plunged all Europe, at various times, into confusion, and large parts of it into

carnage. It would require volumes instead of a few pages to exhibit the bitter fruits produced by these usurpations.

If the Master said: "My kingdom is not of this world," the Church of Rome is governed by another spirit; for, during eleven hundred years, her bishops have held an earthly scepter, and struggled, like the conqueror of Darius, for an empire bounded only by the limits of the globe; a monarchy in which kings are to be tolerated as papal viceroys, and nations are to be treated as dependent nurslings; chastised with a scourge, or rewarded with a smile, at the pleasure of the Holy Father.

These arrogant pretensions have never been recanted; and as the renunciation of one of them would prove the Roman Bishop a fallible mortal like the rest of us, not one of them shall ever be surrendered until the papacy is in ruins. And though masses of enlightened Catholics may repudiate and denounce them, they are still in the heart of the Romish creed; and, as in the past, they will live in the future history of the Catholic Church when an opportunity offers for their exhibition. Infallibility cannot change for the better; it can never admit the necessity for its own reformation.

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