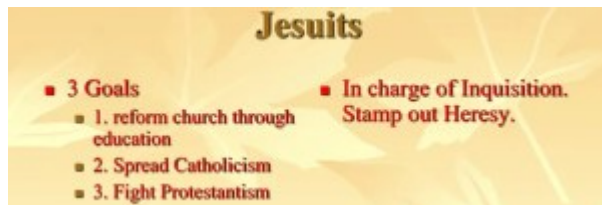


# Rome and Civil Liberty – Part II. The Papal Aggression



Continued from [The Fundamental Principle Of The Reformation, And What It Gave Us](#)

## **The Reconnoitre, Or First Steps.**

THE SHOCK of the French Revolution convinced the Church of Rome, that in the slumber in which she had passed the eighteenth century, she had rested her mitered head upon hidden fires, and that she must rouse herself, and strike for her old dominion, or be swept out of existence. Accordingly, so soon as peace had returned to Europe, the Jesuits came forth from their hiding-places, and concocted that plan for reducing Britain under the yoke of Rome which they have ever since been pursuing with great astuteness and most astonishing success.

That plan may be gathered from various hints dropped by Dr Wiseman, in his book on the "Four Last Popes," and, in particular, from his conversations, there recorded, with Gregory XVI. and the Abbe Lemennais. A great work was to be done; and the first step was to prepare the proper instruments for the doing of it. With this view the English College at Rome was restored. This was the deed of Pius VII. and his well-known Minister, Cardinal Consalvi. This college had been closed for the period of a generation. On the 18th of December 1818, a small band of youths entered that college, and took possession of its long-deserted corridors and chambers. Who were these youths, and from what country had they come? They had come from Great Britain. They had been selected with great care, and sent to Rome to be educated under the keen eye and the skilful hand of the Jesuits, that, when their education was finished, they might come back to England, and begin their work of reconquering Britain to the Roman faith. Of this number was the future Cardinal (Wiseman). One can scarce refrain a smile when he contrasts this little army of six with the greatness of their allotted task. But Rome can foresee great results from apparently insignificant causes.

From Rome the scene now shifts to Britain. These youths were in due time educated, and sent back to England. The implements fashioned abroad were now employed in fashioning other implements at home. The first object was to reduce the Catholic laity and priesthood of Ireland thoroughly under Jesuit control. With this view the College of Clongows was erected, filled with Jesuit professors, and opened for the youth of the middle and upper classes of Ireland. The next step was to reduce the priests of Ireland under Jesuit influence. Dr Kenry was sent from Rome, and appointed Principal of Maynooth.

Its chairs were filled with Jesuits from the College of Clongows; and thus was the priesthood of Ireland brought completely under Jesuit control. The priests were under Dr Kenry, the head of British Jesuitism; and Dr Kenry was under General Roothan, the head of the Jesuitism of the world. And now, headed by a man of no principle but a good deal of rough eloquence (Mr O'Connell), that political agitation was commenced which resulted in the great Romanist victory of 1829. By the Act of 1829 the doors of the British Legislature were opened to the subjects of another potentate (the Pope), and a right was conceded to the members of a foreign community to legislate for a State whose law is not their law, and whose sovereign is not their sovereign.

This done, the next step was to bring the lay adherents of their Church in England under Jesuit control. The College of Stonyhurst was erected, and filled with Jesuit professors; and into that college was gathered the youth of the old Catholic families in England, to receive an education and polish fitting them to take their place with effect in English society. Thus was the whole Catholic body, lay and cleric, in Great Britain and Ireland, subjugated and made ready to be wielded by Jesuitism.

Having taken proper measures with her own members in Great Britain, Rome next turned her attention to the Protestants. Her first measure was to seize upon the universities. On the idea that a plan had been formed for perverting Britain, where should we expect that plan first to discover itself? Why! where but at Oxford and Cambridge? These are the twin fountains of influence in England. From thence do the pulpit and the bar of England draw their supplies. There it is that our future legislators, Cabinet Ministers, and Privy Councilors, are educated. Romanizing teachers were placed in certain of the chairs of these seats of learning; and thus were the seeds of Popery deposited in many a young and unsuspecting mind.

About the year 1833 the next step was taken: the "Tracts for the Times" began to be issued. In this, Rome showed that great practical sagacity (farsightedness) and quick discernment in which she so much excels. She did not sit down and write a ponderous volume: she knew that few would buy, and still fewer would read, such an exposition. Oxford produced, by the thousand, four paged tracts, and into each tract she put the substance of a volume; and Rome turned them to good account. Some philosophers have held that matter is so compressible that the whole universe might be put into a nutshell. However this may be, the whole Papal system was so compressed as to be put into these nutshells, – these little tracts, which were showered like snow-flakes over the country. They were, to borrow a figure from the military art, the gunboats of the Papal invasion. While the volume was lying unbought on the bookseller's shelf, or unopened on the drawing-room table, these tracts, written with great apparent unction and much logical acumen, were passing rapidly from hand to hand. They could be thrown into a railway carriage, circulated in the baron's hall; in short, they penetrated society, where large volumes could not enter; and deposited seed destined to bear an early and plenteous harvest.

A short period indeed divided that seed-time from its harvest; and accordingly, the next stage of this development was the appearance of Puseyism (the back to the Church of Rome movement) in the Church of England.

Several busy years had been passed in sowing Roman seed. Within the Universities it had been largely scattered; outside the Universities it had been scattered still more largely; and now the fields began to be white unto harvest. The pulpit was now heard to speak with a Roman voice; and by and by, ministers of the Church of England began to go over, very scantily at first, to the Church of Rome. The process by which their perversion was accomplished was a skillful and subtle one. They were made to feel as if, in becoming first Tractarian (one of the writers of the Oxford tracts, called "Tracts for the Times," issued during the period 1833-1841, in which series of papers the sacramental system and authority of the Church of Rome, and the value of tradition, were brought into prominence), and next Romanist, they had adopted no new creed, but had only followed boldly and logically to its natural issues a creed they had always held. And now the number of successions to Rome among the clergy amounts to more than two hundred, and to a number still larger among the nobility, gentry, and middle classes.

The next step in advance was the abolition of the statute forbidding the introduction into the country of bulls and rescripts (public documents) from the Pope. The penal statutes against Popery were abolished in 1778. They were framed by our fathers, not to oppress Papists, but to protect their own liberties against Popish machinations. They were extremely mild, when we consider that, when they were framed, the gibbets on which the Protestants had been hanged were but newly taken down, and the ashes of the fires in which they had been burned were yet scarce cold; – mild, especially, when we compare them with the statute "De Comburendo Heretico," (the Suppression of Heresy Act, a law passed by the the English Parliament in 1401 that punished seditious heretics with burning at the stake) framed in the time of Henry IV., and always acted upon so long as the government was in the hands of Papists. Whatever may be thought of these statutes, the opposition to their abolition was rested on the ground that the Church of Rome was not so much a religious society as a political confederation hostile to the liberties of this country.

After the abolition of these laws, there remained the inhibition against bringing bulls from Rome. We are prepared to defend such inhibition, as in harmony with the great principle which is every man's birthright, which we claim for ourselves, and are prepared to give to every human being, – freedom of conscience, to wit. A Papal bull is no matter of religious profession, – it is a matter of civil obedience. The question it raises is, not whether a Church shall have the right of communicating with its members on matters of doctrine, but whether a foreign prince shall be at liberty to send his edicts into our country, enjoining upon the consciences of his adherents, under the highest penalties, matters both temporal and spiritual.

France concedes no such power to the Pope. No rescript from Rome can be published in that country without permission of the Government. It is the same in Spain and Austria; indeed, in every country of Continental Europe, Protestant and Popish. But in Great Britain this statute was repealed in 1846, so far as regards the penalties attached to the 13th of Elizabeth, prohibiting the introduction of letters apostolic from Rome. As regards the older statutes, in especial that of Richard II., Government has declared that

it will not now prosecute upon them; so that the abolition of these prohibitory enactments is virtually total.

The Papists said, "Why do you keep these enactments on your statute-book? They are a relic of the times of bigotry: they are a disgrace to you, and an insult to us. We have no intention of doing what these statutes forbid. For your own credit, if not for our sake, repeal them." This reasoning prevailed. The gates of the country were opened to import and to publish all and every edict from Rome Thus another great point was gained, – a point indispensable for what was to come after.

That an eye in the Vatican was all the while watching this movement, is evident from a conversation of Wiseman with Gregory XVI., recorded in his "Four Last Popes," in which the Pontiff refers to a certain obstacle in Great Britain which must be removed before an organized aggression could take place in that country.

That obstacle was now out of the way; and speedily came the denouement (final outcome), – the Papal Aggression of 1850. That Aggression was the fair and full launching of the whole schema. It exhibited the complete machinery of Rome set up in our country, openly and avowedly, from the red cardinal to the barefooted monk. By these wary and well-weighed steps did the Church of Rome steadily advance to her crowning measure.

Continued in [The Edict From The Flaminian Gate](#)

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