

FOREIGN CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIBERTIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER III



Samuel Morse

- Popery, in its political not its religious character, the object of the present examination
- The fitness of the instrument to accomplish the political designs of despotism considered
- The principles of a despotic and free government, briefly contrasted
- Despotic principles fundamental in Popery
- Proved by infallible testimony-Papal claims of divine right and plentitude of power
- Abject principles of Popery illustrated from the Russian catechism
- Protestantism from its birth in favor of liberty
- Luther on the 4th of July attacked the presumptuous claim of divine right
- Despotism and Popery hand in hand against the liberty of conscience, liberty of opinion; and liberty of the press
- The anti-republican declarations of the present Pope Gregory, XVI.

BEFORE commencing the examination of the perfect fitness of the instrument, Catholic missions, to accomplish the political designs upon this country of Austria and her despotic allies, I would premise, that I have nothing to do in these remarks with the purely religious character of the tenets of the Roman Catholic sect. They are not in discussion. If any wish to resolve their doubts in the religious controversy, the acute pens of the polemic writers of the day will furnish them abundant means of deciding for themselves. But every religious sect has certain principles of government growing out of its particular religious belief, and which will be found to agree or disagree with the principles of any given form of civil government.

Footnote: Opposite tendencies of Popery and Protestantism. On the very threshold of the examination upon which I have here entered, and while searching among the records of the two sects for the political tendencies of the principles of Popery and Protestantism, I was struck with the marked difference in extent which the two fields of inquiry legitimately offered for examination. The prime dogma of the Catholics, that all which their church teaches is infallible, unchangeable; that what she has once taught as truth must now and forever be truth, lays open to our examination a wide field. All and each of the precepts, laws, and acts of Popery, from the earliest ages to the present day, may be legitimately quoted to show the political character of that sect. Innovation, repeal, reform, or progress can find no admittance

into the Papal system, without destroying the fundamental principle on which the whole system rests. **"The whole of our faith," says Cardinal Pallavicini, an infallible authority, "rests upon one indivisible article, namely the infallible authority of the church.** The moment, therefore, we give up any part whatever, the whole falls, for what admits not of being divided, must evidently stand entire, or fall entire.

"Protestantism, on the contrary, is founded on the Bible; the Bible is the rallying point of all Protestant religious sects. They all believe that God is its author. The religious faith of each is bound to this one volume. But as the Bible prescribes no form of faith, or doctrine, or of church government, in which all, in the exercise of the natural and revealed right of private judgment, can agree, each sect adopts that form most in accordance with what it believes to be the spirit of the doctrines which the Bible teaches. Hence there is diversity of views, according to the diversities of human constitution, according to the varying degrees of intellectual cultivation, or the peculiar wants and condition incident to the infinite variety of circumstances in which human society exists. Upon this freedom to choose according to the dictates of reason and conscience, granted to man by his Maker, denied by Roman Catholics and claimed by Protestants, is built the fabric of religious liberty. Difference of opinion being allowed, controversy of course ensues, and converts are to be made not by force of arms, but by force of truth supported by appeals to reason and conscience. Zealous according to the strength of his belief in the dogmas of his sect, the Protestant calls to his aid all the treasures of science. He believes that the divine Author of truth in the Bible is also the author of truth in Nature. He knows, that as truth is one, He that created all that forms the vast field of scientific research cannot contradict truth in Scripture by truth in nature; the Protestant is therefore the consistent encourager of all learning, of all investigation. Every discovery in science, he feels, brings to religious truth fresh treasures. Free inquiry, and discussion, all intellectual activity legitimately belong to Protestantism. It is by thus opening wide the doors of knowledge, and letting in the light of natural science upon what it believes to be the revealed truth of the Bible, that Protestantism has been able gradually to bring out the principle of religious liberty, and in its train the invaluable blessing of civil liberty.

At the commencement of the Reformation, however, we are not to look for a full development of the free principles of Protestantism. We must expect to find many truths, (which to us who live in the noon of freedom, are as clear as the sun,) then obscured or entirely invisible in the popish darkness of the times. The slavish prohibitions, the deep-rooted heathen rites, and the arbitrary dogmas of Popery were then enforced by power, by ignorance, and corruption, so that the struggle of free with despotic principles was attended, through many generations, with constant vicissitude. No maxim or usage of Popish intolerance, that for a long time clung or still clings to any of the Protestant systems of Europe, can be quoted against American Protestantism; consequently I am under no necessity of defending any despotic or intolerant practice, which may be charged or proved upon foreign, or ancient Protestantism, while every act or practice, past or present of Popish enactment is, (Papists themselves being judges,) available to demonstrate the

immutable character of Popery. It is my design, therefore, briefly to consider some of the antagonist principles of the government of Austria and of the United States, and compare them with the principles of government of the Catholic and Protestant sects. By this method we shall be able to judge of their bearing on the permanency of our present civil institutions.

Let us first present to view the fundamental principle of government, that principle which, according to its agreement with one or the other of the two opposite opinions that divide the world, decides entirely the character of the government in every part of the body politic. From whom is authority to govern derived? Austria and the United States will agree in answering, -from God. The opposition of opinion occurs in the answers to the next question. To whom on earth is this authority delegated? Austria answers, To the EMPEROR, who is the source of all authority, -"The Emperor do ordain," &c. The United States answers, To the PEOPLE, in whom resides the Sovereign power, -"We the People do ordain, establish, grant," &c. In one principle is recognized the necessity of the servitude of the people, the absolute dependence of the subject, unqualified submission to the commands of the rulers without question or examination. The Ruler is Master, the People are Slaves. In the other is recognized the supremacy of the people, the equality of rights and powers of the citizen, submission alone to laws emanating from themselves; the Ruler is a public servant, receiving wages from the people to perform services agreeable to their pleasure; amenable in all things to them; and holding office at their will. The Ruler is Servant, the People are Master. The fact and important nature of the difference in these antagonist doctrines, leading, as is perceived, to diametrically opposite results, are all that is needful to state in order to proceed at once to the inquiry, which position does the Catholic sect and the Protestant sects severally favor? The Pope, the supreme Head of the Catholic church, claims to be the "Vicerent of God," "supreme over all mortals;" "over all Emperors, Kings, Princes, Potentates and People;" "King of kings and Lord of lords." He styles himself, "the divinely appointed dispenser of spiritual and temporal punishments;" "armed with power to depose Emperors and Kings, and absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance:" "from him lies no appeal ;" "he is responsible to no one on earth;" "he is judged of no one but God." But not to go back to former ages to prove the fact of the Pope's claiming divine right, let the present Pontiff Gregory XVI. testify. He claims, and attempts the exercise of this plentitude of power and asserts his divine right. The document I quote is fresh from the Vatican, scarce four months old, a document in which the Pope interferes directly in the political affairs of Portugal against Don Pedro. "How can there be unity in the body," says the Pope," when the members are not united to the head and do not obey it? And how can this union and obedience be maintained in a country where they drive from their sees the bishops, legitimately instituted by Him to whom it appertains to assign pastors to all the vacant churches, because the DIVINE RIGHT grants to Him alone the primacy of jurisdiction and the plentitude of power." The Catholic catechism now taught by Catholic priests to the Poles in all the schools of Poland, and published by special order at Wilna, 1832, is very conclusive of the character of Catholic doctrine. The following questions and answers are propounded

"Quest. 1. How is the authority of the Emperor to be considered in reference to the spirit of Christianity?

Ans. As proceeding immediately from God.

"Quest. 2. How is this substantiated by the nature of things? Ans. It is by the will of God that men live in society; hence the various relations which constitute society, which for its more complete security is divided into parts called nations; the government of which is intrusted to a Prince, King, or Emperor, or in other words, to a Supreme ruler; we see, then, that as man exists in conformity to the will of God, society emanates from the same divine will, and more especially the supreme power and authority of our lord and master, the Czar.

"Quest. 3. What duties does religion teach us the humble subjects of his majesty the Emperor of Russia, to practice towards him? Ans. Worship, obedience, fidelity, the payment of taxes, service, love and prayer, the whole being comprised in the words worship and fidelity.

"Quest. 4. Wherein does this worship consist, and how should it be manifested? Ans. By the most unqualified reverence in words, gestures, demeanor, thoughts and actions.

"Quest. 5. What kind of obedience do we owe him? Ans. An entire, passive, and unbounded obedience in every point of view.

"Quest. 6. In what consists the fidelity we owe to the Emperor? Ans. In executing his commands most rigorously, without examination, in performing the duties he requires from us, and in doing every thing willingly without murmuring.

"Quest. 8. Is the service of his Majesty, the Emperor, obligatory on us? Ans. Absolutely so; we should, if required, sacrifice ourselves in compliance with his will, both in a civil and military capacity, and in whatever manner he deems expedient.

"Quest. 9. What benevolent sentiments and love are due to the Emperor? Ans. We should manifest our good will and affection, according to our station, in endeavoring to promote the prosperity of our native land, Russia, (not Poland,) as well as that of the Emperor, our father, and of his august family.

"Quest. 13. Does religion forbid us to rebel, and overthrow the government of the Emperor? Ans. We are interdicted from so doing, at all times, and under any circumstances.

"Quest. 14. Independently of the worship we owe to the Emperor, are we called upon to respect the public authorities emanating from him? Ans. Yes; because they emanate from him, represent him, and act as his substitute, so that the Emperor is every where.

"Quest. 15. What motives have we to fulfil the duties above enumerated? Ans. The motives are two- fold-some natural, others revealed.

"Quest. 16. What are the natural motives? Ans. Besides the motives adduced, there are the following: The Emperor, being the head of the nation, the father of all his subjects who constitute one and the same country, is thereby alone worthy of reverence, gratitude, and obedience: for both public welfare and individual security depend on submissiveness to his commands.

"Quest. 17. What are the supernatural revealed motives for this worship? Ans. The supernatural revealed motives are, that the Emperor is the vicegerent and minister of God to execute the divine commands; and, consequently, disobedience to the Emperor is identified with disobedience to God himself, that God will reward us in the world to come for the worship and obedience we render the Emperor, and punish us severely to all eternity should we disobey and neglect to worship him. Moreover, God commands us to love and obey from the inmost recesses of the heart every authority, and particularly the Emperor, not from worldly considerations, but from apprehension of the final judgment.

"Quest. 19. What examples confirm this doctrine? Ans. The example of Jesus Christ himself, who lived and died in allegiance to the Emperor of Rome, and respectfully submitted to the judgment which condemned him to death. We have, moreover, the example of the Apostles, who both loved and respected them; they suffered meekly in dungeons conformably to the will of Emperors, and did not revolt like malefactors and traitors. We must, therefore, in imitation of these examples, suffer and be silent.

"This is the slavish doctrine taught to the Catholics of Poland. The people, instead of having power or rights, are according to this catechism mere passive slaves, born for their masters, taught by a perversion of the threatenings of religion to obey without murmuring, or questioning, or examination, the mandates of their human deity, bid to cringe and fawn and kiss the very feet of majesty, and deem themselves happy to be whipped, to be kicked, or to die in his service. Is it necessary to say that there is not a Protestant sect in this country that holds such abject sentiments, or whose creed inculcates such barefaced idolatry of a human being? Protestantism, on the contrary, at its birth, while yet bound with many of the shackles of Popery, attacked, in its earliest lisps of freedom, this very doctrine of divine right. It was Luther, and by a singular coincidence of day too, on the fourth of July, who first in a public disputation at Leipsic [sic Liepzig] with his Popish antagonist, called in question the divine right of the Pope.

Let us now examine in contrast other political rights, liberty of conscience, liberty of opinion, and liberty of the press. Austria and the United States differ on these points as widely as on the fundamental question. Austria not only has the press in her own territory under censorship, but intermeddles to control the press in neighboring states on the principle of self preservation. "In Saxony," says Dwight, "the press is fettered by Austria and Prussia, who allege this reason, 'that all the works published in Saxony, which are not on the proscribed list, are freely admitted into our dominions. For our happiness, therefore, and the stability of our thrones, it is necessary that the press should be fettered!!'" As to liberty of opinion, political or religious, in Austria, no one dreams of the existence of such a thing; the dungeon is a summary mode there of obtaining a most happy

uniformity of opinion throughout all the imperial dominions. It is our glory, on the contrary, that all these rights are secured to us by our institutions, and freely enjoyed, not only without the least danger to the peace of the state, but from the very genius of our government, they are esteemed among its most precious safeguards. What are the Catholic tenets on these points? Shall I go back some three or four hundred years, and quote the pontifical law which says. [Art. 9.] "The Pope has the power to interpret Scripture and to teach as he pleases, and no person is allowed to teach in a different way." Or to the fourth Council of Lateran in 1215, which decrees "That all heretics, (that is all who have an opinion of their own,) shall be delivered over to the civil magistrate to be burned." Or shall I refer to the Catholic Index Expurgatorius to the list of forbidden books, to show how the press is still fettered? No! it is unnecessary to go farther than the present day. The reigning pontiff Gregory XVI. shall again answer the question. He has most opportunely furnished us with the present sentiments of the Catholic church on these very points. In his encyclical letter, dated Sept. 1832, the Pope, lamenting the disorders and infidelity of the times, says,

"From this polluted fountain of 'indifference,' flows that absurd and erroneous doctrine, or rather raving, in favor and defence of 'liberty of conscience,' for which most pestilential error, the course is opened to that entire and wild liberty of opinion, which is every where attempting the overthrow of religious and civil institutions; and which the unblushing impudence of some has held forth as an advantage to religion. Hence that pest, of all others most to be dreaded in a state, unbridled liberty of opinion, licentiousness of speech, and a lust of novelty, which, according to the experience of all ages, portend the downfall of the most powerful and flourishing empires."

"Hither tends that worst and never sufficiently to be execrated and detested LIBERTY OF THE PRESS, for the diffusion of all manner of writings, which some so loudly contend for, and so actively promote."

He complains too of the dissemination of unlicensed books.

"No means must be here omitted, says Clement XIII., our predecessor of happy memory, in the Encyclical Letter on the proscription of bad books-no means must be here omitted, as the extremity of the case calls for all our exertions, to exterminate the fatal pest which spreads through so many works; nor can the materials of error be otherwise destroyed than by the flames, which consume the depraved elements of the evil."

Now all this is explicit enough, here is no ambiguity. We see clearly from infallible authority that the Catholic of the present day, wherever he may be, if he is true to the principles of his sect, cannot consistently tolerate liberty of conscience, or liberty of the press. Is there any sect of Protestants in this country, from whose religious tenets doctrines so subversive of civil and religious liberty can be even inferred? If there be, I am ignorant of its name. The subject will be pursued in the next chapter.

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