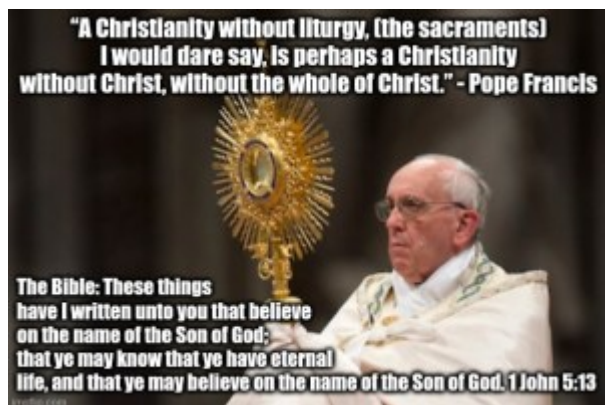


History of the Papacy Chapter VII. That the Church of Rome Neither has Nor Can Change Her Principles on the Head of the Supremacy



Continued from [Chapter VI. The Canon Law](#)

We have shown in the foregoing chapter, that nothing in all past history is better authenticated than the fact that the Papacy has claimed supremacy over kings and kingdoms. We have also shown that this claim is a legitimate inference from the fundamental principles of the Papacy,—that these principles are of such a nature as to imply a Divine right, and that the arrogant claim based on these principles Rome has not only asserted, but succeeded in establishing. Her doctors have taught it, her casuists have defended it, her councils have ratified it, the papal bulls have been based upon it, and her popes have reduced it to practice, in the way of deposing monarchs, and transferring their kingdoms to others. "Seeing it hath been current among their divines of greatest vogue and authority," reasons Barrow, "the great masters of their school,—seeing by so large a consent and concurrence, during so long a time, it may pretend (much better than divers other points of great importance) to be confirmed by tradition or prescription,—why should it not be admitted for a doctrine of the holy Roman Church, *the mother and mistress of all churches*? How can they who disavow this notion be the true sons of that mother, or faithful scholars of that mistress? How can they acknowledge any authority in that Church to be infallible, or certain, or obliging to assent. No man apprehending it false, seemeth capable, with good conscience, to hold communion with those who profess it; for, upon supposition of its falsehood, the Pope and his chief adherents are the teachers and abettors of the highest violation of Divine commands, and most enormous sins of usurpation, tyranny, imposture, perjury, rebellion, murder, rapine, and all the villanies complicated in the practical influence of this doctrine." [1]

But does the fact, so clearly established from history, that the Church of Rome not only claimed, but succeeded in making good her claim, to universal supremacy, suggest no fears for the cause of public liberty in time to come?

Has the Papacy renounced this claim? Has she confessed that it is a claim which she ought never to have made, and which she would not now make were she in the same circumstances? So far from this, it can be shown, that though Gosselin and other modern writers have attempted to apologise for the past usurpations of the Papacy, and to explain the grounds on which these acts were based, as being not so much definite principles as popular beliefs and concessions; and though they have written with the obvious intention of leading their readers to infer that the Papacy would not so act now were it placed in the same circumstances as before; yet it can be shown that the Papacy has not renounced this claim,—that it never can renounce it,—and that, were opportunity to offer, it would once more take upon itself the high prerogative of disposing of crowns and kingdoms. How does this appear? In the first place, if Rome has renounced this alleged right, let the deed of renunciation be produced. The fact is notorious, that she *did* depose monarchs. When or where has she confessed that in doing so she stepped out of her sphere, and was betrayed by a guilty ambition into an act of flagrant usurpation? The contrition must be as public as the crime is notorious. But there exists no such deed; and, in lieu of a public and formal renunciation, we cannot accept the explanations and apologies, the feeble and qualified denials, of modern writers. It is the interest of these writers to keep discreetly in the shade claims and pretensions which it would be dangerous meanwhile to avow. And even granting that these disavowals were more explicit than they are, and granting, too, that they were sincerely made, they carry no authority with them. They are merely private opinions, and do not bind the Church; and there is too much reason to believe that they would be repudiated by Rome whenever she found it safe or advantageous to do so. The case stands thus:—the Church of Rome, in violation of the principle of a co-ordinate jurisdiction in spiritual and civil affairs, and in violation of her own proper character and objects as a church, has claimed and exercised supremacy over kings and kingdoms; but she has not to this hour acknowledged that she erred in doing so, nor has she renounced the principles which led to that error; and so long as she maintains an attitude which is a virtual defence and justification of all her past pretensions, both in their theory and their practice, the common sense of mankind must hold that she is ready to repeat the same aggressions whenever the same occasions and opportunities shall occur.

It is also to be borne in mind, that though the Church of Rome is silent on her claims meanwhile, we are not warranted to take that silence for surrender. They are not claims renounced; they are simply claims not asserted. The foundation of these claims, and their desirableness, remain unchanged. Moreover, it is important to observe, that wherever the action of the Romish Church is restrained, it is restrained by a power from without, and not by any principle or power from within. Her prerogatives have sometimes been wrested from her, but never without the Church of Rome putting on record her solemn protest. She has declared that the authority of which she was deprived was rightfully hers, and that to forbid her to use it was an unrighteous interference with her just powers; which means, that she was purposed to reclaim these rights the moment she thought she could make the attempt with success. In those countries where she still bears sway, we find her giving effect to her pretensions to the very utmost which the liberty

allowed her will permit; and it is certainly fair to infer, that were her liberty greater, her pretensions would be greater too, not in assumption only, but in practice also.

But, second, the Church of Rome cannot renounce this claim, because she is infallible. We shall afterwards prove that that Church does hold the doctrine of the infallibility, and that it is one of the fundamental principles on which her system is built. Meanwhile we assume it. Being infallible, she can never believe what is false, or practise what is wrong, and is therefore incapable in all time coming of renouncing any one doctrine she ever taught, or departing from any one claim she ever asserted. To say that such an opinion was taught as true ages ago, but is not now recognised as sound, or held to be obligatory, is perfectly allowable to Protestants, for they make no claim to infallibility. They may err, and they may own that their fathers have erred; for though they have an infallible standard,—the Word of God,—in which all the fundamental doctrines appertaining to salvation are so clearly taught, that there is no mistaking them on the part of any one who brings ordinary powers and ordinary candour, with a due reliance on the Spirit's promised aid, to their investigation, yet there are subordinate matters, especially points of administration, on which a longer study of the Word of God will throw clearer light. Protestants, therefore, may with perfect consistency amend their system, both in its theory and in its practice, and so bring it into nearer conformity with the great standard of truth. They have built up no wall of adamant behind them. Not so Rome. She is infallible; and, as such, must stand eternally on the ground she has taken up. It is a double thralldom which she has perpetrated: she has enslaved the human understanding, and she has enslaved herself. The dogma of infallibility, like a chain which mortal power cannot break, has tied her to the bulls of popes, and the decrees of councils and canonists; and it matters not how gross the error, how glaring the absurdity, or how manifest the contradiction, into which they may have fallen; the error is part of her infallibility, and must be maintained. The Church of Rome can never plead that she believed so and so, and acted agreeably thereto, six hundred years ago, but that she has since come to think differently on the point,—that a deeper knowledge of the Bible has corrected her views. Infallibility was infallibility six hundred years ago, as really as it is so to-day. Infallibility can never be either less or more. To an infallible Church it is all one whether her decisions were delivered yesterday or a thousand years ago. The decision of ten centuries since is as much a piece of infallibility as the decision of ten hours since. With Rome a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are but as a day.

Nor can the Church of Rome avail herself of the excuse, that such an opinion was held by her in the dark ages, when there was little knowledge of any sort in the world. There was infallibility in it, however, according to the Church of Rome. In those ages, that Church taught as infallible that the earth was stationary, while the sun rolled round it, and that the earth was not a globe, but an extended plain. The apology that this was before the birth of the modern astronomy, however satisfactory in the mouth of another, would in her mouth be a condemnation of her whole system. The ages were dark enough, no doubt; but infallibility then was still infallibility. Why, it is

precisely at such times that we need infallibility. An infallibility that cannot see in the dark is not worth much. If it cannot speak till science has first spoken, but at the risk of falling into gross error, why, we think the world might do as well without as with infallibility. A prophet that restricts his vaticinations to what has already come to pass, possesses no great share of the prophetic gift. The beacon whose light cannot be seen but when the sun is above the horizon, will be but a sorry guide to the mariner; and that infallibility which cannot move a step without losing itself in a quagmire, except when science and history pioneer its way, is but ill fitted to govern the world. The infallibility has made three grand discoveries,—the first in the department of astronomy, the second in the department of geography, and the third in the department of theology. The first is, that the sun revolves round our earth; the second is, that the world is an extended plain; and the third and greatest is, that the Pope is God's vicar. If the Church of Rome be true, these three are all equally infallible truths.

To dwell a little longer on this infallibility, and the unchangeableness with which it endows the Church of Rome,—that Church is not only infallible as a church or society, but every separate article of her creed is infallible. In fact, Popery is just a bundle of infallible axioms, every one of which is as unalterably and everlastingly true as are the theorems of Euclid. How impossible that a creed of this character can be either amended or changed! Amended it cannot be, for it is already infallible; changed still less can it be, for to change infallible truth would be to embrace error. What would be thought of the mathematician who should affirm that geometry might be changed,—that though it was a truth when Euclid flourished, that the three angles of a triangle were together equal to two right angles, it does not follow that it is a truth now? Geometry is what Popery claims to be,—a system of infallible truths, and therefore eternally immutable. Between the trigonometrical survey of Britain in our own times, and those annual measurements of their fields which were wont to be undertaken by the early Egyptians on the reflux of the Nile, there is an intervening period of not less than forty centuries, and yet the two processes were based on the identical geometrical truths. The two angles at the base of an isosceles triangle were then equal to one another, and they are so still, and will be myriads of ages beyond the present moment, and myriads and myriads of miles away from the sphere of our globe. Popery claims for her truths an equally necessary, independent, universal, and eternal existence. When we talk of the one being changed, we talk not a whit more irrationally than when we talk of the other being changed. There is not a dogma in the bullarium which is not just as infallible a truth as any axiom of geometry. It follows that the canon law is as unchangeable as Euclid. The deposing power having been received by the Church as an infallible truth, must be an infallible truth still. Truth cannot be truth in one age and error in the next. The infallibility can never wax old. To this attribute has the Church of Rome linked herself: she must not shirk its conditions. Were she to confess that in any one instance she had ever adopted or practised error,—above all, were she to grant that she had erred in the great acts of her supremacy,—she would virtually surrender her whole cause into the hands of Protestants.

We find Cardinal Perron adopting this precise line of argument on a very

memorable occasion. After the assassination of Henry IV. by the Jesuits, it was proposed, for the future security of government, to abjure the papal doctrine of deposing kings for heresy. When the three estates assembled in 1616, Cardinal Perron, as the organ of the rest of the Gallican clergy, addressed them on the subject. He argued, that were they to abjure the pope's right to depose heretical sovereigns, they would destroy the communion hitherto existing between them and other churches,—nay, even with the church of France before their own time: that seeing the popes had claimed and exercised this right, they could not take the proposed oath without acknowledging that the Pope and the whole Church had erred, both in faith and in things pertaining to salvation, and that for many ages the Catholic Church had perished from the earth: that they behoved to dig up the bones of a multitude of French doctors, even the bones of St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, and burn them upon the altar, as Josiah burnt the bones of the false prophet. So reasoned the Cardinal; and we should like to see those who now attempt to deny the Pope's deposing power try to answer his arguments.

The infallibility is the iron hoop around the Church of Rome. In every variety of outward circumstances, and amid the most furious conflicts of discordant opinions, that Church is and must ever be the same. Change or amendment she can never know. She cannot repent, because she cannot err. Repentance and amendment are for the fallible only. Far more marvellous would it be to hear that she had changed than to hear that she had been destroyed. It will one day be told the world, and the nations will clap their hands at the news, that the Papacy has fallen; but it will never be told that the Papacy has repented. She will be destroyed, not amended.

But, in the third place, the Papacy cannot renounce this claim without denying its essential and fundamental principles. Between the dogma that the Pope is Christ's vicar and the claim of supremacy, there is, as we have shown, the most strict and logical connection. The latter is but the former transmuted into fact; and if the one is renounced, the other must go with it. On the assumption that the Pope is Christ's vicar is built the whole fabric of Popery. On this point, according to Bellarmine, hangs the whole of Christianity;[\[2\]](#) and one of the latest expounders of the Papacy re-echoes this sentiment:—"Wanting the sovereign pontiff," says De Maistre, "Christianity wants its sole foundation."[\[3\]](#) Anything, therefore, that would go to annihilate that assumption, would raze, as Bellarmine admits, the foundations of the whole system. The Papacy, then, has it in its choice to be the superior of kings or nothing. It has no middle path. *Aut Caesar aut nullus*. The Pope is Christ's vicar, and so lord of the earth and of all its empires, or his pretensions are unfounded, his religion a cheat, and himself an impostor.

It is necessary here to advert to the popular argument,—a miserable fallacy, no doubt, but one that possesses an influence that better reasons are sometimes found to want. The world is now so greatly changed that it is impossible not to believe that Popery also is changed. It is incredible that it should now think of enforcing its antiquated claims. We find this argument in the mouths of two classes of persons. It is urged by those who see that the only chance which the Papacy has of succeeding in its present criminal

designs is to persuade the world that it is changed, and who accordingly report as true what they know to be false. And, second, it is employed by those who are ignorant of the character of Popery, and who conclude, that because all else is changed, this too has undergone a change. But the question is not, Is the world altered?—this all admit; but, Is the Papacy altered? A change in the one gives not the slightest ground to infer a change in the other. The Papacy itself makes no claim of the sort; it repudiates the imputation of change; glories in being the same in all ages; and with this agrees its nature, which shuts out the very idea of change, or rather makes change synonymous with destruction. It is nothing to prove that society is changed, though it is worth remembering that the essential elements of human nature are the same in all ages, and that the changes of which so much account is made lie mainly on the surface. The question is, Is the Papacy changed? It cannot be shown on any good ground that it is. And while the system continues the same, its influence, its mode of action, and its aims, will be identical, let the circumstances around it be what they may. It will mould the world to itself, but cannot be moulded by it. Is not this a universal law, determining the development alike of things, of systems, and of men? Take a seed from the tomb of an Egyptian mummy, carry it into the latitude of Britain, and bury it ill the earth; the climate, and many other things, will all be different, but the seed is the same. Its incarceration of four thousand years has but suspended, not annihilated, its vital powers; and, being the same seed, it will grow up into the same plant; its leaf, and flower, and fruit, will all be the same they would have been on the banks of the Nile under the reign of the Pharaohs. Or let us suppose that the mummy, the companion of its long imprisonment, should start into life. The brown son of Egypt, on looking up, would find the world greatly changed;—the Pharaohs gone, the pyramids old, Memphis in ruins, empires become wrecks, which had not been born till long after his embalment; but amid all these changes he would feel that he was the same man, and that his sleep of forty centuries had left his dispositions and habits wholly unchanged. Nay, will not the whole human race rise at the last day with the same moral tastes and dispositions with which they went to their graves, so that to the characters with which they died will link on the allotments to which they shall rise? The infallibility has stereotyped the Papacy, just as nature has stereotyped the seed, and death the characters of men; and, let it slumber for one century, or twenty centuries, it will awake with its old instincts. And while as a system it continues unchanged, its action on the world must necessarily be the same. It is not more accordant with the law of their natures that fire should burn and air ascend, than it is accordant with the nature of the Papacy that it should claim the supremacy, and so override the consciences of men and the laws of kingdoms.

Nay, so far is it from being a truth that Popery is growing a better thing, that the truth lies the other way: it is growing rapidly and progressively worse. So egregiously do the class to which we have referred miscalculate, and so little true acquaintance do they show with the system on which they so confidently pronounce, that those very influences on which they rely for rendering the Papacy milder in spirit, and more tolerant in policy, are the very influences which are communicating a more defined stamp to its bigotry and a keener edge to its malignity. By an inevitable consequence, the Papacy

must retrograde as the world advances. The diffusion of letters, the growth of free institutions, above all, the prevalence of true religion, are hateful to the Papacy; they threaten its very existence, and necessarily rouse into violent action all its more intolerant qualities. The most cursory survey of its history for the past six centuries abundantly attests the truth of what we now say. It was not till arts and Christianity began to enlighten southern Europe in the twelfth century, that Rome unsheathed the sword. The Reformation came next, and was followed by a new outburst of ferocity and tyranny on the part of Rome. Thus, as the world grows better, the Papacy grows worse. The Papacy of the present day, so far from being set off by a comparison of the Papacy of the middle ages, rather suffers thereby; for of the two, the latter certainly was the more tolerant in its actings. No thanks to Rome for being tolerant, when there is nothing to tolerate. No thanks that her sword rusts in its scabbard, when there is no heretical blood to moisten it. But let a handful of Florentines open a chapel for Protestant worship, and the deadly marshes of the Maremme will soon read them the lesson of the Papacy's tolerance; or let a poor Roman presume to circulate the Word of God, and he will have time in the papal dungeons to acquaint himself with Rome's new-sprung liberality; or let the Queen's government build colleges in Ireland, to introduce a little useful knowledge into that model land of sacerdotal rule, and the anathemas which will instantly be hurled from every Popish altar on the other side of the Channel will furnish unmistakable evidence as to the progress which the Church of Rome has recently made in the virtue of toleration. Assuredly Rome will not change so long as there are fools in the world to believe that she is changed.

At no former period, and by no former holder of the pontificate, was the primary principle of the Papacy more vigorously or unequivocally asserted, than it has been by the present pontiff. In his encyclical letter against the circulation of the Bible^[4] we find Pius IX. thus speaking:—"All who labour with you for the defence of the faith will have especially an eye to this, that they confirm, defend, and deeply fix in the minds of your faithful people that piety, veneration, and respect towards this supreme see of Peter, in which you, venerable brothers, so greatly excel. Let the faithful people remember that there here lives and presides, in the person of his successors, Peter, the prince of the apostles, whose dignity faileth not even in his unworthy heir. Let them remember that Christ the Lord hath placed in this chair of Peter the unshaken foundation of his Church; and that he gives to Peter himself the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and that he prayed, therefore, that his faith might fail not, and commanded him to confirm his brethren therein; so that the successor of St. Peter holds the primacy over the whole world, and is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church, and father and doctor of all Christians." There is not a false dogma or a persecuting principle which Rome ever taught or practised, which is not contained, avowedly or implicitly, in this declaration. The Pope herein sets no limits to his spiritual sway but those of the world,—of course excommunicating all who do not belong to his Church; and claims a character,—"true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church,"—which vests in him temporal dominion equally unbounded and supreme.

The popes do not now send their *legates a latere* to the court of London or of

Paris, to summon monarchs to do homage to Peter or transient tribute to Rome. The Papacy is too sagacious needlessly to awaken the fears of princes, or to send its messengers on what, meanwhile, would be a very bootless errand. But has the Pope renounced these claims? We have shown *a priori* that he cannot, and with this agrees the fact that he has not: therefore he must, in all fairness, be held as still retaining, though not actually asserting, this claim. No conclusion is more certain than this, that the essential principles of the system being the same, they will, in the same circumstances, practice the same evils and mischiefs in future which they have done in the past. What has been may be. In the sixth century, had any one pointed out the bearing of these principles, affirming that they necessarily led to supremacy over kings, one might have been excused for doubting whether practically this result would follow. But the same excuse is signally wanting in the nineteenth century. The world has had dire experience of the fact; it knows what the Papacy is *practically* as well as *theoretically*. Moreover are not the modern chiefs of the Papacy as ambitious and as devoted to the aggrandizement of the Papacy as the pontiffs of the past? Is not universal dominion as tempting an object of ambition now as it was in the eleventh century? and, provided the popes can manage, either by craft or force, to persuade the world to submit to their rule, is any man so simple as to believe that they will not exercise it,—that they will modestly put aside the sceptre, and content themselves with the pastoral staff? There is nothing in that dominion, on their own principles, which is inconsistent with their spiritual character; nay the possession of temporal authority is essential to the completeness of that character, and to the vigour of their spiritual administration. Is it not capable of being made to subserve as effectually as ever the authority and influence of the Church? In times like the present, pontiffs may affect to undervalue the temporal supremacy; they may talk piously of throwing off the cares of State, and giving themselves wholly to their spiritual duties; but let such prospects open before them as were presented to the Gregories and the Leos of the past, and we shall see how long this horror of the world's pomps and riches, and this love of meditation and prayer, will retain possession of their breasts. The present occupant of the pontifical chair talked in this way of his temporal sovereignty; but the moment he came to lose that sovereignty, instead of venting his joy at having got rid of his burden, he filled Europe with the most dolorous complaints and outcries, and fulminated from his retreat at Gaeta the bitterest execrations and the most dreadful anathemas against all who had been concerned in the act of stripping him of his sovereignty. So far was Pius from betaking himself to the spiritual solace for which he had so thirsted, that he plunged headlong into the darkest intrigues and conspiracies against the independence of Italy, and sent his messengers to every Catholic court in Europe, exhorting and supplicating these powers to take up arms and restore him to his capital. The result, as all the world knows, was, that the young liberties of Italy were quenched in blood, and the throne of the triple tyrant was again set up. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,"—so wrote they on the gates of Notre Dame;—"Pius IX. kills his." Accordingly, the doctrine now maintained by the pontiff and the advocates of the Papacy in every part of Europe is, that the sacerdotal and temporal sovereignties cannot be disjoined, and that the union of the two, in the person of the Pope, is indispensable to the welfare of the Church and the independence of its supreme bishop. But if it

be essential to the good of the Church and the independence of its head that the Pope should be sovereign of the Roman States, the conclusion is inevitable, that it is equally essential for these objects that he should possess the temporal supremacy. Will not the same good, but on a far larger scale, flow from the possession of the temporal supremacy that now flows from the temporal sovereignty? and will not the loss of the former expose the Papacy to similar and much greater inconveniences and dangers than those likely to arise from the loss of the latter? When we confound the distinction between things civil and sacred, or rather,—for the error of Rome properly lies here,—when we deny the co-ordinate jurisdiction of the two powers, and subordinate the temporal to the spiritual, there is no limit to the amount of temporal power which may not be possessed and exercised by spiritual functionaries. If to possess any degree of temporal jurisdiction conduce to the authority of ecclesiastical rulers and the good of the Church, then the more of this power the better. The temporal supremacy is a better thing than the temporal sovereignty, in proportion as it is a more powerful thing. Thus, every argument for the sovereignty of the Pope is *a fortiori* an argument for the supremacy of the Pope. Why does he cling to the temporal sovereignty, but that he may provide for the dignity of his person and office, maintain his court in befitting splendour from the revenue of St. Peter's patrimony, transact with kings on something like a footing of equality, keep his spies at foreign courts in the shape of legates and nuncios, and by these means check heresy, and advance the interests of the universal Church? But as lord paramount of Europe, he will be able to accomplish all these ends much more completely than merely as sovereign of the Papal States. His spiritual thunder will possess far more terror when launched from a seat which rises in proud supremacy over thrones. The glory of his court, and the numbers of his returns, will be far more effectually provided for when able to subsidize all Europe, than when dependent simply on the limited and now beggared domains of the fisherman. With what vigour will he chastise rebellious nations, and reduce to obedience heretical sovereigns, when able to point against them the combined temporal and spiritual artillery! How completely will he purge out heresy, when at his powerful word every sword in Europe shall again leap from its scabbard! Will not bishops and cardinals be able to take high ground at foreign courts, when they can tell their sovereigns, "The Pope is as much your master as ours?" But this is but a tithe of the power and glory which the supremacy would confer upon the Church, and especially upon its head. To grasp the political power of Europe, and wield it in the dark, is the present object the Jesuits are striving to attain; and can any man doubt that, were the times favourable, they would exercise openly what they are now trying to wield by stealth? Never will the Papacy feel that it is in its proper place, or that it is in a position to carry out fully its peculiar mission, till, seated once more in absolute and unapproachable power upon the Seven Hills, it look down upon the kings of Europe as its vassals, and be worshipped by the nations as a God; and the turn that affairs are taking in the world appears to be forcing this upon the Papacy. A crisis has arrived in which, if the Church of Rome is to maintain herself, she must take higher ground than she has done since the Reformation. She has the alternative of becoming the head of Europe, or of being swept out of existence. A new era, such as neither the Pope nor his fathers have known, has dawned on the world. The French Revolution, after Napoleon had extinguished it in blood, as all men

believed, has returned from its tomb, refreshed by its sleep of half a century, to do battle with the dynasties and hierarchies of Europe.

The first idea of the Papacy was to mount on the revolutionary wave, and be floated to the lofty seat it had formerly occupied. "Your Holiness has but one choice," Cicerovacchio is reported to have said to the Pope: "you may place yourself at the head of reform, or you will be dragged in the rear of revolution." The pontifical choice was fixed in favour of the former. Accordingly, the world was astonished by the unwonted sight of the mitre surmounted by the cap of liberty; the echoes of the Vatican were awakened by the strange sounds of "liberty and fraternity;" and the Papacy, wrinkled and hoar, was seen to coquette with the young revolution on the sacred soil of the Seven Hills. But nature had forbidden the banns; and no long time elapsed till it was discovered that the projected union was monstrous and impossible. The Church broke with the revolution; the harlot hastened to throw herself once more into the arms of her old Paramour the State; and now commenced the war of the Church with the democracy. It is plain that the issue of that war to the Papacy must be one of two things,—complete annihilation, or unbounded dominion. Rome must be all that she ever was, and more, or she must cease to be. Europe is not wide enough to hold both the old Papacy and the young Democracy; and one or other must go to the wall. Matters have gone too far to permit of the contest being ended by a truce or compromise; the battle must be fought out. If the Democracy shall triumph, a fearful retribution will be exercised on a Church which has proved herself to be essentially sanguinary and despotic; and if the Church shall overcome, the revolution will be cut up root and branch. It is not for victory, then, but for life, that both parties now fight. The gravity of the juncture, and the eminent peril in which the Papacy is placed, will probably spirit it on to some desperate attempt. Half-measures will not save it at such a crisis as this. To retain only the traditions of its power, and to practise the comparatively tolerant policy which it has pursued for the past half-century, will no longer either suit its purpose, or be found compatible with its continued existence. It must become the living, dominant Papacy once more. In order that it may exist, it must reign. We may therefore expect to witness some combined and vigorous attempt on the part of Popery to recover its former dominion. It has studied the genius of every people; it has fathomed the policy of every government; it knows the principles of every sect, and school, and club,—the sentiments and feelings of almost every individual; and with its usual tact and ability, it is attempting to control and harmonize all these various and conflicting elements, so as to work out its own ends. To those frightened by revolutionary excesses the Church of Rome announces herself as the asylum of order. To those scared and shocked by the blasphemies of Socialist infidelity she exhibits herself as the ark of the faith. To monarchs whom the revolution has shaken upon their thrones she promises a new lease of power, provided they will be ruled by her. And as regards those fiery spirits whom her other arts cannot tame, she has in reserve the unanswerable and silencing arguments of the dungeon and the scaffold. Popery is the soul of that re-action that is now in progress on the Continent, though, with her usual cunning, she puts the State in the foreground. It was the Jesuits who instigated and planned the expedition to Rome. It was the Jesuits who plotted the dreadful massacres in Sicily, who have filled the dungeons of Naples with thousands of innocent

citizens, who drove into exile every Roman favourable to liberty and opposed to the Pope, who closed the clubs and fettered the press of France, Tuscany, Germany, and Austria; and, in fine, it was the Jesuits of Vienna who crushed the nationalities and counselled the judicial murders of Hungary. History will lay all this blood to the door of the Papacy. It has all been shed in pursuance of a plan concocted by the Church,—now under the government of Jesuitism,—to recover her former ascendancy. The common danger which in the late revolution threatened both Church and State, has made the two cling closely together. “I alone,”—so, in effect, said the Church to the State,—“can save you. In me, and no where else, are to be found the principles of order and the centre of union. The spiritual weapons which it is mine to wield are alone able to combat and subdue the infidel and atheistic principles which have produced the revolution. Lend me your aid now, and promise me your submission in time to come, and I will reduce the masses to your authority.” This reasoning was omnipotent, and the bargain was struck. Accordingly there is not a court of Catholic Europe where the Jesuit influence is not at this moment supreme. And it is happening at present, as it has happened at all former periods of confusion, that in proportion as the State loses the Church acquires strength. Although its companion in trouble, the Church is acting at this moment as the State’s superior. She extends to the civil powers the benefit of her matchless policy and her universal organization. So stands the case, then. It must force itself upon the conviction of all, that this relation of the Church to the State is fraught with tremendous danger to the independence of the secular authority and the liberties of the world. In no fairer train could matters be for realizing all that Rome aspires to. And soon would she realize her aim, were it not that the present era differs from all preceding ones, in that there is an antagonist force in existence in the shape of an infidel Democracy. These two tremendous forces,—Democracy and Catholicism,—poise one another; and neither can reign so long as both exist. But who can tell how soon the equilibrium may be destroyed? Should the balance preponderate in favour of the Catholic element,—should Popery succeed in bringing over from the infidel and democratic camp a sufficient number of converts to enable her to crush her antagonist,—the supremacy is again in her hands. With Democracy collapsed, with the State exhausted and owing its salvation to the Church, and with a priesthood burning to avenge the disasters and humiliations of three centuries, wo to Europe!—the darkest page of its history would be yet to be written.

[1] Barrow’s Works, vol. i. p. 548. [\[Back\]](#)

[2] Bellarm. Prefatio in Libros de Summo Pontifice. [\[Back\]](#)

[3] Du Pape: Discours Preliminaire. [\[Back\]](#)

[4] Letter to the archbishops and bishops of Italy dated Portici, December 8, 1849. [\[Back\]](#)

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