

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

[From Brownson's Quarterly Review for July, 1875]

MR. GLADSTONE has added a new word to the English language, *Vaticanism*, but it may not, after all, prove a permanent addition, for it meets no Catholic want, and serves only a temporary want of Protestant polemics. Yet the Vatican, with all deference to his Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, has introduced one very important innovation, not in doctrine indeed, but in the mode of presenting it. The Holy Council of the Vatican is, we believe, the first oecumenical council that has treated the primacy of Peter as the first part of *De Ecclesia*, or the foundation before treating the body of the edifice. All previous councils, and all the theologians we are acquainted with, had treated the primacy as the second part of the tract, *De Ecclesia*. Thomists, Augustinians, Jesuits, Gallicans, Ultramontanes, the highest-toned papists, as well as the lowest-toned, those who recognized the primacy at all, had uniformly treated the body of the church before treating its head. Even the theologians designated to prepare the "Schema de Ecclesia" for the consideration of the council, undoubted papists and infallibilists as they were, did the same.

This persistence in what has always struck us as an unscientific method, cannot easily be explained otherwise than by the reluctance of any theologian to assume, on his own responsibility, to deviate from it, or the tenacity with which the Catholic mind adheres to established usage; and it is no slight proof of the presence and controlling influence of the Holy Ghost in the council, that the fathers were able to change the method of treating this article of the faith against the uniform practice of councils and theologians, and to adopt what is really the scientific method of treatment. Undoubtedly, the need of defining the powers and prerogatives of the primacy, before they would be compelled to suspend their sessions, or to separate, perhaps never to assemble again in this world, was the occasion used by the Holy Ghost to induce them to adopt the innovation, and treat the head before proceeding to treat the body. This seems at first sight a small matter...

**but it is in our judgment important; and the change is in some measure necessary to guard against the error that the church can exist as the church of Christ without the pope: which we hold to be impossible. The church is founded on Peter, and without Peter it has no foundation. A church without a foundation is founded on nothing and is nothing -a castle in the air. Till you have Peter, you have no church. We cannot understand, therefore, how we can treat scientifically the church before treating the primacy, without which there is no church.**

We beg here to introduce a brief disquisition on the *Constitution of the Church*, written before we removed from Boston in 1855, though not published till January, 1856. We omit the portion of the essay\* {\* ***The omitted portion here inserted consists of the last pages.--ED.***} written after our removal to this city, when the *Review* in a measure changed its character, and sought to cooperate with those of our friends who made it their specialty to labor directly for the conversion of non-Catholic Americans. There was something generous and patriotic, and yet more of enthusiasm in the movement which the *Review* sought to aid, but it came to nothing, and the *Review* caused its own ruin. It went so far at last, that many of its early friends hardly recognized it as Catholic, and non-Catholics began to look for our return to their ranks, as if they had anything to offer us that we had not sufficiently tried before our conversion.

**Yet, however we may have been misled by a mistaken policy, against which we inwardly revolted, we held fast, through the grace of God, to our faith, and held, as we still hold, the church to be essentially papal in her constitution.**

We do not view with indifference the conversion of our non-Catholic countrymen, in whose conversion and incorporation into the Catholic body is the only hope, not only of

their salvation, but of our civil society, becoming most fearfully corrupt, indeed, rotten to the core. But to their conversion there are many obstacles which, in the ordinary course of divine providence, can be only slowly overcome, and with great labor and difficulty, prayer and self-sacrifice, which surpass the zeal and charity of the mass even of our Catholic population, who have hardly learned as yet that this is their country. We can, as laymen, only pray for their conversion, and, as far as we are permitted, present them Catholic truth in its integrity. The article from which we make our extracts was written *a' propos* of a work on church authority by the eminent convert, the late Rev. Robert I. Wilberforce.

*An Inquiry into the Principles of Church Authority; or, Reasons for recalling my Subscription to the Royal Supremacy.* By the Rev. R. I. WILBERFORCE, M. A. Baltimore: 1855.

If it be asked, since the church in one sense is the congregation of the faithful, Where was the church, or what was the church organism prior to the gathering of believers we might answer by asking, Where or what was natural humanity prior to individual men and women? If humanity is inconceivable without individuals, individuals are equally inconceivable without humanity. But we will not insist on that answer. The church derives from Christ, through the Incarnation, typified in the fact that Eve was taken from the side of Adam, and formed from him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Regarded as prior to the visible congregation of believers, the church was in the Blessed Virgin, from whom our Lord assumed his flesh. Hence the Blessed Virgin, a mother and yet a virgin, is termed the mother of God, and the spouse of the Holy Ghost. She is the second Eve, as Christ is the second Adam; the mother, as he is the father, of regenerated humanity. In a certain sense, we may even say that she is the church, and hence the saints apply to her those texts and epithets which they apply to the church herself. She is in more than a figurative sense our spiritual mother. She is the mother of grace, through whom flows the Christian life, and through whom we receive from God his gifts and graces. As the mother of our Redeemer, she is intimately connected with the work of our

redemption; and participates in our regeneration. Hence the reasonableness and justice of that high honor and deep veneration which we Catholics render her, the filial love we bear her, and the prominent place she holds in our devotions, so scandalous to no-church Protestants; and which they foolishly, not to say blasphemously, affect to brand as "Mariolatry." Poor men! How little do they understand of the mystery of the Incarnation, and of the part of our lady, through the grace and election of God, in the conception, birth, and progress of the Christian life!

**Now, if there be any truth in the view we take, and which is certainly scriptural, the church is the maternal source of life to the believer, and as such must be herself a living unity, living her own central life from the indwelling Holy Ghost, supernaturally immanent in her as the new creation, as God is, so to speak, naturally immanent in the primitive creation, and imparting life to the faithful instead of receiving it from them.**

**Hence it follows that to break the unity of the church would be to destroy her, and to be separated from her communion would be spiritual death, because separated from the source and current of spiritual life. Hence the fatal nature of schism, and the terrible consequences of excommunication. Each implies the spiritual death of the soul, and even its eternal death, as much as separation from humanity implies our natural death, -not as a mere penalty arbitrarily annexed, but as a natural and necessary consequence, because it places its subject out of all communication with God in the new creation or supernatural order, and cuts him off from the very source and current of supernatural life.**

**All life springs from unity which is always logically prior to**

**multiplicity. The universe originates in the creative act of unity, and returns to unity as its final cause. If we suppose the church to have life at all, to be a living and not a dead church, we must, if we have a grain of philosophy, regard her as an organism, and, therefore, regard her unity as essential to her very being and existence. All life not only proceeds from unity, but is love. Hatred is death, for it separates, disunites. Life is love, and love is Life, We have our being in God; in him we live and move and are; and God, the Sacred Scriptures tell us, is love. The nature of all love in creatures is, as the saints maintain, to unify, to become one with its object. The essence of the Christian life all agree is love,- charity, and its nature is to unite all who live it with one another and with God. It tends always to unity. But this it could not do if it did not spring from unity, for there cannot be unity in the effect without unity in the cause,-unity in the final cause, without unity in the first cause. There is, then, nothing arbitrary or contrary to the general laws of divine Providence in making union with the church a necessary condition of spiritual life, or in making separation from her communion spiritual death. Having instituted his church as the maternal source of Christian life, it would be repugnant to his own divine being, which is love, to save out of her communion, since this would be to treat hatred as if it were love, death as if it were life, or to repute life where no life is.**

**The church, though like all living organisms, invisible as to the principle of her life, is an outward visible body. The doctors distinguish, indeed, between the soul of the church and the body, as in man we distinguish between the body and soul; but the invisible and the visible do not constitute two distinct organisms, any more than the body and soul in man constitute two distinct persons. Man, though composed of soul and body, is one *man*, in**

whom there is a union of the spiritual and material natures in one person. The church derives, as we have said, from the Incarnation, and includes both the divine and the human, and is, as it were, an extension of the Incarnation. Yet, it includes the human as it is, not as soul alone, but as soul and body; and as the soul is the *forma corporis*, she can be no living church without the union of body and soul. As we can commune with the soul in man only through the body, so in the church we can commune with the soul, the *anima ecclesiae*, only through her body, -with the invisible, only through the visible church; for though the body may bear things which do not pertain to the soul, the soul and body constitute simply one church and are inseparable, -otherwise the church would be subject to dissolution, and might fail, as we know she cannot.

The unity of the church as invisible demands her unity as visible, the unity of the soul requires the unity of the body; for we cannot conceive the soul as *the forma* of several distinct and separate bodies, or regard the church as a monster. If the church is indissolubly soul and body, visible and invisible, and if she be the maternal source of Christian life, which is love and springs from and tends to unity, she must represent in her visible organization the invisible unity, and be alike one in body and soul. All agree that the church is catholic; but if catholic, she must be one, for what is not one cannot be catholic. Multiplicity is as repugnant to catholicity as to unity. There can be no composite catholicity. To attempt to get at the conception of catholicity by the indefinite aggregation of particulars, is as absurd as to attempt to reach the infinite by the indefinite aggregation of measurable quantities, or eternity by the indefinite aggregation of moments. The larger the number aggregated, the further are we removed from catholicity or the universal, for the more limited, relatively at least, is each particular. Hence the church,

**if catholic, as all who profess the apostles' creed acknowledge, she must be one. Her Catholicity asserts necessarily her unity, and her visible catholicity her visible unity. She is then a visible as well as an in visible organism.**

**This established, the reason becomes evident why the constitution of the church is papal, not simply presbyterian or episcopal, and why the church of Rome must be regarded as the mother and mistress of all the churches.**

**The church as visible must have a visible centre of unity, a central visible life from which all in the visible order takes its rise. But without the pope and the Roman see, made one in spiritual marriage, this visible centre, this visible central life is not conceivable. Without the papal constitution, there would be nothing in the visible order to represent the invisible unity; which would be tantamount to saying that there is no visible church at all. But this again would, on the principles we have established, be saying that there is for us no medium of access to the invisible church, and therefore there is and can be no spiritual regeneration or new birth. We should be as to the spiritual life, practically, as if Christ had not been incarnated, and there were no church. It follows from this that the papacy is fundamental, essential to the very conception of the church in the visible order; and without it, the visible church could neither be nor be conceived.**

We think highly of Mr. Wilberforce, but we do not find this thought in his otherwise most admirable treatise. It may not have entered into his plan to recognize and develop it, but he seems not to have entertained it, at least in the full sense in which we wish it to be taken.

**He seems to start from the life of the believer, and speaks of the church as a "confederacy of churches." He recognizes the papacy, but would seem to regard it rather as secondary than primary, as a product of the collective life of the church, than as the original and central unity in which the whole ecclesiastical organization takes its rise.**

He may not have intended all this, and it may be, that this is only a method he has adopted in addressing his Anglican readers, in order to render his views the more intelligible to them, and his arguments the more convincing to their understandings. Such, in fact, we supposed to be the case, for we are far from entertaining any distrust of the theological soundness of the illustrious convert, for whom we have the kindest feelings, and the highest respect.

**But taking this view absolutely, without reference to the author, we cannot accept it; because it makes the child precede the parent, and supposes unity may be evolved from multiplicity, which is metaphysically impossible. Unity is before multiplicity, creates it, and is never created by it. The parent precedes the child; the priest, as spiritual father, precedes the simple believer, and the pope precedes the bishop, and is not only the complement but the foundation of the hierarchy, the basis as well as the summit of the ecclesiastical organization. "Thou art Peter," said our Lord, "and upon this rock will I build my church," and therefore St. Ambrose may well say, *ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia*, -where Peter is, there is the church. Prior to Peter is Christ incarnate and his blessed Mother, and nothing else in our conception of the church. As Christ is prior to Peter, so is Peter prior to the congregation of the faithful under the new law.**

**The pope holds, as successor of Peter, immediately from Christ, in**



whom is the original priesthood, and all teaching and governing authority. He is not evolved from the internal operations of the church, nor created or commissioned by the episcopacy, but is the central unity whence the whole hierarchy takes its rise. He is the vicar of Christ, and represents him in the visible order, and is, in regard to the visible, in the place of Christ himself. Christ may use bishops, priests, or the faithful in designating or electing the successor of Peter, as he may use the people as his Instrument in constituting the state and carrying on the affairs of civil government; but he holds his commission immediately from the invisible head of the church, not from them. It is not the see that makes the bishop, for the see is not strictly a see without the bishop. The see is the bride, the spouse of the bishop, and he wears a ring symbolical of his marriage with his see. But there is no bride without a bridegroom, no wife without a husband, and St. Paul tells us the woman was not first, but the man; which our women's rights men, whose doctrine is a legitimate deduction from Protestant principles, are apt to forget. Rome did not make Peter pope, but Peter made Rome the apostolic see, which without him to create it, it never could have been, and without Peter in the apostolic see there could have been no other see. The pope is Peter, Peter still living; therefore without the pope there could have been no see, and if no see, then again, no bishop. As in the invisible order all originates in Christ incarnate, so in the visible order all originates in the pope married to the holy see. We call the successor of Peter father. The very word pope, *papa*, means father, and we are not to suppose that this term has been applied to him without a reason, or a good and sufficient reason. The term must have some appropriateness, and imply that he is really, in the visible order, the spiritual father of the faithful. Then we must regard him as primary, as before all else in that order. Without so

**regarding him we should have to change the language of all Christendom; we could discover no analogy or correspondence between the visible and the invisible, no aptness in the figures and illustrations used by the Scriptures and spiritual writers, and could not even conceive the unity or the catholicity of the visible church.**

The Anglican theory, which under some points of view Mr. Wilberforce so ably and philosophically refutes, stands directly opposed to this view of the constitution of the Church.

**The Anglican sometimes, when in good humor, is not unwilling to cede the bishop of Rome a certain primacy which he calls a primacy of order, as distinguished from a primacy of jurisdiction, but he stoutly denies that the papacy is integral in the constitution of the church, or essential to her existence. He supposes the church to be prior to the papacy, that she can exist and perform all her essential functions as the church of God, without the pope. Having got angry with the pope in the sixteenth century, he rejected him, and now finds himself unable to assert either the unity or the catholicity of the church. The only church he can now conceive is an aggregation of believers or of particular congregations. The faithful must precede the hierarchy, and the episcopacy hold from the laity. Rejecting the papacy, but still retaining the episcopacy, he is obliged to fall back upon the absurd theory openly avowed by some Anglicans, of diocesan churches, and to maintain that each diocese is independent, a church in all its integrity, complete in itself, and having need of nothing out of itself,-substantially the theory maintained by the Independents.**

**But who creates and circumscribes the diocese? Who institutes or**

**installs the diocesan? The lay authority, is the only answer the Anglican can give, and consequently he must maintain that the bishop holds his appointment, his mission, from the lay society, or that each bishop, in what happens to be his diocese, is a self-constituted pope, not called of God, as was Aaron, but taking his ministry upon himself, and running without being sent. He can have on this theory no legitimate ecclesiastical authority, no unity, no catholicity; for these diocesan churches are not subordinated to one and the same ecclesiastical regimen, and have with one another at best, only relations of comity and friendly correspondence. This diocesan theory has grown out of the erroneous notion, which obtained in England even prior to the so-called reformation, that the papacy is not essential to the being of the church.**

**The tendency of the secular courts, courtiers, and jurisconsults, from Frederick II of Germany and Philip the Fair of France, down to our times, has been to regard the church as episcopal rather than papal, and the papacy as accidental rather than essential in her constitution.**

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the secular authorities, emperors, kings, and princes, though nominally Catholic, forgetful of the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual, wielding the physical force, and having at their disposition the chief temporal advantages, gained an undue ascendancy in ecclesiastical matters, and unhappily, over the minds of not a few churchmen.

**We need not be surprised, therefore, to find large numbers misapprehending the constitution of the church, and imagining that she might exist, and be a true church, without the papal authority. It was the prevalence of this notion that prepared the way, and accounts for the sudden rise and rapid spread of Protestantism in the early part of the sixteenth century.**

No doubt among the coadjutors of Luther there were men who rejected the church herself, and did not even believe in Christ; but the larger part who joined or submitted to the Protestant movement, wished to retain the church and the Christian faith, and never would have become Protestants if they had believed it impossible to throw off the authority of the pope without throwing off that of Christ. Especially was this true in England; and we have no doubt that a very considerable number of the English people verily persuaded themselves, or were persuaded by the royalists and anti-papists, that the schism commenced by Henry and completed by his daughter Elizabeth, was in reality no schism at all, but a simple reformation of abuses, which time and the ambition of the popes-had accumulated, and the restoration of the church to her primitive purity and simplicity.

**are members of the one holy Catholic church, and in union with Christ Even today we find Anglicans who apparently maintain this in good faith, and who really persuade themselves that they.**

**We see here the grave importance of having the people not only rightly, but thoroughly instructed as to the essential nature and constitution of the church. We are not ignorant of the corruptions of the human heart, or of the rebellious nature of passion; but we cannot help thinking that if the people had better understood the great fact that the church is essentially papal, the world would never have been afflicted with the Protestant reformation.**

In the later middle ages, a strong anti-papal spirit extensively obtained, and, owing to the ascendancy of the secular order, everywhere encroaching on the rights and prerogatives of the spiritual, the people or the laity were inadequately instructed as to the real position of the papacy in the gracious economy of divine Providence. They knew that they were required to obey the pope as visible head of the church, but they did not fully understand the strict truth of the maxim where Peter is, there is

the church. Before Luther brought the discussion of theological questions before the public, and appealed from the schools, and even the church herself to the mob, the people had comparatively little understanding of them. They had ordinarily the simplicity of faith, which suffices for salvation, but very little knowledge of its reasons and relations. This answered every purpose when the civil authorities were submissive to the Holy Father, and performed their duty as protectors of the church; but when these authorities made war on the pope himself, when they wished to revive the Caesarism of pagan Rome, and make the chief of the state at once *imperator* and *summus pontifex*, the laity were, save when animated by a lively faith and an ardent piety, ill prepared to stand by the pope, and to offer them a vigorous and manly resistance. Their defective understanding of the essential constitution of the church, laid them open to the arts and subtleties of the evil-minded, and rendered it comparatively easy to impose upon their simplicity, and to detach them from their fidelity. The difficulty did not lie altogether with the simple peasantry, ...

**it lay in the defective understanding of the constitution of the church by the lay society generally.**

Dating from Frederick II. of Germany, the lay society was, speaking in general terms, anti-papal, and held the doctrine of which the Anglican theory is but a logical and historical development. We think this was in a great measure owing to the little real theological instruction imparted to this society. More full or more accurate theological instruction to the laity,-the state of society in those ages considered, however desirable it might have been, was most likely impracticable ; and we must not regard it as a fault of the church, or of those churchmen who were animated with her spirit, and conformed to her wishes, that it was not given.

**The church is obliged to take the world as she finds it, and to do the best she can with it under the circumstances and with the materials it furnishes to her hand.**

She, herself, always wishes her children not only to know the simple dogmas of faith, but to understand well all that pertains to sound doctrine. She has no great fondness for what our friends of *The Rambler* call, "The system of safeguards."

**She does not count temptations and trials an evil, and never seeks to protect the faithful by keeping them in ignorance. She does not teach them that in order to preserve their virtue they must retire from the world, but labors always by her instructions and sacraments to prepare them to live in the world without being of it, or contaminated with its errors and vices. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil."**

The system, which she is supposed to approve, of keeping people in the faith by excluding all knowledge of what is opposed to it, by repressing thought, and insisting on blind obedience, is not her system; and if, as is alleged, it is sometimes countenanced in Catholic countries, we must attribute it not to her, but to the secular order which obtains in them, in spite of all she is able to do. All absolute civil governments, all despotisms and despots, are jealous of freedom of thought, and especially freedom of education. Even in our own country, we find a large party wedded, without knowing it, to social despotism, that are doing their best to destroy freedom of education. They are laboring to place education under the exclusive control of the state, and to prohibit all instruction and all methods of instruction not sanctioned by the civil authorities. The church has always had more or less of civil despotism to struggle with, for though she found it comparatively easy to convert individuals, she has never succeeded in any nation in fully converting society and the civil order. The safeguard system originates not in the church, but in unconverted society; in a state which, while professing the Catholic faith, remains pagan as to its principles and modes of action; and it accords far better with the narrow jealousies and shortsighted views of the civil despot, than with the free, open, ingenuous, and trustful spirit of Catholicity. The church loves the light, for she

is from above, not from below; she fosters intelligence; she promotes education, and provides it wherever the state leaves her free to do so; she labors to have all her children well and thoroughly instructed in all that pertains to spiritual, moral, political, and social life, and wishes everywhere a free, manly, and enlightened laity. She demands in them, it is true, the docility of the child, but in understanding she demands that they be no longer children, but men, -strong, energetic men, in whom intelligence is not repressed or enfeebled, but rectified, elevated, and invigorated by the infused habits of grace.

Whatever may be said in regard to the ages immediately preceding the Protestant outbreak, this much is certain; the church wishes her children to be thoroughly instructed, and the fullest and most exact theological instruction practicable is now a necessity, and the faithful must have it. Never, since the times of the persecuting pagan emperors, has the church had less than now to hope from kings and queens, as nursing fathers and nursing mothers, and never has she been more completely thrown back upon her own resources, as a spiritual kingdom set up by our Lord on the earth. Never, since she emerged from the catacombs and planted the Cross on the Capital of the world, have her children been more mixed up in the commerce of the world with the enemies of their religion, or more exposed to the fatal influences of error and indifferency. Simplicity of faith is now nowhere enough; we must have the knowledge of understanding. It is not enough to know the chief dogmas of our faith, and the ordinary practical duties of our state in life. It is necessary to know the dogmas, and their relation to the practical duties, to one another, and to natural reason. It is not enough now that this knowledge, formerly imparted in the schools to theological students, be possessed by the clergy alone. In these days of insubordination and self-will, when it is so difficult to secure proper respect to pastors and teachers, it must be possessed in as great a degree as practicable by the laity also. Not otherwise shall we be able to meet the wants of our times, bring back a docile and obedient spirit, and guard the faithful against the dangers to their faith and piety multiplied by common schools, newspapers, and popular literature. The laity, in all outside the sacraments, are now in great measure thrown upon

themselves, and their safety, aside from the sacraments, depends to a great extent on their understanding of their faith and its reasons and relations, and in being able at all times to defend it intelligently and manfully.

**There may be those who regret the change that has taken place, and feel that we have fallen upon evil times. We confess that we are not of their number.**

We think the church will gain more than she will lose by the change, for always does she lose more than she gains from the protection of princes. Princes, with a few exceptions, have always made her pay dear for their favor, and enslaved as much as they have protected her. We think, upon the whole, that she will derive great advantages from being thrown back upon her own resources, as the kingdom of God on earth. We must rely now on virtue, rather than innocence; on the knowledge of what is true, rather than on ignorance of what is false. Innocence, regarded as a negative quality, is good, no doubt; but virtue, which is something positive, is better. Ignorance is favorable neither to simplicity of faith, nor to fervor of devotion. All faith and real devotion is an affection of the rational nature, and, therefore, intrinsically reasonable. Our religion presupposes man to be created with a rational nature, and always addresses him as a reasonable and reasoning being. The heart she demands is the enlightened heart,-the union of understanding and will. The church can live, and move at her ease, only in an atmosphere of intelligence, and, as far as she has her freedom, she creates that atmosphere around her.

**She is obliged, as we have said, to take the world as she finds it, and do the best she can with it. She works with such materials as the world furnishes her. Where the political and social order, what we call *civility*, or the civil order,-is adverse to her, she has to labor under a great disadvantage, for she cannot at once change that order, and conform it to her own mind. She addresses men as individuals, and does and must treat them as free agents. Where**



**individuals are ignorant and enslaved, and the state will not suffer them to be enlightened and emancipated, she must take them as they are, and deal with them for what they are; although they are not what she wishes them, or what she would soon make them, if suffered to address their understandings, and to exert her silent but powerful influence on their hearts. \* {\* This is all that was re{published of this article in July, 1875. The rest is from the original article in January, 1856.-ED.}**

We must not forget that the church has never found in the old world a civil order entirely to her mind, and has never been able to show what she could do where the political and social order interposed no obstacles to her progress. Heretofore, she has had to struggle with a hostile civilization. In the old Greco-Roman civilization, so admirable under some aspects, so detestable under others, she has had to contend with social despotism,-the absolutism of the state, which absorbs the individual, and makes man, as man, count for nothing. In the barbarianism of the North, she has had to contend with turbulent passions and an exaggerated individualism, developing itself either in anarchy, or in odious aristocracies, necessarily accompanied by degraded serfs, or a miserable and oppressed peasantry. For the first time in her history, she meets in this country a civil order in some measure fitted in advance for her reception, in which she is able practically to address men as men,-nothing less, and nothing more. We do not say that the political and social sentiments of all Americans are in perfect harmony with Catholic principles, for it is a lamentable fact that Americans are not up to the level of their social and civil order, and are at the moment injuriously affected by reminiscences of cultivated Greco-Roman paganism, on the one hand, and by reminiscences of the uncultivated paganism of the northern barbarians on the other. But true Americanism -the political and civil order- the American civility – *civilta'*-is in strict accordance with Catholic principles. In founding the American state, our fathers were so directed and overruled by Providence, that they retained from the old civilization of Europe only those principles which harmonized with

Catholicity; and added to them -only those principles which the popes had for ages been urging in vain upon European statesmen. We hope, on some future occasion, to show this in detail, and to prove conclusively, that whatever of superior excellence we boast in our institutions, we owe directly or indirectly to the Catholic church. It must suffice us, however, for the present, to say, that if the church had had the constituting of our civil order, we are unable to see how she could have framed it more to her mind. Here neither the state nor the individual is absolute. The state does not absorb the individual, nor the individual the state. We have liberty by authority, and authority by liberty. The man does not, as under Greco-Romanism, lose himself in the citizen; nor the citizen, as under northern barbarianism, lose himself in the man. Here the individual is both a man and a citizen, and his civil duties and personal rights are harmonized as they are under the natural law, which the church presupposes, accepts, and confirms. Hence, the natural would seem here to be fitted in advance, through the disposition of Providence, to correspond to the supernatural, reason to grace, civil society to the church. Nothing remains here to be effected but the conversion of individuals, in order to make us throughout an eminently Catholic nation, with a true and lofty Catholic civilization.

Hence, we are disposed to agree with those of our friends who not only look for the conversion of the American people, absolutely necessary to place them in harmony with the principles of their institutions, but for a new and higher development of Catholic civilization itself. We see no reason why it should not be so. The church can have in this country a free and intelligent laity, such as the world has hitherto never seen. Here she has an open field and fair play. Here are no jealous or despotic monarchies, -no privileged aristocracies,-no oppressed classes, doomed to ignorance and servitude, -no time-honored monopolies, which cannot be removed,-no vested rights working wrongs to individuals, in her way, and impeding the freedom of her action. Here she can address all as equals -as free men, each with a centre of his own, and counting one. Here she can treat individuals as units,-not as mere ciphers,-for such they are in the political order, and rely on them as free and

intelligent beings, capable of acting with understanding, and of being governed, not as slaves, but as free men, by appeals to their reason and judgment, which he cannot consistently do in the case of men whom the civil society enslaves and brutalizes, and in whom the habits of rational freedom and manly independence have never been formed. This cannot but prove an immense gain, in securing to the clergy an intelligent and active laity, capable of taking part with them in all those benevolent works, corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which are within the competency of laymen.

Here the church is destined to give a practical refutation of that popular charge against her, which every Catholic knows to be a foul calumny, that she loves ignorance, and values only blind obedience. She regards ignorance as her greatest enemy, and all her doctors teach that ignorance in all cases is either sin itself, or the penalty of sin. She values no blind obedience, and wishes all her children to understand what and wherefore they believe, what and wherefore they obey. She never refuses to give them, even when indocile and disobedient, as we see in the cases of the misguided courts of Spain and Sardinia, the reasons of the obedience she exacts. If anyone doubts it, or wishes in this respect to have evidence of her condescension and patience, let him read the letters of the popes to refractory prelates and sovereigns. What she wishes is not blind credulity, but an enlightened and free intellectual assent, not a servile submission, but a free and cheerful voluntary obedience, yielded from conviction and free will. She throws herself into the crowd, and courts the fullest investigation of her claims, makes her appeal to reason, which she respects in each and all, and proclaims to the whole world that she has not come to supersede reason, but to teach men to make a right use of it, -not to annihilate the rights of nature, but to accept, elevate, and protect them.

An essential injustice is done in our days to the church by laying to her account whatever of despotism, servility, and ignorance happens to be found in Catholic countries, and by holding up to the world those countries, with approbation or condemnation, as models of Catholic civilization. They are never to be taken as such models, whether our object be

to condemn or to defend the church. She has done much, more than we have space to tell, to mitigate or counteract the evils of the old European civilization, and to prepare the way for a better social order, which, had it not been for the Protestant outbreak in the sixteenth century, might long ere this have been effected; but she has never been able as yet to realize, even in the states which have remained Catholic, a civilization in all respects answerable to her principles or wishes. The elements of the old pagan order in some of its forms, have always remained more or less active. Individuals have been converted, and placed in the way of salvation, which after all is the great thing; but society has remained pagan to a far greater extent than is apparent to superficial observers, and in many places is today fearfully pagan, almost as much so as in the times of Tiberius, Nero, or Heliogabalus. European society, whether under its Greco-Roman, or its northern barbarian form, has never been thoroughly converted, as is evident from the ill success of the Crusades; the alliance in the sixteenth century of Francis I., of France, the eldest son of the church, with the Grand Turk, the sworn enemy of Christendom; the storming and sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V., the sworn protector and defender of the church, especially of the Holy See; the present union of Catholic France and heretical England, avowedly for the purpose of maintaining the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire, the proverbial oppressor of Christians, and a blight upon the fairest regions of the globe; and that rarely has there been, and nowhere is there now, a secular government that does not follow pagan rather than Christian maxims.

We do not deny that there may be despotism, servility, and ignorance to some extent in Catholic countries, though to a far less extent than in Protestant and in schismatic countries; but they are due to the civil and social state, neither formed nor approved by the church; not to the church, which has always struggled against them, but to the old pagan society which has traversed the ages with, but in hostility to, the society founded by Catholicity,-to the society represented and sustained by Caesar, and which becomes exclusive under Protestantism. Under the point of view of civilization, Europe, for eighteen hundred years, has been divided into two hostile camps, and its history has been a struggle between the old Civilization and the new,

between paganism and Christianity, Caesarism and the papacy, despotism and liberty, passion and reason, ignorance and intelligence; or to borrow an illustration from Persian mythology, between Ahriman, the principle of evil, and Ormuzd, the principle of good. The struggle has been continued on both sides with alternate victories and defeats. The church has never gained a complete triumph for her civilization. The Philistines have always remained in the land, and have more than once held the children of Israel captive. It is not likely that the triumph of Catholic civilization will ever be complete, for the church is never in this world the church triumphant; but if the victory is ever completely won, we doubt not, it will be on the plains of this western world.

Indeed, we think that the most important victory the church has ever won for Catholic civilization has already been won here. There really remains nothing to be done here but to convert the individual, in order to have a society as thoroughly Catholic, as we can expect with human nature, as it is since the prevarication of Adam. It would be well if those, who, under the name of Americans, are making war on Catholicity and foolishly alleging that it is hostile to our institutions, and those of our Catholic friends who are so ready to despair of the country, would pay attention to this important fact: The work to be done here in order to have a truly Catholic civilization, is far less than is needed in any other non-Catholic country. Our people have nearly run through Protestantism, and are in a state in which they will readily accept the church, if they only find that she requires no change in our institutions, and that they owe, as they do, to her and the teaching of her doctors, the principles which they most highly prize in them. Nothing, in case our people are converted, will need altering in the framework of our society, in order to adapt it to the church, nor in the church, in order to adapt her to our civil institutions. What Catholics bring with them from the old world, derived not from the church, or from Catholic principles and life, but from the paganism which still lingers in European society, its Caesarism, its distinctions of ranks and classes, privileged aristocracies, and a down-trodden populace, they will, no doubt, have to modify or abandon, as constituting a hindrance rather than a help to the conversion of the country. But everything of this sort, about which some of

our friends trouble themselves quite too much, will gradually disappear, under the free action of their religion in this new field, and the constant influence of the American principles, in perfect harmony with Catholic principles, which constitute the life and vigor of our civilization.

The point we most strenuously insist on, as the reader cannot fail to perceive, is, that the defective instruction in the later middle ages, which we have indicated as a source of so much evil, is due not to the church, to the ascendancy of Catholic principles, but to the civil order, to the social state, and the ascendancies of pagan principles adopted and acted on by Caesar. We are not so Ignorant of history, as to pretend that the laity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not educated. They were educated, and often to an extent we little dream of educating them to now. But the lay culture of those centuries was imbued with an anti-papal spirit, and fitted men to take part in a pagan rather than in a Christian society. The great writers in defence of those principles of liberty, natural right, justice, and equity, which form the basis of true Americanism, were in the middle ages, not laymen, but churchmen and monks; men who were staunch papists, and in every contest took the side of Peter against Caesar. We do not recollect a single layman of literary renown, from Dante down to the seventeenth century, whose influence was not exerted in favor of Caesarism, that is to say, the despotism of the state. Not one of them seems to have had any knowledge of liberty in our American sense; and however loudly they may talk about it, it is always either the freedom of the nation from foreign bondage, or the emancipation of the temporal from its natural subjection to the spiritual. They are always either simply patriots or Caesarists, virtually political atheists, adopting the maxim of the Roman jurist, *Quod placuit principi, legis habet vigorem*. They were formed under the influence of the courts of princes, not in the schools of the church. There may have been in the cultivated lay society some talk of the privileges or liberties of classes, estates, or corporations, but none, as far as we have been able to discover, except by monks and ecclesiastics, of the rights of men as simply men, much, if any prior to our own American struggle for national independence. You will not find those rights recognized anywhere in pagan antiquity. They are essentially a Catholic conception, and are asserted in the maxim of our theologians; denied by all so-

called Evangelicals, *gratia supponit naturam*, grace supposes nature. The founders of our republic have borrowed not from pagan antiquity, nor from the lay literature of the middle ages, but from the social and civil order introduced by Catholicity, and have really done nothing but embody with consummate practical wisdom and sagacity, those great principles which are everywhere inculcated in the pages of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Bellarmine, Suarez, and other doctors of the church, as the fundamental principles of natural justice, equity, and of all wise and just civil polity. The church regards the Christian state as a republic, instituted for the common weal, and if she crowns the monarch, it is as the president, or the chief magistrate, bound by the tenor of his office to exercise his powers for the common good of the community. To her it is, indeed, a matter of indifference whether this chief magistrate is called president, king, or emperor; but by whichever name he is called, she teaches that he derives his power from God through the people, and holds it as a trust for their good, and forfeits it by gross and continued abuse. It is only your Gallican churchmen, courtiers rather than churchmen, who maintain that the prince reigns by an indefeasible personal or family right, and inculcate the Anglican doctrine of "the divine right of kings, and passive obedience;" a doctrine fit only for despots and slaves, and which provoked in its reaction the terrible revolutions, that in these last sixty or seventy years have reduced all Europe well nigh to a state of anarchy. It is not the education of the clergy we have complained of, but of the laity, or lay society, and it was the want of a more full and exact theological-education of the laity, that prepared the way for the Anglican theory of the church.

**The Anglican theory, in its principle, lurks still in now and then a Catholic mind, and it is not seldom that we find nominal Catholics who have very incorrect notions as to the essential constitution of the church.**

There are, indeed, not a few who have very little filial affection for the Holy Father, and who look upon the papacy as our weak point. They find the pope to be the chief object of attack with non-Catholics, and that in their religion, which, with their

theological and historical reading, they are least prepared to defend. They may not wish precisely to get rid of the papacy, but they studiously keep it as far in the background as possible, and sympathize most readily with those churchmen who go furthest in restricting its power and prerogatives.

**They, in fact, see no intrinsic necessity of the papacy, and no reason why the church might not answer every purpose for which she was instituted, as well, if episcopal, or simply presbyterian, as by being papal.**

It is from the ranks of these that your red republicans, socialists, and advocates of state education obtain their recruits, and they are they who in a contest between the two powers, such as we see now in Spain and Sardinia, side with the temporal against the spiritual. These are, in fact, the church's worst enemies, and do more to impede her work of civilization than open schismatics, or avowed heretics. They are always in her way, a let and a hindrance to every good word and work. They embarrass the intelligent and zealous churchman, and create innumerable difficulties for the Holy Father in his relations with temporal sovereigns. They diffuse around them a cold and worldly atmosphere, damp the courage and zeal of the faithful, render faith to the extent of their influence weak and sickly, and perpetuate the political and social evils, which, but for them, the church would soon redress. A man's worst enemies are they of his own household. The church has constantly experienced that her worst enemies are they who are in her communion, without being of it.

**It is to counteract, as far as in our power, the influence of these incipient episcopalians, or presbyterians, in the Catholic communion, that we have insisted on the papal constitution of the church, and endeavored, to the best of our ability, to show that the papacy is essential to her very being and existence as the Christian church. We do not forget that the church is episcopal as well as**



**papal, but we remember, and wish to remind others, that the episcopacy without the papacy is null. We trust we are as little disposed to diminish the rights and powers of bishops, as we are the powers and prerogatives of the pope. Bishops are our prelates, placed over us by the Holy Ghost, and as such we love, honor, venerate, and obey them; but they are placed over us by the Holy Ghost through the medium of the Holy See, and we do not forget that an appeal lies from them, individually, to the pope, or that they even congregated do not, without him, constitute the church, and are incompetent to define her faith. There is no council without the pope, as even Napoleon I was obliged to acknowledge, and no act of bishops is a law for the Catholic conscience, without his approbation. They can neither teach nor govern without him; and although the teaching of the *Ecclesia diepersa*, or each bishop teaching singly in his own diocese, is to be taken as Catholic faith, it is so only because each communes with the pope, and through him with the others. The teaching of any number of bishops separated from his communion, is of no authority for the Catholic.**

It is not the rights and powers of bishops we impugn in the remotest degree whatever, but the powers and prerogatives of the pope that we assert.

**Bishops receive, we well know, a character in their consecration which does not, depend on the pope, and they have rights and powers which he does not confer; but as in the case of the faithful, he is the guardian, the interpreter, and the judge of those rights and powers, and the right to exercise them depends on him, for without him bishops have no mission or jurisdiction. They hold their canonical rights and powers in subordination to the interests of religion, and he, when he judges the interests of religion require it, can, without any fault of theirs, set them aside, as we have seen in the case of the**

**concordat concluded with the First Consul in the beginning of the present century. The episcopacy is essential, but it does not create or limit the papacy, and in the visible order takes, and must take its rise in it.**

We do not suppose that Mr. Wilberforce in this disagrees with us, and we have found much consolation and encouragement in the fact, that the distinguished English converts generally, so far as we know, without any exception, turn to the Holy Father with true filial love and confidence. They seem to be free from those distrustful feelings, and those narrow views in regard to the papacy, which were for a long time a characteristic of English Catholics. Men who have embraced Catholicity from conviction, from an earnest desire to obey God and save their own souls, who have broken up all old connections, and left all to follow Christ, are not likely to wish to mutilate that papal power, the want of which they had so keenly felt, or to shrink through fear of Caesar or his satellites, from asserting it in its plenitude.

**However we may differ from some of them on the development theory, we are gratified to find that we do, and can agree with them on the papacy, and alike feel that our Lord founded his church on Peter. We believe it is of the very last importance in a practical point of view, that the people should understand that, where Peter is, there is the church, and nowhere else; that the church is inconceivable without unity, that the unity of the visible church is inconceivable without the papacy; and therefore that he who separates himself from the pope, separates from unity, from the church, from the Christian religion, from Christ himself, It is this conclusion we have wished to establish, not only against those who are non-Catholics, but also against those who, though within the fold, do not seem to us to have a sufficiently high appreciation of the position of the papacy, and who forget to show that deep filial love for the successor of Peter, and that readiness to defend**

**his rights and prerogatives as the vicar of Christ on earth, which in our Judgment are required for the spread of Catholicity, the welfare of souls, and the prosperity of Catholic civilization. In this we trust we have the sympathy of all who place their religion before their politics, and believe that if God be for us, it is no matter who or what may be against us.**