
A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE V.

THE FINAL CONFLICT OF THE PAPACY AND THE MEDIÆVAL EMPIRE.

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To the men of to-day the half-century just passed seems to be one of the most wonderful eras in the world's history. Men of former generations have had this same feeling as they looked back over the events of their age. Writing of the first fifty years of the thirteenth century, Matthew Paris, a contemporary, says: "All these remarkable and strange events, the like of which have never been seen or heard of, nor are found in any writings of our fathers in times past, occurred during this last half-century." In this list of wonderful events, not a single invention or mechanical discovery is adduced, and from the realm of nature only a few portents are mentioned. But, for all that, those fifty years do constitute a remarkable period. It was still the age of the Crusades, whose energies were, however, fast waning. It was the age of Francis d'Assisi and Dominic, and the rise of the Mendicant Orders. It was the age of some of the greater Schoolmen. It was the age of Innocent III., whose eminence no occupant of the papal chair has ever surpassed, and few have equaled. It was the age of Runnymede and the Great Charter.

Of the period, taken as a whole, the central figure was that very extraordinary personage, Frederick II., King of Sicily and Emperor of Germany. As the last great representative of the House of Hohenstaufen, he attracts attention. His personality is one of the most many-sided of the Middle Ages. There is also a certain mysteriousness about

his ultimate designs and ideals which was even felt by the Chroniclers. His political system, for originality and boldness, has not been excelled from Charlemagne to modern times. Above all, that for which his name stands, is the last struggle between the mediæval papacy and the empire; a struggle of gigantic proportions, engaging the attention of all Europe, and waged with all the weapons within the reach of both parties,—a desperate struggle, which ended in the humiliation of the empire, and also in the resort by the papacy to measures which shook the supreme confidence that the popular opinion of Christendom had reposed in it.

Carolo piissimo Augusto, a Deo coronato, magno, pacifico imperatori, vita et victoria. "To Charles, most religious sovereign, crowned of God, the great and pacific Emperor, be life and victory." These words, acclaiming Charlemagne emperor immediately after his coronation by Pope Leo III., make that Christmas Day of the year 800 the most significant of all but the first. It proved to be the most far-reaching epoch of mediæval history, as 1517 is of modern history. An empire, universal in theory, was again established in the West, a continuation of the Roman Empire, whose crown the pope had withheld for centuries. For emperors and popes regarded Charlemagne and his successors, not as members of a new line, but as the direct heirs of Theodosius, Valentinian, and Constantine.

Had a seer stood at that point of time and looked down into the future, he would have discerned this imperial idea making its way as one of the mighty forces of the Middle Ages for five hundred years. He would have beheld Otto the Great descending upon Rome to save the papacy, and crowned in St. Peter's; Henry III. watching at Sutri the passing away of three popes and the installment of a fourth; Henry IV. waiting at the Porta Penitenza for the absolution of the offended and unyielding Gregory VII.; Frederick

Barbarossa, now refusing to hold the pope's stirrup, now making his peace with him at Venice, now proceeding in his old age to Jerusalem and dying in the waters of the Syrian River. He would have seen Frederick II., with his armor on, appealing to Christendom against the supreme pontiff; Charles V. hesitating what course to take with Luther, and listening to theological confessions at imperial diets; and, last of all, Francis II., inheriting the name and the memories without the power of the empire, resigning the empty title in 1806, and confining himself to his Austrian dignities. All the while it was the emperor from the North, recognized by the papacy and supported by the papacy as a necessity; all the while a rival, and part of the time a deadly foe, of what the papacy deemed to be its God-given prerogative, and yet, each the successor of that great Charles, on whose tomb in Aachen are inscribed the words —*Magnus atque orthodoxus imperator.*

When Frederick II. was crowned emperor at Aachen in 1215, the papacy was at the height of its power as a ruling force in human affairs. Innocent III. was then in the last year of his vigorous pontificate, and embodied in himself the high pretensions stated in the Isidorean Decretals and set forth in the policy of Hildebrand. The papal theory was a theocracy in which the Pope exercised supreme authority. In all questions of right and wrong he was the supreme arbiter on earth. He himself was subject to no tribunal but God. He is above all princes and sovereigns and may set up and depose. The comparison had become familiar whereby the two estates of government, spiritual and civil, were likened to sun and moon, to heaven and earth, to soul and body. The papal power, so the popes contended, was instituted of God; the power of princes was the product of fraud and perfidy and other crimes, beginning with Nimrod. And as all things in heaven and on earth and in hell obey Christ, so all things on earth should

obey his vicar. The priest anoints the king. The king does not anoint the priest. Princes have authority in separate lands, the pope's authority is undivided and extends over all lands. The Cistercian Cæsar Heisterbach of Cologne elaborated these figures and expressed the popular idea, when he compared the church to the firmament, the pope to the sun, the emperor to the moon, the clergy to the day, the laity to the night, and the abbots and bishops to the stars. The culminating expression of these pretensions was given in Innocent's letter to John of England, when he wrote, "As in the ark of God, the rod and the manna lay at the side of the tables of the law, so the terrible power of destruction and the sweet mildness of grace are lodged in the heart of the pope at the side of the knowledge of the law." The two swords were in his hand, the secular and the spiritual.

Such was the realm of ecclesiastical ideas in which Frederick found himself placed. And yet a different view prevailed in some circles, of which the Sachsenspiegel, composed about 1230, was the exponent. According to it, the empire is held from God alone, and not from the pope. Emperor and pope are supreme, each in his own sphere. This was the view expounded at the Diet of Roncaglia, under the influence of Barbarossa. But the Schwabenspiegel, the code of law for Southern Germany, compiled somewhat later, adopts the papal view, and declares that the temporal sword of judgment is entrusted by the pope to the emperor.

Scarcely was Innocent laid in his grave, when Frederick II. began to play his distinguished rôle, coming to be, as Döllinger has said, "the greatest and most dangerous foe the papacy has ever had to contend with."[1] The struggle in which he was the most conspicuous figure kept Europe

[1]Akademische Vorträge, ii. 203. Edward A. Freeman expresses the same judgment, Hist. Essays, i. 288.

in turmoil and unrest for nearly forty years, and was waged with three popes. It was a dispute in which not only diplomacy and arms contended, after the usual fashion. It was a dispute in the court of European opinion, where both parties, by appeals to Scripture and precedent, sought to secure the moral support of Christendom.

Frederick II. was born near Ancona, Italy, in 1194. His father, Henry VI., had joined Sicily to the empire by his marriage with the Norman princess, Constance. Through his mother, Frederick inherited the warm blood of the South. Although he wore the crown of the German empire, and was of the stock of the Hohenstaufen, he was through and through a Sicilian. In Sicily his childhood was passed, and there was his court. He spent only time enough in Germany to assert his right to the crown and to put down the rebellion of his son.

His father died when he was three, his mother, a year later. Constance had been willing to receive the kingdom of Sicily for her son, upon the pledge of its remaining a fief of Rome, in accordance with the previous Norman tenure. At her death she confided him to the guardian care of Innocent III. Thus this helpless "child of Apulia," who was king of Sicily, king-elect of the Romans, and by precedent, heir to the crown of the empire, was the ward of the papacy, against which his ancestors had waged war, and against which he was destined to engage in mortal conflict.

The policy of Innocent, followed out by his successors, to keep the crown of Sicily or Southern Italy separate from the crown of the empire, seemed destined to be successful. Their union threatened the very existence of the State of the Church. It was in the interest of this policy that, as umpire of the imperial election, he passed by Frederick's claims, and gave the imperial crown to "his dearest son in Christ," Otto IV., the Guelf, whose house was by tradition

the friend of the papacy. But, forgetting the stipulations of Neuss, whereby he had renounced all claim upon Sicily and Naples, and pledged himself to withhold his hand from the territory of the apostolic see, Otto invaded Italy and trespassed upon papal land. Then Innocent justly wrote that he whom he had raised to be the head of the corner, had become a rock of offense. Innocent excommunicated and deposed him. Philip of Swabia, the rival emperor, was murdered. Otto's star set at the battle of Bouvines (1214).

It was now Frederick's turn and, with Innocent's consent, he was crowned emperor at Aachen a year later, and thus the very union was again effected which it was the pope's policy to prevent, and which nature seemed to have raised an eternal protest against in the separating walls of the Alps.

Before setting out for Germany, Frederick had ratified the claims of the pope as feudal lord of Sicily, and pledged himself not to touch the State of the Church. At his coronation he took the cross. These two promises,—not to lay hands on papal territory, and to lead a crusade,—were the centers around which the conflict between the papacy and Frederick waged for many years.

The conflict began with Innocent's successor, Honorius. His ruling passion was the recovery of the Holy Land. In vain he strove by solemn and repeated appeals to induce the emperor to keep his vow and start on a crusade. At his coronation in Rome in 1220, he involved himself anew by promises to support the policy of the papal see. He ratified the privileges of the church, announced it as his purpose to suppress heresy, excepted churches from taxation, and promised Sicily should remain a papal fief. He also again took the cross. The concessions were announced, it is said, in St. Peters. The coronation festivities passed off with marked evidences of mutual good-will.

Such occasions were almost invariably marked by violent disturbances. The only exception to the peaceful progress of the celebration in this case was that dispute over a dog between the ambassadors of Pisa and Florence, which subsequently became the occasion of hostilities between the cities.

But Frederick's enthusiasm for the crusade was not consuming. He had set 1221 as the time for starting. The news of the fall of Damietta that year was adapted to arouse a true crusader's zeal. But, as the time approached, Frederick pled excuses for delay. His marriage with Iolanthe, daughter of John of Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem, promoted by the pope, seemed adapted to hasten his departure. Claiming his wife had inherited the title through her mother, Frederick forthwith adopted the title King of Jerusalem. But still he urged reasons for delay. Finally, moved by the threats of Honorius, he solemnly agreed, in the Treaty of St. Germano of 1225, to start in August, 1227, on pain of incurring excommunication. Honorius died the March before the appointed time without seeing his controlling desire fulfilled.

What the exact causes for Frederick's delay were, can only be surmised. The encyclicals of Gregory IX. charge it to the seductive luxuriousness of his court. It may be that he was unwilling to leave his kingdom in its half-organized state. It may be that he had no heart in the recovery of the Holy Land, and declined to risk his life in a cause for which his grandfather, Barbarossa, had found a grave, far away from his kingdom.

Honorius was a man of mild and conciliatory spirit, and sought to keep the peace. In his successor, Gregory IX., Frederick had an antagonist of different metal. Gregory, in spite of his great age,[1] brought rare vigor, unbending resolution, and dauntless bravery to his high office. The

[1] Matthew Paris says he was one hundred years old when he died.

nephew of Innocent III., that pontiff seemed to have risen again from the tomb. With the utmost tenacity he insisted upon all the temporal prerogatives of his predecessors, and apparently in the full assurance of their divine authority. For the greater part of his reign of fourteen years (1227–41) the combat between him and the empire was at its height. While the principle involved in Innocent's duel with John of England was substantially the same, the Angevin John was a stubborn, mean, and narrow-minded antagonist compared with Frederick, the Hohenstaufen.

The promised crusade continued to be the cause of dispute. It was from Gregory, then Cardinal Ugolino, that Frederick had taken the cross at his coronation in Rome. Setting aside the emperor's specious pretexts, Gregory summoned him to fulfill his double pledge, and the matter seemed to be settled when Frederick, accompanied with the papal blessing, actually set sail from Brindisi. But on the third day, driven back by an epidemic, as he asserted, or by the love of pleasure, as Gregory declared, he returned to port. Gregory's disappointment could not remain concealed. He hurled the threatened anathema at the recalcitrant son of the church, the clergy in the church at Anagni dashing their lighted tapers to the floor.

In the letter of excommunication, that he "might not seem to be like a dumb dog unable to bark," the pope spoke of Frederick "as one whom the Holy See had educated with much care, whom it had suckled at its breast, carried on its shoulders, and brought up to manhood at much trouble and expense, and exalted to the imperial station as the wand of its defense, the staff of our old age." He charged him with evading his promises and severing the bonds with which he was bound, casting aside all fear of God, and paying no reverence to Jesus Christ; and, unmindful of the threatened censure of the church, abandoning the Christian army, leaving the Holy Land exposed to

the infidel, and being, to the disgrace of himself and Christianity, enticed away to the usual pleasures of his kingdom.

Frederick did not remain silent, but also made a vigorous appeal to Christendom in reply. He protested against the papal claim to supreme authority in civil matters, and pointed to the humiliation of John of England as a warning to all princes. He condemned the secularization of the church, and called upon the clergy and bishops to return to the ideals of the early Christians, and to practice their self-denial. "She who calls herself my mother," he wrote, "treats me like a step-mother." The English chronicler closes the document with the couplet:—

> "Give heed when neighbors' houses burn,
> For next perhaps may be your turn."

The ban was pronounced against Frederick the second time in 1228, and all places put under interdict where the emperor might be. But, as if to show his independence of papal authority, and his disdain of papal interference, Frederick suddenly set forth in earnest on a crusade. Hearing the news, Gregory again launched the anathema, and inhibited the patriarch of Jerusalem and the Military Orders from giving him assistance. With the threefold ban resting upon him, Frederick entered Jerusalem, and in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher put the crown with his own hands upon his head. Thus we have the singular spectacle of a monarch conducting a crusade in fulfillment of a vow to two popes and burdened with the solemn ban of a third pope. Yea, the second and last crusader to enter the Holy City with his sword unsheathed and to go out of it as a conqueror, he was not only resting under the ban, thrice repeated, but was actually excommunicated the fourth time as he was returning to Europe. He was excommunicated for not going to Jerusalem; he was excommunicated for going; and he was excommunicated for coming back a conqueror. The testy old pope wanted things done in his own way, or

not at all, even if it was such a holy enterprise as the recovery of Jerusalem which was at stake.

Freeman, perhaps justly, calls Frederick an unwilling crusader, but it is hardly in accordance with the facts for him to call the fifth crusade "a grotesque episode in his life." His treaty with Saladin was afterwards made the cause of papal charges. He was accused of having given away Christian interests in the East. Frederick, with his freedom of thought, recognized the Saracen as a worthy foe, rather than a hated infidel, and treated with him in the spirit of religious tolerance. But whatever he might have gained by a resort to a prolonged campaign, he alone of all the crusaders, except Godfrey, did not fail. The concessions he secured were valuable.

Returning to Italy, Frederick's victorious army, with the cross inscribed on its banners, found itself confronted with the papal army bearing the device of the keys. The imperial troops were victorious, and the pope and emperor met in 1230 at Anagni, and arranged a treaty.

For four years Gregory was engaged in controversy with the Romans. Part of the time he spent in exile, but was able with Frederick's help to secure from the Romans the acknowledgment of his claims to jurisdiction over the Patrimony of Peter and clerical exemption from the secular tribunals of Rome. Again he called Frederick "his beloved Son in Christ," and called upon Christendom to enter upon a new crusade.

Now the conflict broke out again: this time over the Lombard cities over which Frederick had resolved to assert his authority. The imperial claims he had revived the year before the death of Honorius. Frederick was also encroaching upon the State of the Church. It was his policy to extend his dominion over all Italy. After crushing the rebellion of his son Henry in Germany, he marched into Lombardy. At this time took place his third marriage,

with Isabella, sister of the English King Henry III., the event which explains his frequent appeals to the English. The victory of Cortenuova, in 1237, seemed to make Frederick's arms completely successful. "Italy," he wrote to Gregory, "is my heritage, as all the world knows."

Before the struggle of Guelf and Ghibelline, Gregory fled from Rome. But Gregory arrayed against the emperor the massive artillery of the church's pretensions, and the traditions, which, false though they were, exercised so vast an influence over the mind of Europe.

It was a clear and notable fact, Gregory wrote, 'that Constantine, with the consent of the senate and people of Rome and the whole Roman Empire, deemed it proper that, as the vicar of Christ ruled over the whole empire of souls and priestly things, so also he should have the government of their bodies and material things. For this reason, he committed to the pope in perpetuity the Roman scepter and the imperial insignia, together with Rome and its territory and the empire itself, thinking it infamous that a terrestrial sovereign should exercise power where the heavenly ruler had established the head of religion. Thus Constantine chose Constantinople for his new abode, and later the church imposed the yoke on Charlemagne and transferred the seat of the empire to Germany. Priests are fathers and masters of kings. Is it not a wicked insanity for the son to seek to coerce the father? Christian emperors are bound to submit their acts to the Roman pontiff. The right to sit in judgment upon the Holy See, the Lord has reserved to himself.'[1]

No other pontiff traced with more clearness the chief features of the famous transfer or translation of the empire. The issue was clearly understood. Frederick Barbarossa had fought against the principle that the crown inhered in the pope's power. The juridical decision of Roncaglia had

[1] Huillard-Bréholles, iv. 914–923.

declared that he held the empire by independent right. But Gregory was learned in canonical law, as well as the jurists of Bologna, who had pronounced in favor of the imperial view. And Gregory was a worthy successor of Alexander III. and the great Innocent.

Again, in 1239, and for the fifth time, the ban was fulminated against the emperor, on the occasion of his son's marriage to Adalesia, the heiress of Sardinia, which the pope claimed as his fief. The marriage had been consummated without consulting him. Frederick was charged with sowing seeds of sedition in Rome, seizing upon territory belonging to the apostolic see, and doing violence to the rights of prelates and benefices. The conflict with the pen which followed between emperor and pope has a unique place in the annals of the papacy. Both parties made an appeal to the judgment of Christendom as represented by its princes and prelates.

Gregory compared[1] the emperor to the beast in the book of Revelation which rose out of the sea, full of words of blasphemy, having the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion, and its other parts like a leopard, which opens its mouth in blasphemies against God's name, his dwelling-place, and the saints in heaven. This beast desires to grind everything to pieces with its claws and teeth of iron, and to trample with his feet on the universal world. Frederick is called the "son of lies, heaping up falsehood on falsehood, robber, blasphemer, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and the dragon emitting waters of persecution from his mouth like a river." The pope charged Frederick with having made treaties in Jerusalem hurtful to the Christian interests, with allowing heresy to spread, and with annexing the territory of the church. Further he made the famous accusation, that, "as the king of pestilence, the emperor had openly asserted that the world had been deceived by

[1] Matthew Paris, Anno 1239. Bréholles, v. 527–540.

three impostors, Jesus, Moses, and Mohammed, two of these having died in glory, and Jesus having been suspended on the cross." Moreover he had denied the possibility of God's being incarnate of a virgin.

This extensive document belongs to the list of the most vehement fulminations ever sent forth by a pope. Epithets could scarcely further go. It is proof of the great influence of Frederick's personality, and the growing spirit of democracy in the Italian cities, that the emperor was not shunned by all men, and crushed under the dead weight of such fearful pronouncements.

In his retort, not to be behind his antagonist in the use of Scripture, Frederick compared Gregory to the rider on the red horse who destroyed peace from the earth, and charged him with being the author of discord and desolation. Nevertheless, recognizing the supremacy of the pope in his own sphere, he even declared that, as God had set two lights in the heavens, and the greater was set to give light to the inferior, so he had placed the *sacerdotium* and the *imperium* on the earth. But he charged the pope with attempting to put the second light into eclipse "by denying the purity of our faith (*nostrae fidei puritatem*), and comparing us to the beast rising out of the sea." He called Gregory "Christ's false vicar." The charge of the three impostors he indignantly denied,[1] and laid down his confession of "the only son of God coeternal and coequal with the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten from the beginning and before the ages." He declared that Mohammed's body was suspended in the air, and his soul given over to the torments of hell.

The struggle did not exhaust itself with epithets and criminations of the pen. As Innocent had declared John

[1] Inseruit nos Christianæ fidei religionem recte non colere ac dixisse tribus seductoribus mundum esse deceptura quod abiit de nostris labiis processisse.

dethroned, and called the King of France to take his realm, so now Gregory summoned the Count of Artois, brother of the King of France, to receive Frederick's crown. The emperor retorted by driving the papal troops within the walls of Rome. The Leonine city had been an uncertain place for Gregory, from which more than once he was obliged to seek refuge in flight. But now, with undaunted courage, the aged pontiff went through the streets in procession, with priests carrying the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, and, as if by a miracle, Frederick retired, as, eighty years before, the troops of Barbarossa had retreated on being suddenly stricken with the pestilence as they besieged the Colosseum, where Alexander III. had entrenched himself.

Excommunication proving ineffective to bring Frederick to terms, the call to the Count of Artois being met by refusal, and the papal arms unsuccessful, one resort was yet open to Gregory,—the decision of a general council. And to a council he made appeal, summoning it to meet in Rome (1241). This assembly has among the councils an amusing side. The seizure of the Genoese fleet conveying the prelates by Frederick's son Enzio, and their confinement in Naples, constituted a most unexpected and almost ludicrous turn of affairs.[1] The pope seemed to be checkmated.

Frederick, no doubt, had grounds for his charge that it was a picked council; for the bishops, with perhaps one or two exceptions, came from Southern Europe. Abbots, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and apostolic legates composed the imperial booty. It was a brilliant *coup de main*, but destined to return to trouble the inventor.

At that moment, this remarkable old man died, older by years than his successor, Leo XIII. He died with his

[1] G. C. Macaulay in Eng. Hist. Rev., 1891, pp. 1-17, gives a lively account of the event.

armor on, and with his face towards his enemy, whose army lay encamped within two miles of Rome. A few weeks before his death, and with confidence unshaken, he wrote "that the faithful have trust in God, and bear his dispensation with patience. The ship of Peter would for a time be driven through the storm and between rocks, but soon, and at a time unexpected, it would rise again above the surging billows, and sail on unharmed over the placid waters."

Gregory's successor, the last pope with whom Frederick had to do, a Genoese, was a match for Frederick and his counselors in shrewdness in planning, and quickness in action. He outwitted Frederick by calling the council to Lyons, as Frederick by preventing its assembly at Rome had outwitted Gregory.

When the papal interregnum of nearly two years which followed Gregory's death was closed by the election of Cardinal Sinibald, it was evident that vigorous measures were not to be abandoned. Frederick, on hearing of the election, is reported to have exclaimed, that among the cardinals he had lost a friend, and in the pope he had gained an enemy. All the weapons within the reach of the papal see were brought by Innocent IV. into requisition in rapid succession,—excommunication, the decree of a general council, the election of a rival emperor, and the active fomenting of rebellion in the emperor's dominions.

The negotiations, looking to peace between the two parties, began well. They were sworn to by Frederick's ambassadors in the presence of Baldwin, Emperor of Constantinople. The pope was to lift the sentence of excommunication; Frederick, to evacuate the papal territory, to restore the property of the prelates imprisoned in Naples, and, as in the case of the conditions placed upon John in regard to the exiled bishops, to make such reparation as the pope might appoint, and to build hospitals and churches.

But Frederick, less politic than his grandfather, abruptly annulled the compact by demanding release from the ban as a prior condition to any agreement.

Innocent's next move was a master stroke. To put himself beyond the reach of violence, he fled from Rome in the disguise of a knight, took ship at Civita Vecchia, and sailed for Genoa. There he was among friends, who received him with the ringing of bells and the acclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The response was given—"We are escaped as the bird from the snare of the fowler." Joined by cardinals, whose numbers increased as the journey advanced, he proceeded to Lyons, which lightly acknowledged the authority of the empire, and was at the borders of the French king's territory, from whom aid in time of distress might be expected. The precedent was followed which Alexander III. had set in his flight. A deep impression was made upon Christendom by the spectacle of a pope in exile from Italian soil.

The way was now open for a fresh appeal to a general council, which assembled in Lyons in 1245. Matthew Paris' sympathies, which had been with Frederick up to this juncture, now wavered. The feeling must have been exceedingly intense. "I have never heard of such bitter hatred," wrote Matthew, "as that between Innocent and Frederick. All Christendom was disturbed, and the Universal Church exposed to danger growing out of the discord and hatred." The cause of the crusade was languishing, and measures to stem the invasion of the Mongols were held in abeyance.

How men's minds were divided between the two contestants is evident from the politic action of the Paris priest. Called upon to publish in his church the renewed papal excommunication of the emperor, he announced in the church, "I am not ignorant of the serious controversy and the unquenchable hatred between the emperor and the

pope. I also know that the one has done harm against the other. But which is the offender I do not know. Him, however, who has done the wrong, be it the one or the other, and as far as my authority goes, I denounce and excommunicate, and I absolve the one who suffers under the injury which is so hurtful to the Christian cause."

The objects included in the summons of the first Council of Lyons, were the relief of the Holy Land, measures for the resistance of the Mongols, whose ravages had extended to Hungary, and the settlement of the matters in dispute between the pope and the emperor. The attendance was respectable. Among the one hundred and forty prelates[1] present were the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch. At least two bishops from the German Empire were present. The Archbishop of Palermo appeared as the representative of the emperor.

Frederick was officially represented by his eloquent and learned chancellor, Thaddeus of Suessa. His promise that the emperor would restore territory unjustly taken from the Holy See, and set forth on a crusade, was rejected. When he offered the kings of France and England as Frederick's sureties, the offer was again rejected. The shrewd pope was right in taking the ground that Frederick was simply trying to gain time, and that, if he accepted the promises and they were not fulfilled, he would have three sovereigns as his antagonists instead of one. He was justified in thinking that "the ax was laid at the root of the tree, and the stroke was meant simply to be delayed."

Innocent was plainly master of the situation. A council was at his right hand. Many of its members were burning with resentment at the indignity and loss put upon their relations and friends by Frederick on their way to

[1] The number given by Matthew Paris. The papal document includes several English prelates. Catholic historians have been concerned to increase the number from the North.

Gregory's shipwrecked council. Locally, Innocent was safe from the arms of his antagonist.

The pope's address, opening the council, appealed to the sympathies of Christendom. "See ye who pass by this way, was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow," were the words of the text. One of the five sorrows or wounds affirmed of the church was Frederick's persecution. The specific charges against the emperor were sacrilege and heresy. He was on terms of intimacy with the Saracens, mingled with their women, and was guilty of repeated perjury. The seizure of the prelates was gone into at length. The charge of heresy, Thaddeus declared, could only be answered by the emperor in person. Two weeks were given him to appear. As he did not appear, claiming that the council was made up of partisans, pledged against him, Innocent pronounced the ban upon him, and declared him deposed.

The deliverance set forth four heavy offenses,—perjury in violating his oath to keep peace with the church; sacrilege in seizing the prelates on their way to the council; heresy; and arbitrary treatment of Sicily, which was the pope's fief. Among the grounds for the charge of heresy were the denial of the pope's right of the keys, and Frederick's collusion with the sultan, allowing the name of Mohammed to be publicly proclaimed day and night in the temple, keeping eunuchs over his women, and giving his daughter in marriage to an excommunicated prince.

The fell sentence ran, "Seeing that we, unworthy as we are, hold on earth the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said to us in the person of St. Peter, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, etc., do hereby declare Frederick, who has rendered himself unworthy of the honors of sovereignty, and for his crime has been deposed from his throne by God, to be bound by his sins, and cast off by the Lord." His subjects were absolved

from their allegiance, and authority was given for the election of a new emperor. "We decree that any one who shall henceforth give him assistance or advice, or show favor to him as emperor or king, shall for this act be excommunicated, and those in the empire on whom the election of an emperor devolves, may freely elect a successor in his place."

Gregorovius has declared this pronouncement one of the most ominous events of universal history. It was the assertion of the absolute authority of the church in all matters whatsoever.

The sentence was not a *brutum fulmen.* The council made a profound impression in Europe, and presented the church as a united organism. Frederick's reception of the news, by calling for his crown and putting it firmly upon his head, was bold enough. But he was at war with a pope who followed the council up with energetic action. Matthew Paris expresses, at least, his own opinion when he says that Louis of France, who made a plea for the emperor at Clugny, "found in Innocent little of the humility which he had a right to expect from the servant of the servants of God."

Frederick's manifesto, addressed to the King of England and other princes, struck the chords of great truth, as we understand truth, although the mediæval theory of the papacy could not tolerate it. He denied the pope's right to touch his temporal authority, and warned the princes again that his cause was theirs. He was not the first civil ruler on whom the abuse of the priestly power bore heavily, nor would he be the last. He announced it as his purpose to continue war against his oppressors as it had been his aim to recall the priesthood from the profession of arms and worldliness and luxury to the simplicity of apostolic times.

The following year, in another address to the prelates

and nobles of England, he declared it as his belief that full authority in spiritual matters was conferred by the Lord upon the apostolic see, but that we nowhere read that divine or human power was given to him, either by divine or human law, to transfer the empire at his pleasure, or to decide the temporal punishments of kings and princes by depriving them of their territories. The prerogative of consecrating the emperor belongs to the pope by original right, and by the custom of his own predecessors, but the prerogative of disposition does not belong to him.

Frederick was in advance of his age. He had some of the spirit of the Reformation which started in Germany three centuries later. But too much credit must not be given to him for far-seeing and enlightened policy. The rights of individual conscience he nowhere hints at, and probably did not dream of. He was actuated by the conception of his own supreme imperial authority.

Innocent met Frederick's manifestoes with all the most extravagant reassertions of authority claimed by his predecessors as vicars of Christ. As Gregory VII. had adduced the case of Samuel and Saul as a precedent for his treatment of Henry IV., so Innocent declared that if, under the Old Testament, the priests deposed unworthy kings, how much more right had the vicar of Christ to exercise that prerogative! To words were added vigorous measures. The Mendicant Orders were on his side, and stirred up the flame of discontent in Germany. The archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, Treves, and Bremen took the initiative in electing the rival emperor Heinrich Raspe, Landgrave of Thuringia, and at his death, in 1247, William of Holland. In Italy civil war reigned.

Frederick met the opposition in the far South, and then turned to Northern Italy. Here he was utterly defeated in the siege of Parma, and lost his crown. His minister, Peter della Vigna, had left him, and is followed by an un-

certain fame. Theodore of Suessa perished in battle. His Saracen troops could not save him. The emperor's career was at an end. In the midst of his troubles he died, December 13, 1250, near Lucera, in Apulia, the town he had built for his Saracen subjects, on the old Samnite site. The pope was master of the field. Frederick lies buried at the side of his parents in the Cathedral of Palermo. According to contemporary chronicles, he died absolved by the hand of the Archbishop of Palermo, and clothed in the habit of the Cistercians.

Stupor mundi—"the Wonder of the World"—that is the epithet which the great English chronicler and contemporary, Matthew Paris, applies to Frederick II. of the House of Hohenstaufen. The splendid title which Frederick often used, ran,—"Frederick, Emperor of the Romans and always Augustus, King of Jerusalem and Sicily." And he was entitled to it. Europe had not seen his equal as a ruler since Charlemagne. For the wide outlook of his genius, the diversity of his gifts, and the vigor and versatility of his statescraft, he is justly compared to the great rulers. Morally the inferior of his grandfather, Barbarossa, he surpassed him in intellectual power. He is the most conspicuous political figure of his own age and the most cosmopolitan of the Middle Ages. He was warrior, legislator, statesman, man of letters. He brought order out of the great confusion in which he found Southern Italy, and in the Sicilian Constitutions he substituted a uniform civil code for the irresponsible jurisdiction of ecclesiastic and baron.

It has been said he founded the principle of centralized government.[1] Such a view is not discredited by the decentralizing tendency of the charters he gave to German cities upon which the last writer on the Mediæval Empire

[1] Gregorovius, v. 271.

lays so much stress.[1] He was a thorough Sicilian, and ruled Germany neither by his presence nor from affection. He struck out a new path by appealing again and again to the judgment of Christendom through its princes, sovereigns and prelates.

In his conflict with the pope he was governed, not by hatred of the spiritual power, but by the determination to keep it to its own realm. In genuine ideal opposition to the hierarchy he went further than any of his predecessors.[2] Gregory and Innocent called him "the great dragon," and declared him worthy of the fate of Absalom. He did not resort to the measure of his grandfather and set up an antipope, but he scoffed at the principle announced by Gregory VII., and repeated by Innocent and Gregory IX., that while the papacy was founded of God, the civil power is a result of robbery, pride, perfidy, and other crimes, and for that reason to enjoy only relative authority.

It has been surmised that Frederick was not a Christian. The encyclical of Gregory declared that the charge of the three impostors was susceptible of proof. The professor of theology in Paris, Simon Tornacensis, had made the assertion before him. The book on the subject is ascribed to different authors. If Frederick said what is charged against him, he must have said it in a mood. He was in the midst of a burning conflict. The prelatical power which he was opposing with charges of simony and worldliness, might easily mistake a rumor for a fact, or exaggerate an offhand statement into the settled hostility of an unchristian purpose. The denials of Frederick's letters are so emphatic as to leave no room for believing the charge, unless we deny to him all truthfulness. It is noteworthy that Innocent IV. did not make reference to the accusation in his

[1] Herbert Fisher, The Mediæval Empire. He has a good chapter (XI.) on "Imperial Legislation in Italy."

[2] Ranke, viii. 369 *sqq.*

list of heretical offenses at the Council of Lyons. It does not seem likely that the emperor was burdened with an oversupply of piety. His toleration of Mohammedan and Jew at the moment he was persecuting the Christian dissidents, indicates a readiness to serve a political policy at the expense of mental consistency.

Neander expresses the opinion that Frederick denied revealed religion. Schlosser withholds from him all religious and moral faith. Ranke and Freeman leave the question of his religious views unsettled. Both lay stress upon his freedom of thought. Hergenröther makes the distinction, that as a man Frederick was an unbeliever, and as a monarch a strict Catholic; Gregorovius holds that he cherished religious convictions as sincerely Catholic as those professed by the Ghibelline Dante. Fisher[1] emphasizes "his singular detachment from the current superstitions of the day." Huillard-Bréholles saw in his movement an attempt to usurp the sovereign pontificate, and to found a lay papacy, combining in himself royalty and papal functions, an opinion no one has shared with him. Amari, the historian of the Mohammedan tenure of Sicily, calls him a baptized sultan.

Frederick retained the friendship of the Archbishop of Palermo. And in spite of his rude treatment of church institutions and territory, the attempt to restrict the pope to his own sphere and to recall the clergy to some conformity to apostolic precedents, was quite consistent with religion. The Mendicant Orders were against him, but their faces were, from the first, set against mental freedom in religious matters, and in favor of drastic methods with dissenters.

Of moral crimes there were not a few; but the crime of crimes was that Frederick had supported the independent dignity of the imperial power by the boldest defiance.

[1] The Mediæval Empire, ii. 168.

And, as Peter the Lombard said, the Roman Church used all its power against the empire as represented by him, and for his destruction. The high conception of modern sovereignty, Frederick shows no traces of having had. Free and tolerent as he was towards races and religions, he was still the representative of imperial absolutism. He anticipated the appeal of later times to public opinion in the appeal he made to the judgment of Christendom, and yet his idea of the ruler did not include the rights of private judgment. He represented with manly vigor the claims of the state, against the astounding claims built up through centuries for the papacy. This was his merit.

Frederick's court in Palermo, which, in addressing his letters, he often called the "Happy City," he made at once the scene of oriental luxury and of literary culture. He imitated the habit of the Saracens in keeping a harem. He was a precursor of the Renaissance, and was himself given to rhyming. He was familiar with Greek, Latin, German, French, Italian, and Arabic. His book on falconry, Ranke pronounced one of the best treatments of its subject in the Middle Ages. He established the University of Naples, and ordained that no one should practice medicine in Southern Italy without a license from Salerno. Michael Scott was his favorite astrologer, but in the practice of astrology he had popes of a more enlightened age for his companions. It was characteristic of the man that, while he was besieging Milan in 1239, he was concerned about the minute details of forest and household management in Sicily and was sending orders in regard to it.

Freeman's remark that "in mere genius, in mere accomplishments, Frederick was surely the greatest prince who ever wore a crown," will meet with dissent; but when[1] he

[1] Hist. Essays, i. 283. Again the same great historian says, "It is probable that there never lived a human being endowed with greater natural gifts."

finds in Frederick's career some of the most wonderful chapters of European history, all will agree with him. Bryce pronounces him one of the most extraordinary personages in history. Gregorovius expresses the judgment, "that, with all his faults and virtues, he was the most complete and gifted character of his century and the representative of its culture." Dante, a half-century after his death, puts the great emperor among the heresiarchs in hell. When the news of his death was brought to Innocent, that pope wrote to the Sicilians that heaven and hell rejoiced at it, for the emperor had crushed the church with the hammer of persecution. The Freiburger *Chronicle* expressed a juster feeling when it said, "If he had loved his soul, who would have been his equal?"

With Frederick II. the greatness and the rôle of the Hohenstaufen was at an end. The sympathy of later generations goes out to the father on account of the tragic fate of his gifted sons. Against the remaining male members of the house, the papacy declared irreconcilable feud. The decree against the house was humiliation and, if necessary, extirpation. The pope called its representatives "the viperous brood," the "poisonous brood as of a dragon of poisonous race." The family moved on to its relentless fate. Enzio languished to his death in his prison at Bologna. Conrad, Frederick's successor on the imperial throne and the throne of Sicily, died four years after his father, at the age of twenty-six. For his only son, Conradin, two years old at his father's death, a tragic end was waiting. Manfred, Frederick's illegitimate son,[1] the brilliant representative of chivalry, had inherited his father's spirit, and for a time was master of Southern Italy, and wore the Sicilian crown, but was killed at Benevento (1266).

In the meantime, Innocent had returned to Rome (1253),

[1] He was born out of wedlock, whatever reparation Frederick may have made later to his mother.

and called Charles of Anjou, brother of the King of France, to aid in destroying the Hohenstaufen, and establishing the perpetual independence of the crown of Naples and Sicily from the empire. He was willing to hold it as a fief of the papal see. Charles introduced a new order of things, became the dictator of the papal policy, controlling the elections of the popes in the interest of the French, and preparing the way for the Avignon captivity.

Conradin, the last male scion of his race, on reaching the age of fourteen, crossed the Alps to make good his claim to his ancestral patrimony in Southern Italy. The papal ban, so often hurled against his ancestors, was once more pronounced against him. A fitful outburst of enthusiasm greeted him in Rome and other parts of Italy, but, no match for the tried skill of Charles, he lost all in the battle of Tagliacozzo. Betrayed and captured, he was put on trial for his life. In vain did Guido of Suzarra, the Bolognese master of law, plead that the young prince had come to Italy, not as a robber but to assert his lawful rights. Charles had determined upon his death, and Conradin was executed at Naples, October 29, 1268. His last words, as he kneeled to receive the fatal blow, were, "O mother, what pain of heart do I make for you!" As he wrote to the pope, Charles accorded to the young prince military honors at his burial, but not religious rites.

The hill on which the proud castle of the Hohenstaufen stood, continues to look down upon the peaceful fields of Würtemburg, and preaches with tender eloquence the sermon, that all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. Italian soil and politics had been fatal to German unification and development, as well as to the Swabian house. Italy had been laid waste by sword and rapine and urbane strife for a half-century and more. Europe was weary of the conflict between the two great powers. The Latin Empire of Constantinople succumbed

in 1261. Antioch, the last relic of the crusaders in Syria, fell in 1268. The Minnesänger gave expression to the discontent with the old conflicts. A new era was not far distant.

The papacy was triumphant, triumphant by the defeat of the imperial house; and yet in that defeat it received itself a severe blow. The measures to which it had to resort in calling in Charles were the source of subservience to France in the line of French popes seated in Rome, and the papal captivity in France. Rudolf of Hapsburg, elected by papal support to the imperial throne in 1273, surrendered all claim to Italian soil. Peace between empire and papacy followed.

> Dann geendigt nach langem verderblichen Streit
> War die kaiserlose, die schreickliche Zeit.
>
> Then was ended the long and direful strife,
> The time of terror without an emperor's rule.[1]

But the theory of the empire wearisomely built up by the papacy was forever discredited, and the monarchies of Europe emerged out of the struggle of Frederick. As if in mockery of human calculations, Frederick's granddaughter, and Manfred's daughter, came to the Sicilian throne as the consort of Peter of Aragon, and by the expulsion of the French from Sicilian soil.

The Roman Empire, so far as any real power or mission was concerned, had finished its course with Frederick II. But his Sicilian legislation in all its main features survives in Sicily. And it was a principle of vast importance that he stood champion for. His struggle had a meaning beyond his age, and was more than a memory at the time of the Reformation, when Luther in his Call to the German Nation, appealed to him and his fate; and the execution of Conradin was reproduced in prints.

The great Frederick occupied a lonely eminence. He was

[1] Schiller in his poem, "Rudolf of Hapsburg."

probably a free-thinker in theology; and yet in his own age, the age of Francis and Dominic, the forces of religious enthusiasm were ardent. He was King of Jerusalem, and its last Christian king, and yet the aims and superstition of the crusaders were foreign to him. He was a German emperor, and yet least of all a German. He contended against the domination of the apostolic see outside of the spiritual sphere, and yet he had most sympathy with Eastern despotism.

Ideas survive long after the dynasties have become extinct, and the men have perished who have battled for them. So it is with the ideas represented in the duel between the empire and the papacy. It filled the Middle Ages and connected them together. It has even been called, by the last great historian of Rome, "the grandest spectacle of all ages." The ideas the contending parties stood for are wonderfully imposing; and, though they are fictitious, they still exercise a spell even where the principles of modern liberty obtain.

For boldness of conception, for consequential unity, the mediæval papal idea still has supreme attraction for many minds who would gladly have the spectacle of its glory renewed, and who are blind to the ambitious self-assumption of the system, the worldly motives and unreligious lives of many of the popes, and the antagonism of the papal fabric to the temper and letter of the New Testament, which declares, that the powers that be are ordained of God, and tribute should be rendered unto Cæsar.

But the mediæval idea is even more than a memory. It was reasserted by Pius IX. in the Syllabus, and by Leo XIII. in his Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, November 1, 1885.

On the other hand, it is not unfair, in the light of events to surmise that the view of the prerogative of the imperial ruler as held by the mediæval emperors is more than a memory with the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs who sit on

thrones of empires to-day and insist on claims which antagonize the ideas of popular sovereignty and the separation of church and state which rule the judgment and command the assent of these American shores.

The memories of history are one of the misfortunes of the study of the past. For the ambitious, they become a pretext; for the blind, refusing to see the ideal of the future, they may become a snare. But the study of church history, not to be discarded because of its abuse, becomes the instructor of those who are willing to learn, and who, with their faith in God, are looking forward to better realizations of the words and spirit of Christ in the affairs of men. And, as in the crusades, the student sees a pulpit turned towards Jerusalem, and publishing the mighty sermon, "He is not here, he is risen from the dead"; so, as he sits down on the battle-field where papacy and empire met, and contended for power, and watches the procession of pope and emperor through a thousand years,—Constantine and Sylvester, Charlemagne and Leo III., Hildebrand and Henry IV., Alexander and Barbarossa, Innocent and John of England, Gregory IX. and Frederick II., Lewis the Bavarian and John XXII.,—he seems to hear the everlasting words, "My kingdom is not of this world; my kingdom is within you."