

be at the disposal of the bishop. Any who keep them back are cut off from the communion of holy church.

6. That no cleric or priest shall receive a church from laymen in any fashion, whether freely or at a price.
7. That no one shall receive the habit of a monk in the hope or with the promise of becoming an abbot.
8. Nor shall any priest hold two churches at the same time.
9. That no one shall be ordained or promoted to any ecclesiastical office by simoniacal heresy. . . .

### *The Norman Alliance*

24. Oath of Robert Guiscard to Pope Nicholas II (August 1059), ed. P. Fabre and L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Censuum de l'église romaine* (Paris, 1910), p. 422.

I, Robert, by the grace of God and St. Peter duke of Apulia and Calabria and, with the help of both, future duke of Sicily, will from this hour forward be faithful to the holy Roman church and the apostolic see and to you, my lord Pope Nicholas. I will not give any counsel or commit any act whereby you would lose life or limb or fall into vile captivity. I will not knowingly disclose so as to injure you any information that you impart to me and forbid me to disclose. So far as lies within my power I will support the holy Roman church in holding and acquiring the temporalities and possessions of St. Peter everywhere and against all men, and I will help you to hold the Roman papacy securely and honorably. I will not invade or seek to acquire or presume to dispoil the lands and principality of St. Peter unless you or your successors who have entered upon the honor of St. Peter give explicit permission, and that in addition to the things which you are now conceding to me and which your successors will concede. I will faithfully ensure that the holy Roman church shall have each year such payment as has been laid down from the lands of St. Peter which I hold or shall hold. Also I will put all churches in my lordship and their possessions under your power and I will defend them as one faithful to the Roman church; and I will not swear fealty to anyone without reserving the fealty owed to the Roman church. Moreover, if you or your successors shall depart this life before me, I will assist in the election and consecration of a pope to the honor of St. Peter according to the advice of the leading cardinals and of the Roman clergy and people. All these things I will observe with due fidelity to the Roman church and to you, and I will observe this fidelity to your successors, consecrated to the honor of St. Peter, who confirm to me the investiture you have conceded. So help me God.

## 2. The Program of Gregory VII

Hildebrand was the youngest of the reforming cardinals whom Leo IX had gathered together at Rome. By the end of the pontificate of Alexander II (1061-73) he was almost the only survivor of the original group and had emerged as the dominant figure in the Roman curia. At the burial of Alexander a tumult arose among the people. They clamorously demanded that Hildebrand become their pope and, according to his own account, "dragged [him] to the place of apostolic rule." The cardinals were of the same mind as the people, and Hildebrand was duly elected, taking the name of Gregory VII. There is no doubt that the election was canonically valid, but the technical irregularity that the people had expressed their preference before the meeting of the cardinals made it possible later for his enemies to question the legitimacy of his position.

Gregory's reign was filled with conflict, above all with King Henry IV of Germany who had grown to manhood and begun to assume personal control of his kingdom in the years just before the pope's election. The immediate cause of the clash was Gregory's re-enactment of the earlier decree against lay investiture and his determination to enforce the decree in practice. But the apparently technical nature of the dispute should not obscure the fundamental importance of the issues involved. Henry could not give up the right of appointing bishops without abandoning all hope of welding Germany into a united monarchy. Gregory could not acquiesce in the imperial claims, which included a claim to appoint the popes themselves, without jeopardizing the continuance of the entire reform movement, for Henry showed none of his father's spontaneous zeal for the task of revivifying the church. When Henry turned to his bishops for support in resisting the pope's decree, and Gregory in turn appealed to the German princes to assist him in deposing Henry from his kingship, it became clear that the whole leadership of Christian society was at stake in the dispute.

The documents printed below illustrate how the whole substance of Gregory's program, including his specifically political claims, was set out in the first two years of his pontificate, before the open breach with

Henry IV. There is no question here of an extreme policy developing only under the pressure of uncontrollable events. In 1074 Gregory held a council at Rome which promulgated afresh the usual reforming decrees against simony and clerical marriage. This legislation is described in the pope's letter to Bishop Otto of Constance (No. 25). In February of 1075 came the crucial decree prohibiting lay investiture. In March of 1075 there was inserted in the pope's official Register the peculiar document known as the *Dictatus Papae* (No. 26), which contained the first explicit claim that a pope could depose an emperor. The unusual form of the document has been much discussed, and the most convincing explanation of it is that the *Dictatus* presents chapter headings for a proposed collection of canons which would have supported each proposition with a selection of relevant authorities. In any case there seems to be no doubt that the *Dictatus* presents the considered opinions of Gregory VII at the outset of his reign. Document No. 27 illustrates the pope's determination to preserve every shred of temporal power over secular kings that the Roman see had obtained through feudal transactions in preceding generations.

This program of Gregory VII has provoked a variety of conflicting judgments from historians. Some condemn the pope as a worldly-minded prelate obsessed by a selfish ambition to dominate Europe. Others praise him as a selfless servant of the church whose whole life was dedicated to the ideals of religious liberty and ecclesiastical reform. This dispute goes back to the days of Gregory himself, for he was accused of undue ambition by his own contemporaries. Peter Damian once called him "My holy Satan"—and Satan's sin was the sin of pride. The pope himself was deeply sensitive to this accusation; time and again he found it necessary to deny that he sought worldly power for its own sake. (In the very act of deposing King Henry IV he declared, addressing St. Peter: "Rather would I have chosen to end my life as a pilgrim than to seize upon thy place for earthly glory.") Both views of the pope's character may contain an element of truth. Gregory at any rate was not a dispassionate intellectual or much given to self-analysis, but rather a man of action, filled with tumultuous energy, prone to make impetuous decisions. It is not difficult to see such a man driven by an ineluctable will to power and at the same time utterly convinced in his own heart that all his energies are being poured out in the service of a cause greater than himself.

A related controversy has grown up concerning the central objectives of Gregory's program. Augustin Fliche emphasizes the pope's concern with moral reform and sees the conflict with Henry IV arising out of the young king's obdurate resistance to the reform program in Germany. Even in the matter of lay investiture, Fliche suggests, "with a prince other than Henry IV things could have been arranged." In a quite different spirit Walter Ullmann maintains that the whole point of Gregory's

program was to translate abstract theocratic principles into concrete governmental actions.<sup>1</sup> Here the two positions seem mutually exclusive but, again, both express important truths. Gregory VII was deeply preoccupied with moral reform and sometimes seems to have set this objective above all others. For example, he strove to enforce rigorously the decrees on clerical celibacy—which were especially unpopular among the lower clergy of Germany—in the months immediately before his breach with Henry IV, when elementary political prudence would have indicated that he was likely to need every possible source of support in the German church (No. 25). But it is misleading to suggest that Gregory was simply a peace-loving pontiff reluctantly driven into a conflict because Henry IV resisted his reform policy. The prohibition of lay investiture was of the essence of Gregory's program, and it was a demand that no king of that time could have accepted. No king did accept it.

This raises a further question that has also been a matter of much dispute. Was Gregory essentially a conservative or a revolutionary in the objectives he pursued? Both Fliche and Ullmann would argue in their different ways that he was really a traditionalist, continuing a line of papal policy that dated back to the early centuries of the church. Erich Caspar, on the other hand, called Gregory "the great innovator who stood all alone," and Norman Cantor has recently described the eleventh-century reform movement as one of the four great "world-revolutions" of Western history.<sup>2</sup> Here again it seems possible to take a middle position. Gregory certainly thought that he was being a traditionalist. All the reformers can be called conservatives in that they consciously aimed at reviving ancient laws of the church which had fallen out of use in the chaos of preceding centuries. For that reason they devoted a great deal of time and energy to searching through old records in order to produce compilations of canons that would provide authoritative support for their own programs. In a sense the policies they pursued really were traditional ones. It is certainly true that canonical election and clerical celibacy belonged to the early tradition of the Western church and that lay investiture was a fairly recent innovation, unsupported by canonical authority; but it is no very uncommon paradox in Western history that the literal application by would-be reformers of half-understood old texts from a different historical epoch can have revolutionary implications for their own times. The use of medieval precedents by the English parliamentarians of the seventeenth century is a case in point. So too in the 11th century the ancient rules that the reformers wanted to enforce acquired a radically changed significance when they were applied in a

<sup>1</sup> A. Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne* (Paris, 1946), p. 131; W. Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government* (London, 1955), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> E. Caspar, "Gregor VII in seinen Briefen," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXX (1924), pp. 1-30; N. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England* (Princeton, 1958), pp. 6-9.



historical context quite different from the one which had originally given rise to them. However conservative the eleventh-century reformers intended to be, the inevitable result of their activities was not to re-establish an old order of things but to bring a new order into existence.

### *Moral Reform*

25. Letter of Gregory to Otto, bishop of Constance (December 1074), trans. E. Emerton, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII* (New York, 1932), pp. 52-53.

Gregory . . . to Otto, bishop of Constance, greeting. . . .

A report has come to us with regard to Your Fraternity, which I have heard with grief and regret—a report which, if it had been made to us of the lowest member of the Christian community, would undoubtedly have called for a severe disciplinary sentence. While we were zealously striving to wipe out the heresy of Simony and to enforce the chastity of the clergy, inspired by apostolic authority and the authentic opinions of holy fathers, we enjoined upon our colleague, the venerable archbishop of Mainz, whose suffragans are numerous and widely scattered, that he should diligently impress this decree upon his whole clergy, in person and through his assistants, and should see that it was carried out without exception.

To you also, who preside over the numerous clergy and the widespread population of the church of Constance, it has, for the same reason, seemed good to us to send a special letter under our own seal. With this as your authority you can more safely and more boldly carry out our orders and expel from the Lord's holy place the heresy of Simony and the foul plague of carnal contagion. The apostolic authority of St. Paul is here of especial force, where, counting in fornicators and adulterers with other vicious persons, he gives this plain decision: "With such a one, no, not to eat."

Furthermore the whole body of the Catholic Church consists of virgins or married persons or those holding themselves in restraint. Whoever, therefore, is outside those three classes is not to be counted among the sons of the Church or within the bounds of the Christian religion. Wherefore we also, if we should know for certain that even the lowest layman was involved in concubinage, would cut him off completely from the body and blood of the Lord until he should perform due penance. How then shall one be the distributor or server of the holy sacraments who cannot in any wise be partaker of them? Further, we are urged to this by the authority of the blessed Pope Leo [I] who deprived subdeacons of the right to marry, a decree to which his successors in the

Holy Roman Church, especially that famous doctor Gregory [I], gave such force of law that henceforth the marriage bond has been absolutely forbidden to the three orders of priests, levites and subdeacons.

But when we, in our pastoral forethought, sent word to you that these orders were to be carried out you, not setting your mind on the things that are above, but on the things that are upon the earth, loosed the reins of lust within the aforesaid orders so that, as we have heard, those who had taken concubines persisted in their crime, while those who had not yet done so had no fear of your prohibitions. Oh, what insolence! Oh, what audacity, that a bishop should despise the decrees of the Apostolic See, should uproot the precepts of holy fathers—nay more, by orders from his high place and his priestly office should impose upon his subjects things contrary and repugnant to the Christian faith.

Wherefore we command you to present yourself before us at the approaching synod in the first week of Lent to give answer according to canon law as well for this disobedience and contempt of the Apostolic See as for all the other offenses charged against you.

### *Papal Power*

26. *The Dictatus Papae* (March 1075), trans. S. Z. Ehler and J. B. Morrall, *Church and State Through the Centuries* (London, 1954), pp. 43-44.

1. That the Roman Church was founded by God alone.
2. That the Roman Pontiff alone is rightly to be called universal.
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.
4. That his legate, even if of lower grade, takes precedence, in a council, of all bishops and may render a sentence of deposition against them.
5. That the Pope may depose the absent.
6. That, among other things, we also ought not to stay in the same house with those excommunicated by him.
7. That for him alone it is lawful to enact new laws according to the needs of the time, to assemble together new congregations, to make an abbey of a canonry; and, on the other hand, to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones.
8. That he alone may use the imperial insignia.
9. That the Pope is the only one whose feet are to be kissed by all princes.
10. That his name alone is to be recited in churches.
11. That his title is unique in the world.
12. That he may depose Emperors.
13. That he may transfer bishops, if necessary, from one See to another.

14. That he has power to ordain a cleric of any church he may wish.
15. That he who has been ordained by him may rule over another church, but not be under the command of others; and that such a one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.
16. That no synod may be called a general one without his order.
17. That no chapter or book may be regarded as canonical without his authority.
18. That no sentence of his may be retracted by any one; and that he, alone of all, can retract it.
19. That he himself may be judged by no one.
20. That no one shall dare to condemn a person who appeals to the Apostolic See.
21. That to this See the more important cases of every church should be submitted.
22. That the Roman Church has never erred, nor ever, by the witness of Scripture, shall err to all eternity.
23. That the Roman Pontiff, if canonically ordained, is undoubtedly sanctified by the merits of St. Peter; of this St. Ennodius, Bishop of Pavia, is witness, many Holy Fathers are agreeable and it is contained in the decrees of Pope Symmachus the Saint.
24. That, by his order and with his permission, subordinate persons may bring accusations.
25. That without convening a synod he can depose and reinstate bishops.
26. That he should not be considered as Catholic who is not in conformity with the Roman Church.
27. That the Pope may absolve subjects of unjust men from their fealty.

### Feudal Lordship

27. Letter to Solomon, king of Hungary (October 1074), trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 48-49.

Gregory . . . to Solomon, king of Hungary, greeting. . . . Your letter to us arrived late owing to delay on the part of your messenger. It would have been more graciously received at our hands had not your ill-considered condition been so grievously offensive to St. Peter. For, as you may learn from the chief men of your country, the kingdom of Hungary was long since offered and devotedly surrendered to St. Peter by King Stephen as the full property of the Holy Roman Church under its complete jurisdiction and control. Furthermore, the emperor Henry [III] of pious memory, after his conquest of that kingdom, in honor of St. Peter sent to his shrine a spear and a crown, and in celebration of

his triumph delivered the insignia of sovereignty to the place where he knew the headship of that power belonged.

This being so you, nevertheless, who in other respects also have widely departed from the character and quality of a king have, as we hear, degraded the right and the honor of St. Peter as far as you could by accepting a kingdom which is his as a fief from the king of the Germans. If this is true, you yourself know how much favor from St. Peter or good will from ourself you can expect. You cannot receive these or hope to reign long without apostolic reproof unless you correct your fault and acknowledge that the scepter of the kingdom which you hold is a fief of the apostolic and not of the royal majesty. For neither fear nor favor nor any respect of persons shall, so far as in us lies, prevent us from claiming with God's help every possible honor due to him whose servant we are.

If you are prepared to correct these wrongs and to order your life as becomes a king, then beyond a doubt you shall enjoy in full measure the affection of the Holy Roman Church as a beloved son of a mother, and also our own friendship in Christ.

### Lay Investiture

(Gregory's first prohibition of lay investiture was issued in February 1075. The text of the decree has not survived, but its substance was repeated in the later enactments given below which were promulgated in November 1078 and March 1080 respectively.)

28. Decrees against lay investiture, trans. E. F. Henderson, *Documents* (London, 1892), pp. 365-66.

Inasmuch as we have learned that, contrary to the establishments of the holy fathers, the investiture with churches is, in many places, performed by lay persons; and that from this cause many disturbances arise in the church by which the Christian religion is trodden under foot: we decree that no one of the clergy shall receive the investiture with a bishopric or abbey or church from the hand of an emperor or king or of any lay person, male or female. But if he shall presume to do so he shall clearly know that such investiture is bereft of apostolic authority, and that he himself shall lie under excommunication until fitting satisfaction shall have been rendered.

Following the statutes of the holy fathers, as, in the former councils which by the mercy of God we have held, we decreed concerning the ordering of ecclesiastical dignities, so also now we decree and confirm:



that, if any one henceforth shall receive a bishopric or abbey from the hand of any lay person, he shall by no means be considered as among the number of the bishops or abbots; nor shall any hearing be granted him as bishop or abbot. Moreover we further deny to him the favour of St. Peter and the entry of the church, until, coming to his senses, he shall desert the place that he has taken by the crime of ambition as well as by that of disobedience—which is the sin of idolatry. In like manner also we decree concerning the inferior ecclesiastical dignities.

Likewise if any emperor, king, duke, margrave, count, or any one at all of the secular powers or persons, shall presume to perform the investiture with bishoprics or with any ecclesiastical dignity—he shall know that he is bound by the bonds of the same condemnation. And, moreover, unless he come to his senses and relinquish to the church her own prerogative, he shall feel, in this present life, the divine displeasure as well with regard to his body as to his other belongings: in order that at the coming of the Lord, his soul may be saved.

### *The Role of the Laity*

(One of Gregory's most radical measures commanded layfolk to reject priests who failed to conform to his reform decrees.)

28a. Letter of Gregory to Otto, bishop of Constance (March 1075), ed. P. Jaffé. *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*. II (Berlin, 1865), p. 525.

... Those who obtain churches by the gift of money must forfeit them completely, and no one henceforth shall be permitted to buy or sell them. Also, those who fall into the crime of fornication may not celebrate masses or serve at the altar in minor orders. We have further decreed that, if they disobey our statutes, or rather those of the holy fathers, the people shall in no way accept their ministrations, so that those who are not corrected by the love of God or the honor of their office may be brought to their senses by the shame of the world and the rebuke of the people.

### 3. The Struggle with Henry IV

Even before Gregory became pope, two causes of friction between the papacy and the royal government in Germany had arisen. In a disputed election to the great see of Milan Pope Alexander II had supported one candidate, the king another. Also, Alexander had had occasion to rebuke the young king for tolerating simoniacal practices at his court. Later on Henry would prove an intransigent opponent, but at the time of Gregory's election in 1073 his royal power was threatened by a great rebellion in Saxony, and he was in no position to make new enemies. He therefore wrote to Gregory most submissively, acknowledging Gregory as pope even though he had taken no part in Gregory's election and promising to accept papal correction in the affair of Milan. During the course of 1074 Gregory began to complain to the German bishops that his reform decrees were not being enforced effectively (*No.* 25). In February of 1075 came the papal decree forbidding all lay investiture. Henry never had the slightest intention of complying with this decree, and he was able to defy it openly after he won a great victory over the Saxons in June.

It then required only a test case to bring pope and king into open conflict, and the test case was already at hand in the dispute over the episcopal election at Milan. After a riot in the city Henry renewed his support for a royal candidate against the papally approved bishop. In December of 1075 Gregory wrote to him about this matter reproachfully and, for the first time, threateningly, reminding Henry that the pope possessed all the powers of St. Peter and that the king, like all other Christians, was bound by the papal decrees (*No.* 29). Henry responded by summoning a council of German bishops that denounced Gregory as a usurper of the papacy and accused him of perjury, immorality, and gross abuses of papal authority in the dioceses of Germany. In February of 1076 Gregory replied with a decree in which he declared Henry excommunicated and deprived of his royal authority (*No.* 31). At about this time Henry wrote two defenses of his position. One, addressed to the pope, was an outright assertion of divine-right kingship. Its whole tone and substance are epitomized in the salutation, "Henry, King not by usurpation, but by the pious ordination of God, to Hildebrand, now

not Pope, but false monk" (No. 30). The second, sent to the German bishops, repeated that Henry had been called to the kingship by God, and accused Gregory of seeking to pervert the divine ordering of human affairs by uniting priesthood and kingship in his own person (No. 32).

The next few months showed that Henry had greatly overestimated the strength of his position. The turbulent princes of medieval Germany were never willing to submit to the rule of a powerful, centralized monarchy, and Henry, after his triumph over the Saxons, was far too strong for their liking. The announcement of the king's excommunication and deposition was therefore very welcome to many of the nobles. Moreover, the moral effect of the pope's condemnation, with its solemn invocation of the authority of St. Peter, seems to have been very great indeed. Even the bishops who had joined Henry in condemning the pope soon deserted him to seek Gregory's pardon. Henry found himself faced by an overwhelming coalition of nobles and bishops and was compelled to accept humiliating terms of surrender. He agreed that a diet should be held at Augsburg in February of 1077. The pope was to preside in person at this diet, which would consider Henry's behavior and decide whether to permit him to continue reigning as king. It was a most satisfying prospect for Pope Gregory.

In January 1077 the pope, traveling northward to the diet, paused at the castle of Canossa on the Italian side of the Alps. Then came the most dramatic episode of the whole struggle. Henry slipped away from Germany, crossed the Alps with an escort of only a few personal attendants, and presented himself as a humble penitent, barefoot in the depths of winter, at the gates of the pope's castle. Gregory was faced with a difficult choice. As a spiritual pastor faced with a penitent sinner seeking forgiveness, his obvious duty was to give absolution. But as a political leader playing for high stakes, his obvious course was to send Henry packing back to Germany with a reminder that his case was to be considered at the diet of princes in February and not before. Gregory permitted himself the luxury of keeping the king waiting for three days, but he did in the end give the desired absolution and released Henry from his sentence of excommunication, without, however, restoring him to the office of kingship. He then wrote to the German princes giving them an account of his actions (No. 33).

The pope behaved with complete propriety on this occasion, but the political effects of his decision were disastrous. Many of Henry's former supporters rallied to his cause again when they heard that he had made his peace with the pope. The princes who continued to oppose Henry thought that Gregory had betrayed them, and without consulting him elected a king of their own, Rudolph of Swabia. Gregory had not foreseen this turn of events and announced that he could not decide which of the two candidates to recognize without carefully considering their merits. He took three years to reach a decision, while a most savage and

destructive civil war raged in Germany between the partisans of the two claimants to the throne. At last the pope decided for Rudolph and in 1080 again declared Henry excommunicated and deposed from the kingship (No. 35). This second excommunication apparently had little of the moral effect of the first. Gregory was widely blamed in Germany for all the disasters of the civil war, and in any case his decision came too late. Henry had already gained the upper hand in the fighting, and a few months after the second papal sentence against him his rival Rudolph was defeated and killed.

Henry no longer thought of seeking a reconciliation with the pope. He summoned councils of German and Lombard bishops which again declared that Hildebrand was a usurper and no true pontiff. This time, moreover, they elected an antipope who called himself Clement III, and Henry marched on Rome to expel Gregory and to install his own pope there. The city held out against imperial sieges from 1081 to 1084, a most exceptional display of stamina and fortitude on the part of the citizens of medieval Rome. Gregory, more than most popes, commanded their loyalty and affection. But in the end Henry burst into the city and enthroned his antipope in St. Peter's while Gregory took refuge nearby in the impregnable fortress of St. Angelo.

During the siege of Rome Gregory had renewed the papal alliance with the Normans of south Italy. Now at last, too late, Robert Guiscard marched on the city to rescue his nominal overlord. The imperial armies withdrew without giving battle. The Normans, finding Rome at their mercy, fully lived up to their reputation for savage brigandage and looted the whole city, leaving a third of it razed by fire. Then they withdrew to the south, taking the pope with them. Gregory died among the Normans a few months later. His last words, it is said, were a bitter parody of Psalm 44: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity—and so I die in exile."

Two major problems of interpretation arise from the pope's letters concerning Henry IV. The first is to determine with precision just what claims Gregory did put forward in the temporal sphere. The second is to assess the quality of the arguments by which he supported those claims. It would seem clear from the very explicit wording of the decrees of 1076 and 1080 (Nos. 31, 35) that he did at least claim the right definitively to depose a king, but even this has been questioned. The main difficulty is that in several letters written after 1076 Gregory continued to use the royal title in mentioning his opponent, referring to him still as "King Henry." Probably no one will ever succeed in constructing an entirely coherent system of thought out of all of Gregory's scattered phrases. He was not an original thinker, still less a tidy-minded systematizer of abstract theories, and there is no consistency of usage in the references to Henry that occur in his letters. Sometimes he remembered to refer to his adversary as a "so-called king" or "tyrant," sometimes not. A recent



study has pointed out that Gregory did not consider either of his two decrees against Henry as final and irrevocable.<sup>1</sup> He never lost sight of the possibility that Henry might mend his ways, come to an agreement with the pope, and be reinstated in his kingship by general consent. This fact seems sufficient to account for Gregory's inconsistencies of terminology. The flat assertion of the *Dictatus Papae* that the pope had the power to depose emperors, taken together with the two deposition decrees themselves, seems to establish beyond all doubt that Gregory did claim the right to dethrone secular rulers.

As for the basis of that claim, we are fortunate in having the pope's own letter to Bishop Hermann of Metz in which he set out his views at length (No. 36). The letter consists in part of historical examples which Gregory thought, provided precedents for his treatment of Henry IV, and in part of theological argumentation explaining why the pope possessed a right to depose kings. The historical examples are not very convincing. There was in fact no clear precedent for the outright deposition of a king by a pope. It does not require the apparatus of modern scholarship to discern the fact; some of Gregory's contemporary critics were able to attack him effectively on this point. The theoretical sections of Gregory's letter are more interesting. They rely heavily on the doctrine proclaimed earlier by Cardinal Humbert that secular power was intrinsically inferior to spiritual. St. Ambrose, the pope declared, had held that the priestly office was as superior to the royal as gold to lead (a spurious text this, though Gregory believed it to be genuine). Pope Gelasius too had maintained that the priesthood was entrusted with a higher responsibility than the kingship. Finally, arguing from a kind of perverted Augustinism, Gregory contrasted secular rulers "who raised themselves above their fellows by pride, plunder, treachery, murder" with ecclesiastical ones who were divinely ordained successors to the priesthood of Christ.

There is a flaw in this whole line of argument that was evidently never apparent to Gregory himself. The assertion that ministers of religion have a higher responsibility than secular rulers does not necessarily imply that ecclesiastical officials can depose temporal ones. It is possible to maintain simply that the two structures of offices are separate from one another. Whatever Gelasius meant by his famous pronouncement, he certainly did not maintain that he as pope could depose the emperor Anastasius; nor did it ever occur to St. Ambrose that he could depose Theodosius; nor, we may well suppose, did any such idea ever occur to St. Peter himself in connection with the emperor Nero. Ambrose and Gelasius both took for granted the existence of two separate orders of government, each with its own defined sphere of action. But the pattern familiar to Gregory was that of a unitary church-state. When Gregory

<sup>1</sup> Karl F. Morrison, "Canossa: A Revision," *Traditio*, XVIII (1962), pp. 121-48.

read in his old texts of a superiority inherent in the spiritual power, he conceived of it as a superiority within a single, unified system of government, implying the hierarchical subordination of one power to the other. In this matter he seems to have been completely a captive of the conventional presuppositions of his own age.

Gregory did not attempt to work out in detail or to assert either in theory or practice all the logical implications of his belief in the intrinsic superiority of the spiritual power. Indeed, for a full understanding of his position it is as important to notice what he did not claim as what he did. Although he asserted a right to depose Henry he never suggested that the king's authority was in principle delegated to him by the pope; nor did he claim in practice the right to choose anyone he wished as king, but rather acknowledged that the right of election belonged primarily to the princes. Least of all did he ever suggest that he could himself assume the role of a king of Germany and so combine in his own person supreme spiritual and temporal power.

The same kinds of reservations occur also in the king's letters. Henry insisted that his authority came from God alone and that only God could depose him—certainly not the pope. But he also insisted that the two swords of spiritual and temporal government should remain separate from one another and did not claim both for himself. His assertion that Gregory alone was guilty of confusing the two orders of government may seem disingenuous since it was the king's insistence on his right to appoint bishops that caused the whole dispute. But Henry did not maintain, at least in principle, that all spiritual and temporal authority belonged to him as vicar of God. The assertions of both rulers thus fell far short of claims to absolute theocratic power.

### *The Beginning of the Dispute*

29. Letter of Gregory to Henry complaining of the king's mistreatment of the church (December 1075), trans. E. Emerton, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII* (New York, 1932), pp. 87-89.

Gregory, bishop, servant of God's servants, to King Henry, greeting and the apostolic benediction—but with the understanding that he obeys the Apostolic See as becomes a Christian king. . . .

We marvel exceedingly that you have sent us so many devoted letters and displayed such humility by the spoken words of your legates, calling yourself a son of our Holy Mother Church and subject to us in the faith, singular in affection, a leader in devotion, commending yourself with every expression of gentleness and reverence, and yet in action showing yourself most bitterly hostile to the canons and apostolic decrees in those

duties especially required by loyalty to the Church. Not to mention other cases: the way you have observed your promises in the Milan affair, made through your mother and through bishops, our colleagues, whom we sent to you, and what your intentions were in making them is evident to all. And now, heaping wounds upon wounds, you have handed over the sees of Fermo and Spoleto—if indeed a church may be given over by any human power—to persons entirely unknown to us, whereas it is not lawful to consecrate anyone except after probation and with due knowledge.

It would have been becoming to you, since you confess yourself to be a son of the Church, to give more respectful attention to the master of the Church, that is, to Peter, prince of the Apostles. To him, if you are of the Lord's flock, you have been committed for your pasture, since Christ said to him: "Peter, feed my sheep" (John 21:17), and again: "To thee are given the keys of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Now, while we, unworthy sinner that we are, stand in his place of power, still whatever you send to us, whether in writing or by word of mouth, he himself receives, and while we read what is written or hear the voice of those who speak, he discerns with subtle insight from what spirit the message comes. Wherefore Your Highness should beware lest any defect of will toward the Apostolic See be found in your words or in your messages and should pay due reverence, not to us but to Almighty God, in all matters touching the welfare of the Christian faith and the status of the Church. And this we say although our Lord deigned to declare: "He who heareth you heareth me; and he who despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke 10:16). . . .

This edict [against lay investiture], which some who place the honor of men above that of God call an intolerable burden, we, using the right word, call rather a truth and a light necessary for salvation, and we have given judgment that it is to be heartily accepted and obeyed, not only by you and your subjects but by all princes and peoples who confess and worship Christ—though it is our especial wish and would be especially fitting for you, that you should excel others in devotion to Christ as you are their superior in fame, in station and in valor.

Nevertheless, in order that these demands may not seem to you too burdensome or unfair we have sent you word by your own liegemen not to be troubled by this reform of an evil practice but to send us prudent and pious legates from your own people. If these can show in any reasonable way how we can moderate the decision of the holy fathers [at the council] saving the honor of the eternal king and without peril to our own soul, we will condescend to hear their counsel. It would in fact have been the fair thing for you, even if you had not been so graciously admonished, to make reasonable inquiry of us in what respect we had

offended you or assailed your honor, before you proceeded to violate the apostolic decrees. But how little you cared for our warnings or for doing right was shown by your later actions.

However, since the long-enduring patience of God summons you to improvement, we hope that with increase of understanding your heart and mind may be turned to obey the commands of God. We warn you with a father's love that you accept the rule of Christ, that you consider the peril of preferring your own honor to him, that you do not hamper by your actions the freedom of that Church which he deigned to bind to himself as a bride by a divine union, but, that she may increase as greatly as possible, you will begin to lend to Almighty God and to St. Peter, by whom also your own glory may merit increase, the aid of your valor by faithful devotion.

30. Letter of Henry to Gregory refusing to recognize him as pope (1076), trans. T. E. Mommsen and K. F. Morrison, *Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century* (New York, 1962), pp. 150-51. . .

Henry, King not by usurpation, but by the pious ordination of God, to Hildebrand, now not Pope, but false monk:

You have deserved such a salutation as this because of the confusion you have wrought; for you left untouched no order of the Church which you could make a sharer of confusion instead of honor, of malediction instead of benediction.

For to discuss a few outstanding points among many: Not only have you dared to touch the rectors of the holy Church—the archbishops, the bishops, and the priests, anointed of the Lord as they are—but you have trodden them under foot like slaves who know not what their lord may do. In crushing them you have gained for yourself acclaim from the mouth of the rabble. You have judged that all these know nothing, while you alone know everything. In any case, you have sedulously used this knowledge not for edification, but for destruction, so greatly that we may believe Saint Gregory, whose name you have arrogated to yourself, rightly made this prophesy of you when he said: "From the abundance of his subjects, the mind of the prelate is often exalted, and he thinks that he has more knowledge than anyone else, since he sees that he has more power than anyone else."

And we, indeed, bore with all these abuses, since we were eager to preserve the honor of the Apostolic See. But you construed our humility as fear, and so you were emboldened to rise up even against the royal power itself, granted to us by God. You dared to threaten to take the kingship away from us—as though we had received the kingship from you, as though kingship and empire were in your hand and not in the hand of God.



Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has called us to kingship, but has not called you to the priesthood. For you have risen by these steps: namely, by cunning, which the monastic profession abhors, to money; by money to favor; by favor to the sword. By the sword you have come to the throne of peace, and from the throne of peace you have destroyed the peace. You have armed subjects against their prelates; you who have not been called by God have taught that our bishops who have been called by God are to be spurned; you have usurped for laymen the bishops' ministry over priests, with the result that these laymen depose and condemn the very men whom the laymen themselves received as teachers from the hand of God, through the imposition of the hands of bishops.

You have also touched me, one who, though unworthy, has been anointed to kingship among the anointed. This wrong you have done to me, although as the tradition of the holy Fathers has taught, I am to be judged by God alone and am not to be deposed for any crime unless—may it never happen—I should deviate from the Faith. For the prudence of the holy bishops entrusted the judgment and the deposition even of Julian the Apostate not to themselves, but to God alone. The true pope Saint Peter also exclaims, "Fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17). You, however, since you do not fear God, dishonor me, ordained of Him.

Wherefore, when Saint Paul gave no quarter to an angel from heaven if the angel should preach heterodoxy, he did not except you who are now teaching heterodoxy throughout the earth. For he says, "If anyone, either I or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:18). Descend, therefore, condemned by this anathema and by the common judgment of all our bishops and of ourself. Relinquish the Apostolic See which you have arrogated. Let another mount the throne of Saint Peter, another who will not cloak violence with religion but who will teach the pure doctrine of Saint Peter.

I, Henry, King by the grace of God, together with all our bishops, say to you: Descend! Descend!

31. Deposition of Henry by Gregory (February 1076), trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 90-91.

O blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, mercifully incline thine ear, we pray, and hear me, thy servant, whom thou hast cherished from infancy and hast delivered until now from the hand of the wicked who have hated and still hate me for my loyalty to thee. Thou art my witness, as are also my Lady, the Mother of God, and the blessed Paul, thy brother among all the saints, that thy Holy Roman Church forced me against my will to be its ruler. I had no thought of ascending thy throne as a robber, nay, rather would I have chosen to end my life as a pilgrim than to seize upon thy place for earthly glory and by devices

of this world. Therefore, by thy favor, not by any works of mine, I believe that it is and has been thy will, that the Christian people especially committed to thee should render obedience to me thy especially constituted representative. To me is given by thy grace the power of binding and loosing in Heaven and upon earth.

Wherefore, relying upon this commission, and for the honor and defense of thy Church, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through thy power and authority, I deprive King Henry, son of the emperor Henry, who has rebelled against thy Church with unheard-of audacity, of the government over the whole kingdom of Germany and Italy, and I release all Christian men from the allegiance which they have sworn or may swear to him, and I forbid anyone to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who seeks to diminish the glory of thy Church should lose the glory which he seems to have.

And, since he has refused to obey as a Christian should or to return to the God whom he has abandoned by taking part with excommunicated persons, has spurned my warnings which I gave him for his soul's welfare, as thou knowest, and has separated himself from thy Church and tried to rend it asunder, I bind him in the bonds of anathema in thy stead and I bind him thus as commissioned by thee, that the nations may know and be convinced that thou art Peter and that upon thy rock the son of the living God has built his Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

32. Letter of Henry to the German bishops (1076), trans. T. E. Mommsen and K. F. Morrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-54.

... Let your good will stand by us, therefore, together with your power at this opportune time, the good will for which not only our need is earnestly longing, but also that of all your fellow bishops and brethren, nay rather, that of the whole oppressed Church. Certainly, you are not ignorant of this oppression. Only see to it that you do not withdraw assistance from the oppressed Church, but rather that you give your sympathy to the kingship and to the priesthood. Just as hitherto the Church was exalted by each of these offices, so now, alas, it is laid low, bereft of each; since one man has arrogated both for himself, he has injured both, and he who has neither wanted nor was able to be of benefit in either has been useless in each.

To keep you in suspense no longer as to the name of the man under discussion, learn of whom we speak: it is the monk Hildebrand (a monk indeed in habit), so-called pope who, as you yourself know clearly, presides in the Apostolic See not with the care of a pastor but with the violence of a usurper and from the throne of peace dissolves the bond of the one catholic peace. To cite a few things among many: without God's knowledge he has usurped for himself the kingship and the

priesthood. In this deed he held in contempt the pious ordinance of God, which especially commanded these two—namely, the kingship and the priesthood—should remain, not as one entity, but as two. In his Passion, the Savior Himself meant the figurative sufficiency of the two swords to be understood in this way: When it was said to him, "Lord, behold there are two swords here," He answered, "It is enough" (Luke 22:38), signifying by this sufficient duality, that the spiritual and the carnal swords are to be used in the Church and that by them every hurtful thing is to be cut off. That is to say, He was teaching that every man is constrained by the priestly sword to obey the king as the representative of God but by the kingly sword both to repel enemies of Christ outside and to obey the priesthood within. So in charity the province of one extends into the other, as long as neither the kingship is deprived of honor by the priesthood nor the priesthood is deprived of honor by the kingship. You yourself have found out, if you have wanted to discover it, how the Hildebrandine madness has confounded this ordinance of God; for in his judgment, no one may be a priest unless he begs that [honor] from his arrogance. He has also striven to deprive me of the kingship—me whom God has called to the kingship (God, however, has not called him to the priesthood)—since he saw that I wished to hold my royal power from God and not from him and since he himself had not constituted me as king. And further, he threatened to deprive me of kingship and life, neither of which he had bestowed. . . .

### *Canossa and the Aftermath*

33. Letter of Gregory to the German princes giving an account of the incident at Canossa (January 1077), trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 111-12.

Whereas, for love of justice you have made common cause with us and taken the same risks in the warfare of Christian service, we have taken special care to send you this accurate account of the king's penitential humiliation, his absolution and the course of the whole affair from his entrance into Italy to the present time.

According to the arrangement made with the legates sent to us by you we came to Lombardy about twenty days before the date at which some of your leaders were to meet us at the pass and waited for their arrival to enable us to cross over into that region. But when the time had elapsed and we were told that on account of the troublous times—as indeed we well believe—no escort could be sent to us, [and] having no other way of coming to you, we were in no little anxiety as to what was our best course to take.

Meanwhile we received certain information that the king was on the way to us. Before he entered Italy he sent us word that he would make satisfaction to God and St. Peter and offered to amend his way of life and to continue obedient to us, provided only that he should obtain from us absolution and the apostolic blessing. For a long time we delayed our reply and held long consultations, reproaching him bitterly through messengers back and forth for his outrageous conduct, until finally, of his own accord and without any show of hostility or defiance, he came with a few followers to the fortress of Canossa where we were staying. There, on three successive days, standing before the castle gate, laying aside all royal insignia, barefooted and in coarse attire, he ceased not with many tears to beseech the apostolic help and comfort until all who were present or who had heard the story were so moved by pity and compassion that they pleaded his cause with prayers and tears. All marveled at our unwonted severity, and some even cried out that we were showing, not the seriousness of apostolic authority, but rather the cruelty of a savage tyrant.

At last, overcome by his persistent show of penitence and the urgency of all present, we released him from the bonds of anathema and received him into the grace of Holy Mother Church, accepting from him the guarantees described below. . . . And now that these matters have been arranged, we desire to come over into your country at the first opportunity, that with God's help we may more fully establish all matters pertaining to the peace of the Church and the good order of the land. For we wish you clearly to understand that, as you may see in the written guarantees, the whole negotiation is held in suspense, so that our coming and your unanimous consent are in the highest degree necessary. Strive, therefore, all of you, as you love justice, to hold in good faith the obligations into which you have entered. Remember that we have not bound ourselves to the king in any way except by frank statement—as our custom is—that he may expect our aid for his safety and his honor, whether through justice or through mercy, and without peril to his soul or to our own

34. Henry's oath at Canossa (January 1077), trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 112-13.

I, Henry, king, within the term which our lord Pope Gregory shall fix, will either give satisfaction according to his decision, in regard to the discontent and discord for which the archbishops, bishops, dukes, counts and other princes of the kingdom of Germany are accusing me, or I will make an agreement according to his advice—unless some positive hindrance shall prevent him or myself—and when this is done I will be prepared to carry it out.

*Item:* If the same lord Pope Gregory shall desire to go beyond the



mountains or elsewhere he shall be safe, so far as I and all whom I can constrain are concerned, from all injury to life or limb and from capture—both he himself and all who are in his company or who are sent out by him or who may come to him from any place whatsoever—in coming, remaining or returning. Nor shall he with my consent suffer any hindrance contrary to his honor; and if anyone shall offer such hindrance, I will come to his assistance with all my power.

35. The second deposition of Henry (March 1080), trans. E. Emerson, *Correspondence*, pp. 149-52.

O blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, and thou, Paul, teacher of the Gentiles, deign, I pray, to incline your ears to me and mercifully to hear my prayer. Ye who are disciples and lovers of the truth, aid me to tell the truth to you, freed from all falsehood so hateful to you, that my brethren may be more united with me and may know and understand that through faith in you, next to God and his mother Mary, ever virgin, I resist the wicked and give aid to those who are loyal to you. For you know that I entered holy orders not of my own pleasure, and that I accompanied the lord Pope Gregory [VI] unwillingly beyond the mountains, but still more unwillingly returned with my master Pope Leo [IX] to your special church, where I have served you as best I could; and then most unwillingly and unworthy as I was, to my great grief and with groans and lamentations I was set upon your throne.

I say this because it is not I that have chosen you, but you that have chosen me and laid upon me the heavy burden of your Church. And because you have commanded me to go up into a high mountain and denounce their crimes to the people of God and their sins to the sons of the Church, those limbs of the Devil have begun to rise up against me and have dared to lay hands upon me even unto blood.

The kings of the earth, and the princes, both secular and clerical, have risen up, courtiers and commons have taken counsel together against the Lord, and against you, his anointed, saying, "Let us burst their chains and throw off their yoke," and they have striven utterly to overwhelm me with death or banishment.

Among these especially Henry, whom they call "king," son of the emperor Henry, has raised his heel against your Church in conspiracy with many bishops, as well ultramontanes as Italians, striving to bring it under his control by overturning me. Your authority withstood his insolence and your power defeated it. In confusion and humiliation he came to me in Lombardy begging for release from his excommunication. And when I had witnessed his humiliation and after he had given many promises to reform his way of life, I restored him to communion only,

but did not reinstate him in the royal power from which I had deposed him in a Roman synod. Nor did I order that the allegiance of all who had taken oath to him or should do so in future, from which I had released them all at that same synod, should be renewed. I held this subject in reserve in order that I might do justice as between him and the ultramontane bishops and princes, who in obedience to your Church had stood out against him, and that I might establish peace amongst them, as Henry himself had promised me to do on his oath and by the word of two bishops.

The above-mentioned ultramontane bishops and princes, hearing that he had not kept faith with me, and, as it were, in despair about him, chose Duke Rudolf for their king, without my approval as you will bear witness. Then King Rudolf immediately sent an envoy to me declaring that he had assumed the government of the kingdom under compulsion, but nevertheless was prepared to obey me in every way. And to make this the more acceptable, from that time on he repeatedly sent me the same declaration, adding that he would confirm his promise by sending as hostages his own son and the son of his liegeman Bertaldus [of Zähringen].

Meanwhile Henry was beginning to beg for my help against Rudolf. I replied that I would gladly take action after I had heard both sides in order that I might learn which was the more in accord with what was right. But he, thinking himself strong enough to overcome his opponent, paid no attention to my reply. Later, however, as he saw that he could not do as he had hoped, the two bishops of Verdun and Osnabrück came to Rome on the part of his followers and at a synod requested me in behalf of Henry to do what was right by him. The envoys of Rudolf made the same request. Finally, by divine inspiration as I believe, I decreed at the same synod that a conference should be held beyond the mountains that peace might be restored there, or else that he should be recognized as king whose cause seemed to be the more just. For I, as you, my fathers and my lords, will bear me witness, have never to the present day taken either side except as justice required. And because I reckoned that the wrong side would not be willing to have a conference in which justice was to prevail, I excommunicated and placed under the bonds of anathema all persons, whether of a king or a duke or a bishop or of any vassal, who should try by any device to prevent the holding of a conference. But the aforesaid Henry together with his supporters, not fearing the perils of disobedience—which is the crime of idolatry—incur excommunication by preventing a conference and bound himself in the bonds of anathema and caused a great multitude of Christians to be delivered to death, churches to be scattered abroad and almost the whole kingdom of the Germans to be desolated.

Wherefore, trusting in the justice and mercy of God and of his most worshipful mother Mary, ever virgin, and relying upon your authority, I place the aforesaid Henry, whom they call "king," and all his supporters under excommunication and bind them with the chains of anathema. And again forbidding him in the name of Almighty God and of yourselves to govern in Germany and Italy, I take from him all royal power and state. I forbid all Christians to obey him as king, and I release all who have made or shall make oath to him as king from the obligation of their oath. May Henry and his supporters never, so long as they may live, be able to win victory in any encounter of arms. But that Rudolf, whom the Germans have chosen for their king in loyalty to you, may rule and protect the kingdom of the Germans, I grant and allow in your name. And relying upon your assurance, I grant also to all his faithful adherents absolution of all their sins and your blessing in this life and the life to come. For as Henry is justly cast down from the royal dignity for his insolence, his disobedience and his deceit, so Rudolf, for his humility, his obedience and his truthfulness is granted the power and the dignity of kingship.

And now, most holy fathers and princes, I pray you to take such action that the whole world may know and understand that if you are able to bind and loose in Heaven, you are able also on earth to grant and to take away from everyone according to his deserts empires, kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, marquisates, earldoms and the property of all men. You have often taken patriarchates, primacies, archbishoprics and bishoprics away from wicked and unworthy men and have granted them to pious holders. And if you can give judgment in spiritual things, what may we not believe as to your power over secular things? Or, if you can judge the angels who guide all haughty princes, what can you [not] do to their servants? Now let kings and all princes of the earth learn how great is your power, and let them fear to neglect the commands of your Church. And against the aforesaid Henry send forth your judgment so swiftly that all men may know that he falls and is overwhelmed, not by chance but by your power—and would that it were to repentance, that his soul be saved in the day of the Lord!

### *Gregory's Defense of His Policy*

96. Letter of Gregory to Bishop Hermann of Metz (March 1081), trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 166-75.

... You ask us to fortify you against the madness of those who babble with accursed tongues about the authority of the Holy Apostolic See not being able to excommunicate King Henry as one

who despises the law of Christ, a destroyer of churches and of the empire, a promoter and partner of heresies, nor to release anyone from his oath of fidelity to him; but it has not seemed necessary to reply to this request, seeing that so many and such convincing proofs are to be found in Holy Scripture. Nor do we believe that those who abuse and contradict the truth to their utter damnation do this as much from ignorance as from wretched and desperate folly. And no wonder! It is ever the way of the wicked to protect their own iniquities by calling upon others like themselves; for they think it of no account to incur the penalty of falsehood.

To cite but a few out of the multitude of proofs: Who does not remember the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Are kings excepted here? Or are they not of the sheep which the Son of God committed to St. Peter? Who, I ask, thinks himself excluded from this universal grant of the power of binding and loosing to St. Peter unless, perchance, that unhappy man who, being unwilling to bear the yoke of the Lord, subjects himself to the burden of the Devil and refuses to be numbered in the flock of Christ? His wretched liberty shall profit him nothing; for if he shakes off from his proud neck the power divinely granted to Peter, so much the heavier shall it be for him in the day of judgment. . . .

Thus Pope Gelasius, writing to the emperor Anastasius, gave him these instructions as to the right theory of the principate of the Holy and Apostolic See, based upon divine authority: "Although it is fitting that all the faithful should submit themselves to all priests who perform their sacred functions properly, how much the more should they accept the judgment of that prelate who has been appointed by the supreme divine ruler to be superior to all priests and whom the loyalty of the whole later Church has recognized as such. Your Wisdom sees plainly that no human capacity whatsoever can equal that of him whom the word of Christ raised above all others and whom the reverend Church has always confessed and still devotedly holds as its Head."

So also Pope Julius, writing to the eastern bishops in regard to the powers of the same Holy and Apostolic See, says: "You ought, my brethren, to have spoken carefully and not ironically of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ addressed her respectfully, saying, 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' For it has the power, granted by a unique privilege, of opening and shutting the gates of the celestial kingdom to whom it will." To whom, then, the power of open-



ing and closing Heaven is given, shall he not be able to judge the earth? God forbid! Do you remember what the most blessed Apostle Paul says: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3).

So Pope Gregory declared that kings who dared to disobey the orders of the Apostolic See should forfeit their office. He wrote to a certain senator and abbot in these words: "If any king, priest, judge or secular person shall disregard this decree of ours and act contrary to it, he shall be deprived of his power and his office and shall learn that he stands condemned at the bar of God for the wrong that he has done. And unless he shall restore what he has wrongfully taken and shall have done fitting penance for his unlawful acts he shall be excluded from the sacred body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and at the last judgment shall receive condign punishment." Now then, if the blessed Gregory, most gentle of doctors, decreed that kings who should disobey his orders about a hospital for strangers should be not only deposed but excommunicated and condemned in the last judgment, how can anyone blame us for deposing and excommunicating Henry, who not only disregards apostolic judgments, but so far as in him lies tramples upon his mother the Church, basely plunders the whole kingdom and destroys its churches—unless indeed it were one who is a man of his own kind?

As we know also through the teaching of St. Peter in his letter touching the ordination of Clement, where he says: "If any one were friend to those with whom he [Clement] is not on speaking terms, that man is among those who would like to destroy the Church of God and, while he seems to be with us in the body, he is against us in mind and heart, and he is a far worse enemy than those who are without and are openly hostile. For he, under the forms of friendship, acts as an enemy and scatters and lays waste the Church." Consider then, my best beloved, if he passes so severe a judgment upon him who associates himself with those whom the pope opposes on account of their actions, with what severity he condemns the man himself to whom the pope is thus opposed.

But now, to return to our point: Is not a sovereignty invented by men of this world who were ignorant of God subject to that which the providence of Almighty God established for his own glory and graciously bestowed upon the world? The Son of God we believe to be God and man, sitting at the right hand of the Father as High Priest, head of all priests and ever making intercession for us. He despised the kingdom of this world wherein the sons of this world puff themselves up and offered himself as a sacrifice upon the cross.

Who does not know that kings and princes derive their origin from men ignorant of God who raised themselves above their fellows by pride, plunder, treachery, murder—in short, by every kind of crime—at the

instigation of the Devil, the prince of this world, men blind with greed and intolerable in their audacity? If, then, they strive to bend the priests of God to their will, to whom may they more properly be compared than to him who is chief over all the sons of pride? For he, tempting our High Priest, head of all priests, son of the Most High, offering him all the kingdoms of this world, said: "All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matthew 4:9).

Does anyone doubt that the priests of Christ are to be considered as fathers and masters of kings and princes and of all believers? Would it not be regarded as pitiable madness if a son should try to rule his father or a pupil his master and to bind with unjust obligations the one through whom he expects to be bound or loosed, not only on earth but also in heaven? Evidently recognizing this, the emperor Constantine the Great, lord over all kings and princes throughout almost the entire earth, as St. Gregory relates in his letter to the emperor Mauritius, at the holy synod of Nicaea took his place below all the bishops and did not venture to pass any judgment upon them but, even addressing them as gods, felt that they ought not to be subject to his judgment but that he ought to be bound by their decisions.

Pope Gelasius, urging upon the emperor Anastasius not to feel himself wronged by the truth that was called to his attention said: "There are two powers, O august Emperor, by which the world is governed, the sacred authority of the priesthood and the power of kings. Of these the priestly is by so much the greater as they will have to answer for kings themselves in the day of divine judgment"; and a little further: "Know that you are subject to their judgment, not that they are to be subjected to your will."

In reliance upon such declarations and such authorities, many prelates have excommunicated kings or emperors. If you ask for illustrations: Pope Innocent excommunicated the emperor Arcadius because he consented to the expulsion of St. John Chrysostom from his office. Another Roman pontiff [Zachary] deposed a king of the Franks [Childeric], not so much on account of his evil deeds as because he was not equal to so great an office, and set in his place Pippin, father of the emperor Charles the Great, releasing all the Franks from the oath of fealty which they had sworn to him. And this is often done by Holy Church when it absolves fighting men from their oaths to bishops who have been deposed by apostolic authority. So St. Ambrose, a holy man but not bishop of the whole Church, excommunicated the emperor Theodosius the Great for a fault which did not seem to other prelates so very grave and excluded him from the Church. He also shows in his writings that the priestly office is as much superior to royal power as gold is more precious than lead. He says: "The honor and dignity of bishops admit of no comparison. If you liken them to the splendor of kings and the diadem of princes, these are as lead compared to the

glitter of gold. You see the necks of kings and princes bowed to the knees of priests, and by the kissing of hands they believe that they share the benefit of their prayers." And again: "Know that we have said all this in order to show that there is nothing in this world more excellent than a priest or more lofty than a bishop."

Your Fraternity should remember also that greater power is granted to an exorcist when he is made a spiritual emperor for the casting out of devils, than can be conferred upon any layman for the purpose of earthly dominion. All kings and princes of this earth who live not piously and in their deeds show not a becoming fear of God are ruled by demons and are sunk in miserable slavery. Such men desire to rule, not guided by the love of God, as priests are, for the glory of God and the profit of human souls, but to display their intolerable pride and to satisfy the lusts of their mind. Of these St. Augustine says in the first book of his Christian doctrine: "He who tries to rule over men—who are by nature equal to him—acts with intolerable pride." Now if exorcists have power over demons, as we have said, how much more over those who are subject to demons and are limbs of demons! And if exorcists are superior to these, how much more are priests superior to them!

Furthermore, every Christian king when he approaches his end asks the aid of a priest as a miserable suppliant that he may escape the prison of hell, may pass from darkness into light and may appear at the judgment seat of God freed from the bonds of sin. But who, layman or priest, in his last moments has ever asked the help of any earthly king for the safety of his soul? And what king or emperor has power through his office to snatch any Christian from the might of the Devil by the sacred rite of baptism, to confirm him among the sons of God and to fortify him by the holy chrism? Or—and this is the greatest thing in the Christian religion—who among them is able by his own word to create the body and blood of the Lord? or to whom among them is given the power to bind and loose in Heaven and upon earth? From this it is apparent how greatly superior in power is the priestly dignity.

Or who of them is able to ordain any clergyman in the Holy Church—much less to depose him for any fault? For bishops, while they may ordain other bishops, may in no wise depose them except by authority of the Apostolic See. How, then, can even the most slightly informed person doubt that priests are higher than kings? But if kings are to be judged by priests for their sins, by whom can they more properly be judged than by the Roman pontiff?

In short, all good Christians, whosoever they may be, are more properly to be called kings than are evil princes; for the former, seeking the glory of God, rule themselves rigorously; but the latter, seeking their own rather than the things that are of God, being enemies to

themselves, oppress others tyrannically. The former are the body of the true Christ; the latter, the body of the Devil. The former rule themselves that they may reign forever with the supreme ruler. The power of the latter brings it to pass that they perish in eternal damnation with the prince of darkness who is king over all the sons of pride. . . .

Let kings and princes fear lest the higher they are raised above their fellows in this life, the deeper they may be plunged in everlasting fire. Wherefore it is written: "The mighty shall suffer mighty torments" (Wisdom 6:7). They shall render unto God an account for all men subject to their rule. But if it is no small labor for the pious individual to guard his own soul, what a task is laid upon princes in the care of so many thousands of souls! And if Holy Church imposes a heavy penalty upon him who takes a single human life, what shall be done to those who send many thousands to death for the glory of this world? These, although they say with their lips, *mea culpa*, for the slaughter of many, yet in their hearts they rejoice at the increase of their glory and neither repent of what they have done nor regret that they have sent their brothers into the world below. So that, since they do not repent with all their hearts and will not restore what they have gained by human bloodshed, their penitence before God remains without the fruits of a true repentance.

Wherefore they ought greatly to fear, and they should frequently be reminded that, as we have said, since the beginning of the world and throughout the kingdoms of the earth very few kings of saintly life can be found out of an innumerable multitude, whereas in one single chair of successive bishops—the Roman—from the time of the blessed Apostle Peter nearly a hundred are counted among the holiest of men. How can this be, except because the kings and princes of the earth, seduced by empty glory, prefer their own interests to the things of the Spirit, whereas pious pontiffs, despising vainglory, set the things of God above the things of the flesh. The former readily punish offenses against themselves but are not troubled by offenses against God; the latter quickly forgive those who sin against them but do not easily pardon offenders against God. The former, far too much given to worldly affairs, think little of spiritual things; the latter, dwelling eagerly upon heavenly subjects, despise the things of this world.

All Christians, therefore, who desire to reign with Christ are to be warned not to reign through ambition for worldly power. They are to keep in mind the admonition of that most holy pope Gregory in his book on the pastoral office: "Of all these things what is to be followed, what held fast, except that the man strong in virtue shall come to his office under compulsion? Let him who is without virtue not come to it even though he be urged thereto." If, then, men who fear God come under compulsion with fear and trembling to the Apostolic See where



those who are properly ordained become stronger through the merits of the blessed Apostle Peter, with what awe and hesitation should men like Saul and David become worse! What we have said above is thus stated in the decrees of the blessed pope Symmachus—though we have learned it by experience: "He, that is St. Peter, transmitted to his successors an unfailing endowment of merit together with an inheritance of innocence"; and again: "For who can doubt that he is holy who is raised to the height of such an office, in which if he is lacking in virtue acquired by his own merits, that which is handed down from his predecessor is sufficient. For either he [Peter] raises men of distinction to bear this burden or he glorifies them after they are raised up."

Wherefore let those whom Holy Church, of its own will and with deliberate judgment, not for fleeting glory but for the welfare of multitudes, has called to royal or imperial rule—let them be obedient and ever mindful of the blessed Gregory's declaration in that same pastoral treatise: "When a man disdains to be the equal of his fellow men, he becomes like an apostate angel. Thus Saul, after his period of humility, swollen with pride, ran into excess of power. He was raised in humility, but rejected in his pride, as God bore witness, saying: 'Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?' " (1 Kings 15:17) and again: "I marvel how, when he was little to himself he was great before God, but when he seemed great to himself he was little before God." Let them watch and remember what God says in the Gospel: "I seek not my own glory," (John 8:50), and, "He who would be first among you, let him be the servant of all" (Mark 10:44). Let them ever place the honor of God above their own; let them embrace justice and maintain it by preserving to everyone his right; let them not enter into the counsels of the ungodly, but cling to those of religion with all their hearts. Let them not seek to make Holy Church their maidservant or their subject, but recognizing priests, the eyes of God, as their masters and fathers, strive to do them becoming honor.

If we are commanded to honor our fathers and mothers in the flesh, how much more our spiritual parents! If he that curseth his father or his mother shall be put to death, what does he deserve who curses his spiritual father or mother? Let not princes, led astray by carnal affection, set their own sons over that flock for whom Christ shed his blood if a better and more suitable man can be found. By thus loving their own son more than God they bring the greatest evils upon the Church. For it is evident that he who fails to provide to the best of his ability so great and necessary an advantage for our holy mother, the Church, does not love God and his neighbor as befits a Christian man. If this one virtue of charity be wanting, then whatever of good the man may do will lack all saving grace.

But if they do these things in humility, keeping their love for God and their neighbor as they ought, they may count upon the mercy of him who said: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart" (Matthew 11:29). If they humbly imitate him, they shall pass from their servile and transient reign into the kingdom of eternal liberty.

(In the last year of his life Gregory was still protesting that he had sought only to defend the Church.)

36a. Letter of Gregory to all the faithful (1084), ed. E. Caspar. *MGH Epistolae Selectae* II (1920-23), p. 575.

... Ever since by divine providence Mother Church raised me, all unworthy and God knows unwilling, to the apostolic throne, I have been concerned above all that Holy Church, the bride of God, our lady and mother, should return to her own proper dignity and remain free, chaste, and catholic. But because these things were greatly displeasing to the ancient enemy, he armed his members against us to defeat them. Thus he has achieved more against us—or rather against the Apostolic See—than he has been able to achieve since the time of the emperor Constantine the Great. And no wonder! for the nearer the time of Antichrist approaches the more he strives to destroy the Christian faith.

So now, my dearly beloved brothers, listen carefully to what I say. Throughout the whole world all who bear the name of Christian and truly understand the Christian faith know and believe that blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, is the father of all Christians and their chief pastor after Christ, and that the Holy Roman Church is mother and mistress of all the churches. If therefore you believe this and hold it without a doubt I, as your brother and unworthy master, ask and command you by Almighty God to help and succor these your father and mother if you wish to gain through them absolution of all your sins, and blessing and grace in this world and the world to come. May Almighty God, from whom all good things proceed, enlighten your minds and make them grow in love of God and of your neighbor, so that you may deserve by your steady devotion to have your father and mother become your debtors, and enter without shame into their fellowship.

#### 4. The War of Propaganda

The conflict between Gregory VII and Henry IV stimulated an unprecedented outburst of polemical pamphleteering, a new departure in the medieval tradition of political thought.

The initial exchanges between Gregory and Henry had confused rather than clarified the issues between them. From the reformers' point of view the real need was to discriminate between the spheres of spiritual and temporal authority so clearly as to end the practice of kings arbitrarily appointing bishops and bestowing on them the symbols of their spiritual office. But Gregory found it impossible to conceive of any effective separation between church and state and by his claim to depose a king laid himself open to the charge of seeking supreme temporal and spiritual power for himself. The essential interest of the king was to retain an effective voice in the selection of bishops, since these officials played a vital role in the civil government of his kingdom. His right to make such appointments had formerly been based on the theocratic assumption that the royal office was itself an ecclesiastical dignity, that the king was head of the church, but Henry had largely abandoned this ground when he insisted on a separation of priesthood and kingship in the course of his argument against Gregory. There was a great need then for intellectuals to reconsider the theoretical issues that lay behind the open strife of pope and king.

A striking feature of the whole debate is that hardly any of the major participants propounded really extreme doctrines of papal or royal theocracy. The one who came closest to doing so was the anonymous royalist author of the so-called York Tractates (No. 37), who wrote in England about 1100, and even he started out from the Gelasian doctrine that sacerdotal authority and royal power were both necessary for the governance of the Christian people. Having stated the principle, however, he certainly succeeded in developing it in a way that very thoroughly subordinated the priestly office to the royal one. It is often pointed out that the "Anonymous of York" held a theory of "sacral kingship" that was already somewhat archaic in his own day, and it is true that for the rest of the Middle Ages kings chose to defend their authority with arguments that were more legalistic and less theological.

But it must also be remembered that a belief in the supernatural authority of kings remained widespread throughout Europe for centuries after 1100, and, indeed, the existence of such a trend of thought contributed significantly to the eventual defeat of the more extreme political claims of the papacy. The doctrine of royal theocracy cannot be dismissed as an aberration of the Dark Ages but was rather a continuing element in European political theory.

More typical examples of eleventh-century polemical writers are Manegold of Lautenbach (No. 38), a vehement supporter of Gregory VII, and the author of the *Liber de Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda* (No. 39), an adherent of the imperial party. Both addressed themselves with particular care to the question whether a pope could depose a king. Manegold built up an impressive picture of the supreme jurisdiction that inhered in the Roman church as the see of St. Peter and gave a wholly approving account of the proceedings in Rome when Pope Gregory deprived Henry IV of his royal office. But he did not conclude his argument with an assertion that the pope possessed a superior temporal jurisdiction which empowered him to depose a king. Instead his thought moved off in a quite different direction and he propounded a primitive but quite explicit theory of social contract. The king's power was derived from the people, he argued, and they chose him with the understanding that he would rule justly. If a king became a tyrant, he broke the contract that bound him to the people and so by his own action relinquished the royal dignity and released the people from all obligations of obedience to him. Manegold did not suggest at all that the king's power was derived from the pope and, indeed, the whole argument implied that any sentence pronounced by the pope could only be a declaratory one.

The imperialist argument in the *Liber de Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda* was even more explicitly dualistic. The author not only quoted Gelasius but insisted that the pope's teaching required a real division of authority between spiritual and temporal rulers. The special interest of his work is that he took up all the historical arguments that Gregory had advanced in his letter to Hermann of Metz and refuted them one by one in a very effective rebuttal of a large part of Gregory's case.

Although the problem of Henry's deposition was obviously of the highest importance, the most valuable contribution that 11th century intellectuals could make to the resolution of the whole conflict was something other than this scoring of debating points about the licitness or otherwise of the pope's action. There was also an urgent need for a new analysis of the whole act of royal investiture which would start out from the premise that spiritual office and temporal jurisdiction were two different things, conceptually separable from one another. Ivo of Chartres, a French canonist of massive learning, took a major step in this direction in a pungent and penetrating letter (1097) to Arch-



bishop Hugh of Lyons, the papal legate in France (No. 40). Ivo was writing to defend one Daimbert, archbishop of Sens, who had been attacked by Hugh for accepting investiture from the king. Ivo was himself a supporter of the reform movement, but he suggested that Hugh and the other papal reformers were losing sight of the essential goal of their own program. "You strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," he wrote tartly. The one really important thing according to Ivo was that bishops should be chosen by canonical election and without simony. The king obviously could not bestow spiritual office; on the other hand, he did have a right to bestow the temporal possessions of the bishopric on the chosen candidate. It was of no great significance, Ivo thought, whether the king performed this legitimate function by conferring an episcopal staff or by some other symbolic ceremony.

It is not quite true—as has sometimes been maintained—that Ivo was the first to suggest the solution to the investiture contest that eventually came to be accepted in practice. His distinction between the spiritual office and the temporal possessions of a bishop was indeed all-important, but the episcopal staff was too widely regarded as a symbol of spiritual office for the reformers ever to acquiesce in its continued use by secular rulers. A solution more acceptable to them was put forward by Hugh of Fleury, a moderate royalist who wrote a few years after Ivo (No. 41). The king, he suggested, had the right to assent to an episcopal election on behalf of the layfolk, whose acceptance of a newly elected bishop was part of the established canonical procedure, and a right to invest the new bishop with the temporal lands and jurisdictions pertaining to his see. But he ought not to use the disputed symbols of staff and ring in doing so. The staff and ring were rather to be bestowed by the consecrating archbishop, since they symbolized the "care of souls." The temporalities of the see were to be conferred by the king in some other fashion. In this way, Hugh concluded, the command of Christ would be fulfilled to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

### *The "Anonymous of York"*

37. *Tractatus Eboracenses* (c. 1100), ed. H. Boehmer, *MGH Libelli de Lite*, III (Hanover, 1897), pp. 663, 667, 679.

By divine authority and by institution of the holy fathers kings are ordained in the church of God and are consecrated at the altar with sacred unction and benediction, that they may have the power of ruling the people of the Lord, the Christian people, which is the holy church of God—a chosen race, a holy race, a purchased people

(cf. 1 Peter 2:9). What else indeed is the church but the congregation of faithful Christians living together in the house of Christ in charity and in the one faith? Therefore kings receive in their consecration the power to rule this church, that they may rule it and strengthen it in judgement and justice and administer it in accordance with the discipline of the Christian law; for they reign in the church, which is the kingdom of God, and reign together with Christ, in order that they may rule, protect and defend it. To reign is to rule the subjects well and to serve God with fear. The episcopal order too is instituted and consecrated with sacred unction and benediction, that it also may rule the holy church according to the form of doctrine given to it by God. Accordingly the blessed pope Gelasius speaks thus, "Two there are by which this world is chiefly ruled, the priestly authority and the royal power." By "this world" he means the holy church, which is a sojourner in this world. In this world, then, the priestly authority and the royal power hold the principate of sacred government. Some seek to divide the principate in this fashion, saying that the priesthood has the principate of ruling souls, the king that of ruling bodies, as if souls could be ruled without bodies and bodies without souls, which cannot be done by any means. For if bodies are well ruled it is necessary that souls are well ruled too and vice versa, since both are ruled for this purpose, that at the resurrection they may both be saved together.

Christ, God and man, is the true and highest king and priest. But he is king from the eternity of his divinity, not made, not created, not below or separate from the Father, but equal to and one with the Father. He is priest from his assumption of humanity, made and created according to the order of Melchisedech and so less than the Father. As king he created all things and rules and preserves all things, governing both men and angels. As priest he only redeemed men that they might reign with him. This is the sole reason why he was made priest, to offer himself as a sacrifice so that men might be made sharers of his kingdom and of his royal power. For everywhere in the Scriptures he promised the kingdom of heaven to the faithful but nowhere the priesthood. It is clear, therefore, that in Christ the royal power is greater and higher than the priestly in proportion as his divinity is greater and higher than his humanity. Hence some hold that among men likewise the royal power is greater and higher than the priestly and the king greater and higher than the priest, as being an imitation and emulation of the better and higher nature or power of Christ. And so it is not contrary to the justice of God, they say, if the sacerdotal dignity is instituted by the royal or subjected to it, for so it was done in Christ; he was made a priest by his royal power and was subjected to the Father in his priestly power while he was equal to him in his royal power. . . .

But now let us see what the king confers on a man who is to be

created bishop by the prerogative of the pastoral staff. I think that he does not confer the order or right of priesthood, but what pertains to his own right and to the rule of worldly things, namely the lordship and guardianship of the things of the church, and the power of ruling the people of God, which is the temple of the living God, and the holy church, the bride of Christ our Lord. That a bishop has lordship over earthly things, that is, possession of estates, by the law of kings is stated by Augustine at the end of his sixth treatise on John where he says "Each man possesses all he does possess by human law for, by divine law, 'the Lord's is the earth and the fullness thereof'. . . . By human law and therefore by the law of emperors. . . ."

No one should take precedence by right over [the king], who is blessed with so many and such great blessings, who is consecrated and made like unto God with so many and such great sacraments, for no one is consecrated and made like God with more or greater sacraments than he is, nor indeed with equivalent ones, and so no one is co-equal with him. Therefore he is not to be called a layman, for he is the anointed of the Lord, a God through grace, the supreme ruler, supreme shepherd, master, defender and instructor of holy church, lord over his brothers, worthy to be adored by all men, chief and highest prelate. It is not to be said that he is inferior to the bishop because the bishop consecrates him, for it often happens that lesser men consecrate a greater, inferiors their superior, as when the cardinals consecrate a pope or suffragan bishops a metropolitan. This can be so because they are not the authors of the consecration but ministers. God makes the sacrament efficacious; they administer it.

### *Manegold of Lautenbach*

38. *Manegoldi ad Gebhardum Liber* (1080-85), ed. K. Francke, *MGH Libelli de Lite*, I (Hanover, 1892), pp. 325, 358, 365, 391-92.

. . . Since then it is evident from the aforementioned opinions of the holy fathers and from others, so numerous that it is irksome to include them, that the Roman church is distinguished with such great authority and indeed excels all the principalities and powers of this world in its singular and incomparable dignity, and since, according to the harmonious witness of the holy fathers, no one is permitted to judge its judgements or reverse its sentences and no one may rightfully have the will or power to disobey its decrees, anyone who has not remained in communion with it is a stranger and a sinner and an enemy of God, and whatever is done against its discipline can in no wise be

held lawful. Let our conspirators see then, let them see, these men who publicly and contumaciously forsake the holy faith and the Catholic religion, how guilty they are of sacrilege, how inextricably they are bound by the knot of their innumerable wickednesses, these men who day by day destroy the souls of those whom they lead to despise the Roman see, who subject to the torment of eternal fire along with themselves as many as they seduce from its unity by their rash examples of sacrilege and their pestiferous arguments.

. . . As for the king himself, the author and fomentor of so much evil, the holy council decreed that the apostolic sword be unsheathed to cut him off from the body of the whole church and that, bound by the bond of anathema, he be deprived of the royal dignity. It absolved from their oaths all those who had sworn oaths to him and forbade anyone to serve him as king, for it was fitting that he who had presumed to annul and trample under foot the honor divinely conferred on St. Peter by special privilege should himself lose the honor that he seemed to possess, and that he who disdained to obey as a Christian should be judged unworthy to rule over Christians. . . .

Just as the royal dignity and power surpasses all earthly powers, so too the man appointed to exercise it should not be base and infamous but should excel others in wisdom, justice and piety as he does in place and dignity. It is necessary, therefore, that the one who is to have charge of all and govern all should display greater virtue than others and should be careful to exercise the power committed to him with a fine balance of equity; for the people do not exalt him above themselves so as to concede to him an unlimited power of tyrannizing over them, but rather to defend them against the tyranny and wickedness of others. However, when he who is chosen to repress evil-doers and defend the just begins to cherish evil in himself, to oppress good men, to exercise over his subjects the cruel tyranny that he ought to ward off from them, is it not clear that he deservedly falls from the dignity conceded to him and that the people are free from his lordship and from subjection to him since it is evident that he first broke the compact by virtue of which he was appointed? Nor can anyone justly or reasonably accuse the people of perfidy when it is evident that he first broke faith with them. To take an example from a meaner sphere, if a man hired someone for a fair wage to look after his swine and then found that he was not caring for them but stealing, killing and destroying them, would not the man withhold the promised wage from him and remove him ignominiously from his task of caring for the swine? Now, if this is observed in base things, that a man who does not care for his swine but destroys them shall not be kept as a swineherd, are there not just and reasonable grounds for maintaining that, in proportion as humans



differ from swine, so too it is more fitting that anyone who does not strive to rule his subjects but rather to lead them into error should be deprived of the power and authority over men that he has received? Why should we be surprised if this rule is observed under the Christian religion when the ancient Romans in the days of the illustrious Collatinus and Brutus, refusing to endure the pride of Tarquin because of the shameful deed which his son, not he himself, had perpetrated against the noble matron Lucretia, expelled him and his son from the country and from the kingship, and created a government by two consuls holding office for a year to prevent anyone growing haughty through long exercise of authority. . . .

The nature of man excels that of all other living creatures in this, that, being capable of treating by reason whatever has not fallen out by fortuitous hazard, it inquires into the causes of things with rational judgement and considers not only what is done but why it is done. Since then no one can make himself an emperor or king, the people raise some man above themselves for these reasons, to rule and govern them by virtue of his just authority, to apportion to each his own, to protect the good, to repress the wicked and to deal out justice to all. If, however, he breaks the compact by which he was elected and ruins and confounds what he was established to order correctly, reason justly considers that he has absolved the people from their duty of submission to him since he himself first broke the bond of mutual fidelity by which he was bound to them and they to him.

### *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda*

39. *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda* (1090-93), ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, *MGH Libelli de Lite*, II (Hanover, 1892), pp. 185-87, 194-96.

. . . [Pippin], when he was head of the household in the Frankish kingdom, that is, prefect of the palace, and all the royal power and dignity belonged to him, was the first of the prefects of the palace to be chosen king. He was consecrated with the blessing of the holy Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz, the judgement of Pope Zacharias having been obtained beforehand since the consent and authority of the Roman pontiff seemed necessary for this matter. Burchard of Wurzburg, a bishop of holy life, with other messengers fit for this mission, was sent to him by command of the princes to consult the oracle of his opinion and receive his response concerning this question, how they might reform the realm of the Franks and bring it to the state of its

former dignity. For a long time it had lacked the prerogative of royal honor, since the one who was called king possessed nothing but the shadow of an empty name. Neither the wealth nor the power of the kingdom nor any ordering of its affairs rested with him but rather with the head of the household who controlled the palace. Therefore it seemed to them just and fitting that hereditary succession to the whole royal dignity and power be taken away from Hilderic [Childeric] and that the royal title be transferred to Pippin, at that time prefect of the palace, who was worthy of it by virtue of his nobility and courage. Seeing that he vigorously carried on the government of the household and of the armies of the realm it would be appropriate for him to receive the title of king along with the labors and the duties of the office. When Pope Zacharias had considered this proposal and deemed it just and expedient he gave his consent to it and afterwards Pope Stephen confirmed this judgement. Pippin was made king by common consent of the princes, and Hilderic received the tonsured crown and the habit of monastic life in place of the empty name of king. Now if this is so, or rather because this is so, it seems that the above-mentioned Pope Gregory, also called Hildebrand, unjustly imputed to Zacharias and Stephen, holy pontiffs of the Roman church, the acts of deposing Hilderic from the kingship solely by their own authority and of absolving the Franks from the oaths of fidelity that they had sworn to him, when perchance the princes of the realm would have considered it unworthy to swear an oath to a man of the sort described above. He wrote this, along with much else, to Hermann, Bishop of Metz, in order to convince his party that they might safely abandon their king, as if this example proved that he had power to depose him. . . .

If [his] words had been tempered with the charity that edifies, the breach with the rulers of the world that now exists would not have arisen since, as the holy Pope Leo writes, "There can be no general security unless the things that pertain to the profession of religion are defended by royal and priestly authority." So too Pope Gelasius declared, "Christ, mindful of human frailty, regulated with an excellent disposition what pertained to the salvation of his people. Thus he distinguished between the offices of both powers according to their own proper activities and separate dignities. . . ." Since God himself has thus arranged things and has instituted these two, the royal power and the sacred authority of priests, by which this world is chiefly ruled, who can attempt to go against this except one who resists the ordinance of God? . . .

. . . The above-mentioned Pope Hildebrand cites St. Ambrose in his letter in order to strengthen and confirm his party in schism, saying that Ambrose excommunicated the emperor Theodosius for a certain sin. But St. Ambrose, who corrected with ecclesiastical discipline the emperor

Theodosius when he was incited by the clamor of some of his supporters to avenge the grave crime of the Thessalonians, did not divide the church; rather he taught that we should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. . . . It is this excommunication, which was profitable to the church and the emperor Theodosius alike, that is now cited in the letter with which we are dealing as a precedent for propagating a schism by which princes and nobles of the realm are separated from the companionship and service of their emperor. Ambrose, that strong tower and wall of the church, attempted nothing of the sort. . . . It is written indeed that Pope Innocent excommunicated the emperor Arcadius because he consented to the deposition of the holy bishop John. Where this is taken from is still unknown to us but we know for certain that it is not found in the *Gesta Romanorum Pontificum* or in the *Liber Decretorum* or in the *Historia Tripartita*, where we find more about that sentence of deposition than anywhere else. . . .

### Ivo of Chartres

40. *Epistola ad Hugonem Archiepiscopum Lugdunensem* (1097), ed. E. Sackur, *MGH Libelli de Lite*, II (Hanover, 1892), pp. 644-46.

. . . You write that the chosen candidate [Daimbert] received episcopal investiture from the hand of the king, but we have not been informed of this by anyone who saw it. In any case, even if he did, we cannot see how the inclusion or omission of this investiture injured the faith or holy religion since it does not have the force of a sacrament in the making of a bishop. Again, it does not seem that kings are prohibited by apostolic authority from installing in bishoprics after canonical election has been held, for we read that supreme pontiffs of holy memory have sometimes interceded with kings on behalf of men elected to churches in order that the bishoprics to which they were elected might be granted to them by those same kings, and we read that others have delayed consecrations because royal installation did not follow the election. . . . Why should it matter whether this installation is accomplished by hand or by gesture, by word or by staff, when the kings do not intend to bestow anything spiritual but only to add their assent to the petition of the people, or to confer on the persons elected the ecclesiastical estates and other worldly goods which the churches receive through the munificence of kings. Thus Augustine writes in his sixth treatise on the Gospel of John, in the first part, "Does not a man possess whatever he possesses by human law? For by divine law 'the Lord's is

the earth and the fulness thereof.' By human law we say, 'This estate is mine, this house is mine, this slave is mine.' Take away the laws of the emperors and who will dare say, 'This estate is mine, that slave is mine, that house is mine'. . . ."

If these things [i.e., rules against lay investiture] were established by eternal law it would not lie within the power of rulers sometimes to judge strictly according to them, sometimes to relax them out of mercy so that men remain in dignities received in a fashion contrary to what they prescribe. But since in fact what they forbid is illicit essentially because it has been prohibited by rulers, so too the remission of them by rulers according to their own judgement is licit. We see no one or almost no one condemned for this kind of transgression but we see many disquieted, many churches despoiled, many scandals arisen, and a division between the kingship and the priesthood without whose harmonious cooperation there can be no sound and secure conduct of human affairs. . . . I do not say this as one who wants to set himself up against the apostolic see or resist its salutary decrees or cast doubt on the decisions of his superiors in so far as they are supported by cogent reasons and by the evident authority of the ancient fathers; but I do wish, together with many other devout persons, that the ministers of the Roman church, like experienced doctors, would concern themselves with curing the most grievous sicknesses and not have to hear their mockers saying, "You strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. You pay tithes on mint and anise and cummin but leave undone the weightier matters of the law" (cf. Matthew 23:23-24). . . .

### Hugh of Fleury

41. *Tractatus de Regia Potestate* (1102-04), ed. E. Sackur, *MGH Libelli de Lite*, II (Hanover, 1892), p. 472.

I think that a king, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can appoint a pious cleric to the honor of prelacy. The archbishop indeed ought to commit to him the care of souls. The most Christian kings and princes promoted holy men in the church according to this prudent custom down to our own times. . . . If, indeed, a bishop has been elected by clergy and people reasonably and according to ecclesiastical custom the king ought not to use force against the electors tyrannically or harass them but rather should lawfully give his consent to the ordination. But if the one elected is found to be reprehensible, not only the king but the people of the province ought to withhold their assent and approval from his election and, moreover, they ought to expose publicly the crimes that mark him with detestable infamy so that by this reproach the audacity



of the electors may be restrained. After the election the elected bishop ought to receive from the king's hand, not the ring and staff but the investiture of secular things, and he ought to receive from the archbishop, among his orders, the care of souls through the ring or staff, so that this kind of business may be carried through without dispute and the privilege of his authority may be maintained by both earthly and spiritual powers. If this is regularly observed, what our Savior commanded in the Gospel will be fulfilled—"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25). A procedure firmly and properly established will not be in doubt, and holy church will be freed from a host of tribulations. For the king, as was set out above, bears the likeness of God the Father, and the bishop of Christ. Although the Lord Jesus Christ himself seems to say in the Gospel to his disciples and their followers, ". . . I appoint you to a kingdom as my Father has appointed me" (Luke 22:27). This was a kingdom of holy souls, not a kingdom of this world, as Christ witnessed at the time of his passion when he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). For, as the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "No one serving as God's soldier entangles himself in worldly affairs" (2 Timothy 2:4).

## 5. The End of the Contest

The struggle over investiture continued after Gregory VII's death and spread also to France and England. Ivo of Chartres and Hugh of Fleury had pointed the way to a possible solution of the dispute by drawing a distinction between the spiritual and temporal offices of a bishop, but their ideas made slow headway against the established opinion of the reformers that a bishopric—office and lands together—was a single juridical entity. A compromise was indeed reached in England as early as 1107 by which the king gave up the practice of investing bishops with ring and staff while retaining the right to receive feudal homage for the lands attached to their churches, but the pope of the time, Paschal II, regarded this as only a temporary concession, not as a permanent settlement of the investiture question.

Paschal is famous for another, far more radical solution that he proposed in his dealings with the emperor Henry V (son and successor to Henry IV). In 1111 Henry V occupied Rome with a German army, hoping to be crowned as emperor and to achieve a final settlement of the dispute with the papacy. The issue was now clearer than ever before. The king would not give up his right to appoint bishops because they were feudal lords exercising secular jurisdiction over lands that they held from the king. The pope would not acknowledge this royal right of appointment because bishops were ministers of God wielding a spiritual authority that was not derived from any lay ruler. Paschal's proposal for ending the impasse was a simple one—one of those simplicities that would have turned the world upside down. He suggested that the German churches renounce and return to the king all the vast lands and jurisdictions with which they had been endowed over the course of the centuries. The bishops would become once more simple pastors of souls, living on the tithes and free gifts of the faithful without any responsibilities for temporal government. The king would no longer have any reason for meddling in their appointments on political grounds (No. 42). Henry V accepted this proposal, and the new agreement was announced during the coronation service for the emperor-to-be in St. Peter's. At once a tumult broke out. The cardinals denounced the agreement, and the German bishops in the emperor's entourage refused to be bound by it.

Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching

EDITORIAL BOARD

Matilda Bruckner  
Joseph W. Goering  
Douglas Hildebrand  
Amy Hollywood  
Suzanne Rancourt  
Pamela Sheingorn  
David Staines

Brian Tierney

THE CRISIS OF CHURCH  
AND STATE 1050-1300

Published by University of Toronto Press  
Toronto Buffalo London  
in association with the Medieval Academy of America