

us when that revolutionary impetus which has destroyed everything there was to destroy, and which has urged us to the point where we must at last pause, is perpetuated. If the revolution advance one step further it cannot do so without danger. In the line of liberty, the first act which can follow is the annihilation of royalty; in the line of equality, the first act which must follow is an attempt on all property. Revolutions are not effected with metaphysical maxims—there must be an actual tangible prey to offer to the multitude that is led astray. It is time, therefore, to end the revolution. It ought to stop at the moment when the nation is free and when all Frenchmen are equal. If it continue in trouble it is dishonored, and we with it; yes, all the world ought to agree that the common interest is involved in the close of the revolution. Those who have lost ought to perceive that it is impossible to make it retrograde. Those who fashioned it must see that it is at its consummation. Kings themselves—if from time to time profound truths can penetrate to the councils of kings—if occasionally the prejudices which surround them will permit the sound views of a great and philosophical policy to reach them—kings themselves must learn that there is for them a wide difference between the example of a great reform in the government and that of the ambition of royalty; that if we pause here, where we are, they are still kings! but be their conduct what it may, let the fault come from them and not from us. Regenerators of the empire! follow straightly your undeviating line; you have been courageous and potent—be to-day wise and moderate. In this will consist the glorious termination of your efforts. Then, again returning to your domestic hearths, you will obtain from all, if not blessings, at least the silence of calumny.

ROYER-COLLARD



PIERRE PAUL ROYER-COLLARD, French philosopher and politician, and in 1828 president of the Chamber of Deputies, was born at Sompuis, Marne, France, June 21, 1763, and died near St-Aignan, Sept. 4, 1845. After receiving a liberal education, he was admitted to practice at the Bar. On the outbreak of the French Revolution, he took the popular side, and was Secretary of the Paris Municipal Council, and a member in 1797 of the Council of Five Hundred. He was, however, repelled by the sanguinary course pursued by Danton and Robespierre, and from the era of the Reign of Terror until the fall of Napoleon, in 1814, he lived in retirement, devoting himself to his duties as professor of philosophy in Paris. After the Restoration, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and remained a member of it for about fifteen years, becoming eventually its president. The annexed speech was delivered while the doctrinaire was a member of that body. After the Revolution of July, 1830, he withdrew from politics.

"SACRILEGE" IN LAW

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, PARIS, 1825, AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY FOR SACRILEGE

WHAT is a sacrilege? It is, according to this law, the profanation of sacred vases and of consecrated wafers. What, then, is profanation? It is an act of violence committed voluntarily, through hatred or contempt of religion. What are consecrated wafers? We Catholics believe that consecrated wafers are no longer the wafers that we see, but Jesus Christ the Holy of Holies; God and man together, invisible and present in the most sacred of our mysteries. The violence is thus committed against Jesus Christ himself. The irreverence of this language is shocking, for religion also has its modesty; but the irreverence is that of the law. The sacrilege then consists, I take the law to witness, in an act of violence committed

upon Jesus Christ. The crime punishable by the law, under the name of sacrilege, is a direct outrage on the Divine Majesty; that is to say, according to ancient ordinance, the crime of lèse-majesté divine; and as this crime exclusively springs from the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence, it results that if, in thought, we can separate from the wafers the real presence and divinity of Jesus Christ, the sacrilege disappears together with the penalty by which it is punished. It is the dogma which makes the crime, and it is also the dogma which gives it a name.

For three ages past the Christian religion has unfortunately been torn into Catholic and Protestant, and the dogma of the Real Presence is only true on this side of the strait which separates them; but beyond that it is false and idolatrous. Truth is limited by the seas, the rivers, and the mountains; it is determined, as Pascal says, by a meridian. There are as many varieties of truth as of State religions. Still more, if in every State, and under the same meridian, the political law should change, truth, a docile companion, changes with it, and all these truths, contradictory among themselves, have an equal claim to the title of immutable, absolute truth, of which, according to your law, we must be satisfied by executions that will at all times and places be equally just. Contempt of God and man cannot be carried further than this, and yet such are the natural and necessary consequences of legal truth; it is impossible to avoid them when once the principle is admitted. Will it be said that this is not the principle of the law? Whenever this is asserted I shall still repeat that the law admits the legal sacrilege against consecrated wafers, if the Real Presence is not a legal truth.

But other consequences spring from the same principle.

We do not play with religion as with men; we do not allot to it the part it is to take; we cannot say to it with authority: Thus far shalt thou go, and no further. The sacrilege resulting from the profanation of consecrated wafers is provided against in your law; but why that one alone, when there are as many acts of sacrilege as there are modes of outraging the Deity? And why the crime of sacrilege alone, when with equal audacity heresy and blasphemy are knocking at the door? Truth does not suffer these partial compromises. By what right does your profane hand thus divide the Divine Majesty, declaring it vulnerable upon one point alone, and invulnerable upon every other? Sensitive to acts of violence, but insensible to all other kinds of outrage. That writer is not wrong who declares your law to be paltry, fraudulent, and even atheistical! The moment that a single dogma of the Catholic religion enters into the law, that religion should be held true in its fullest extent, and all the others false; it should form a part of the constitution of the State, and thence spread itself through all its civil and political institutions.

In breaking a long silence, I have wished to mark my lively opposition to the theocratic principle which threatens at once society and religion, a principle so much the more serious that it is not, as in the days of barbarity and ignorance, the sincere fury of a too ardent zeal which relights this torch. There is no longer a St. Dominic, neither are we Albigenses. The theocracy of our times is less religious than political; it forms a part of that system of reaction which leads us on; and that which now renews it is its counter-revolutionary aspect. Without doubt, gentlemen, the revolution has been impious even to fanaticism and to cruelty; but let them take care, it was that crime, above

all others, which caused its ruin; and we may predict to the counter-revolution that reprisals of cruelty, even if only written, will bear evidence against it, and blast it in its turn. I vote against the law.

AGAINST PRESS CENSORSHIP

DELIVERED IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES IN 1823


IN THE ideas of some men, it was imprudent on the great day of creation to allow man, a free and intelligent being, to escape into the midst of the universe! A more lofty wisdom is now about to repair this fault of Providence and to render humanity, sagely mutilated, the service of elevating it at last to the happy innocence of the brute creation! The Author of all things formerly thought otherwise; but he was wrong! Truth is a good, say these men, more provident than nature, but error is an evil. Perish, then, both truth and error! As a prison is the natural remedy for liberty, ignorance will be the natural remedy for intelligence; ignorance is the true science of man and of society! Gentlemen, a law which thus denies the existence of mind is an atheistical law and should not be obeyed! Alas! we have passed through periods when the authority of the law, having been usurped by tyranny, evil was called good, and virtue crime. During this fearful test we did not seek for the rule of our actions in the law, but in our consciences: we obeyed God rather than men. Must we, under the legitimate government, be brought back to these deplorable recollections? We shall still be the same men! Your law, be it well understood,

will be vain, for France is better that its government! Counsellors of the crown, what have you done hitherto? Who has raised you above your fellow-citizens that you assume a right to impose a tyranny upon them? Obscure and ordinary men like ourselves, you only surpass us in temerity! Such senseless audacity can only be met with in factions. Your law, therefore, denounces a faction in the government with as much certainty as if this faction had denounced itself. I shall not ask it what it is, whence it comes, or whither it is going, for it would tell me falsehoods! I judge this faction by its works! It now proposes to you to destroy the liberty of the press; last year it exhumed from the Middle Ages the right of primogeniture, and the year before it introduced sacrilege! It is thus retrograding. It matters not to me whether it be called counter-revolution or otherwise; it is going backward in religion and policy! It clings to fanaticism, to privilege, to ignorance, and to barbarism, or to the absurd domination which barbarism favors! The enterprise, however, will not be so easy to accomplish. In future not another line is to be printed in France! With all my heart! A brazen frontier shall preserve us from foreign contagion! Well and good! But for a long time discussion has existed in the world between good and evil, between the true and the false. It fills innumerable volumes, which have been read over and over, day and night, by an inquisitive generation. Whole libraries of books have passed into the minds of men. It is from thence you must banish them: have you a law ready for that purpose? So long as we shall not forget what we know, we shall be ill-disposed to brutishness and slavery. But the action of mind is not solely derived from books; springing from freedom of condition,

it exists in labor, in riches, and in leisure; while it is nourished by the assemblages of towns and the facility of communication. To enslave men it is necessary to disperse and to impoverish them, for misery is the safeguard of ignorance. Believe me, reduce the population, discard the men of industry from the soil, burn the manufactories, fill up the canals, plow up the highways. If you do not effect all this, you will have accomplished nothing; if the plow does not pass entirely over civilization, that which remains will be sufficient to baffle your efforts.

I cannot support the amendments of the committee, or indeed any amendments. The law is neither worthy nor susceptible of any. There is no arrangement to be made with the principle of tyranny by which it was dictated. I reject it purely and simply out of respect for humanity which it degrades, and for justice by which it is outraged.

BARON PLUNKET

ILLIAM CONYNGHAM PLUNKET, an eminent Irish jurist, orator, and politician, and for eleven years lord chancellor of Ireland, was the son of a Presbyterian minister and was born at Enniskillen, Ireland, July 1, 1764. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and studied law at Lincoln's Inn, London. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1787, and in 1798 entered the Irish Parliament, where he opposed the union with Great Britain, and in 1803 was the prosecuting attorney in the trial of Robert Emmet for treason. From 1807 to 1822 he sat in the English House of Commons, where his voice was frequently heard in behalf of Catholic emancipation. Plunket was twice attorney-general of Ireland, and in 1827 he became chief-justice of the common pleas in Ireland and was raised to the peerage as Baron Plunket. He filled the post of lord chancellor of Ireland 1830-41, and died in his ninetieth year in County Wicklow, Ireland, Jan. 4, 1854. Plunket's fame rests mainly on his long-continued services in the interest of Catholic Emancipation, one of his ablest as well as most eloquent speeches being delivered in support of Burdett's Catholic Relief Bill in 1825. Plunket's oratory aimed to convince by close, logical reasoning rather than by appeals to the passions, while elevated thought, full and refined expression were especial characteristics of his speeches. His intellect was that of a jurist and great master of equity.

ON THE COMPETENCY OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT TO PASS THE MEASURE OF UNION

SIR, I, in the most express terms, deny the competency of Parliament to do this act. I warn you, do not dare to lay your hand on the constitution. I tell you that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this act, it will be a nullity, and that no man in Ireland will be bound to obey it. I make the assertion deliberately—I repeat it, and I call on any man who hears me to take down my words: you have not been elected for this purpose—you are appointed to make laws and not legislatures—you are appointed to act under the constitution, not to alter it—you are appointed to exercise the functions of legislators, and not to transfer them—and if you do so your act is a dissolution of the government, you