



CLERICAL IDEOLOGY IN A REVOLUTIONARY AGE: THE GUADALAJARA CHURCH AND THE IDEA OF THE MEXICAN NATION (1788-1853)

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Hegemony Renewed

The Beginnings of a Clerical Counterdiscourse

The Reconstitution of Clerical Discourse in the Decade after Independence

The Guadalajara Church lost the initiative in social discourse in the 1820s, despite its impressive production of sermons about Independence under Iturbide. It found itself constantly obliged to respond defensively. How could it remain identified with the cause of Independence, popular sovereignty and national progress without accepting a situation that lowered it from its earlier position as the equal of the state?¹ How could it prove itself loyal to popular government and popular sovereignty while at the same time refuse to adhere to a new social order on religious matters?² Not only the motto of “throne and altar” was placed in doubt, but also that of “religion and fatherland.” The Church had to defend itself through redefinition. Responding to this challenge, the Church made itself present in crucial ways, tenaciously remaking its social discourse and creating new bases of support for its role in society.

The 1824 Political Constitution of the state of Jalisco had presented the first legislative attack under the new federal republic on the Church’s internal autonomy and union on equal terms with the state. Article 7 of the Constitution had given the state control of ecclesiastical finances.³ This set off a battle in the press. By swearing loyalty to the Constitution, the Church would have lost authority, even moral authority, because it became a



dependent branch of the state itself. While it is true that the president of the republic offered an opportune political resolution of this dilemma, by means of a decree which allowed citizens to take an oath of loyalty to the Constitution while deferring the question of Article 7, the underlying struggle for ideological hegemony could not be resolved so easily in the future.⁴ The freedom which prevailed in the new republic, and the work in course on a constitutional framework, made absolutely necessary an open political debate to win the support of public opinion either for or against Article 7, with all it implied.⁵

What is most notable about the resulting debate is how it confirmed the formation of two alternative and decidedly opposed intellectual groups in the state of Jalisco. Liberal and secularizing intellectuals, heirs to the fiery liberalism of the Cortes of Cádiz, had claimed a space in Jalisco. In its origins, this liberalism was an unexpected byproduct of the climate of change of the Bourbon Reforms, reinforced by the vacuum of legitimate power produced by the Napoleonic invasion. In contrast, there were also republican intellectuals who were more fond of the reformist tradition, more inclined towards individual liberties than towards liberalism as a system, and more desirous of combining authority with the new means of government. Liberalism in Jalisco took shape from the debate between the two.⁶

Curiously enough, while liberalism only explicitly took note of the existence of opposition to its program as an obstacle to be overcome, the Church's defensive ideology presented liberalism as not only a suspicious radicalism but also a source of social renewal whose contributions and understandings could not simply be brushed aside. This was the most problematic aspect of the clearly eclectic direction of this discourse, evident in 1821 and 1822 sermons. In this complex dynamic, the Church lost the initiative in social discourse, but at the same time social practice would prove that liberalism could not do without its opponent, lest it threaten with dissolution the society it wished to liberate.⁷

José María Luis Mora had sensed a key element of this entire process. His approach underscores what was established in Chapter Five:

The clergy is a corporation dating back to the founding of the colony and deeply rooted in it. Every branch of public administration and the civil acts of life have been and still are more or less subject to its influence. It dictated part of the Laws of the Indies and



has had jurisdiction over the government of Indians and castas who were its faithful servants until Independence, despite the civil government's efforts to emancipate them. Spaniards and their descendants have not escaped it either, falling into the nets it laid in education and the rule of conscience. Everything known in Mexico was taught by the clergy's ministry or subject to its censure. The Inquisition, the bishops and the priests exercised the most absolute dominance over the press, reading, and teaching. The rule of conscience has not been limited to religious duties, but has extended its reach to social, conjugal and domestic duties, to dress and public diversions. Viceroy, magistrates, judges, public administrators, in sum all men of government, have for many years subjected the exercise of public functions to the dictates of a confessor, who even today makes himself heard and effectively influences acts of sovereignty, directing the people who exercise them under his tutelage, acts which ecclesiastics aim to restrict in the final analysis to a matter of mere religious duty.⁸

From this standpoint, not only were the clergy deeply entrenched in society and the state itself, but they ideologically conditioned the power of the state, making it subject to ends unrelated to its Earthly mission.

Paradoxically, Doctor Mora's thinking suggested that the struggle to establish liberalism would simultaneously be a struggle to strengthen the state. Statism and republicanism would blur into one, because without a strong liberal state, society would continue along the same course as always. Mora asked incisively:

In fact, what power can the republic [that is, the republican state] have against a body which has been in the country much longer, directed by bishops, its perpetual and irresponsible [i.e., not responsible to an electorate] heads, whose annual income is at least fifteen and at most one hundred and twenty thousand pesos, and who have at their disposal eighty million pesos of investments whose productive portion yields seven and a half million [pesos per year]? A republic born yesterday, where every branch of public administration is in disarray and the habit of following orders is entirely lost; a republic whose public income barely doubles that of the clergy, and does not remotely suffice to meet its budget; a republic in sum where all is decrepitude, disorder and confusion: can such a republic sustain itself against a body which has the will and the power to destroy its constitution, cripple its laws, and raise up the masses against it?⁹



Above all, the national state had to fortify itself to take up the role of transformer of society.

Considering this, we should assess the Church's efforts to keep from losing its cultural hegemony over society. It is not enough to see the problem from the perspective of liberalism, as in the previous chapter. It would be an error to ignore or downplay the formidable efforts made by the ecclesiastical hierarchy to reshape clerical discourse in a way more in keeping with the times and with the long-term corporatist and ideological interests of the Church.

Evidently, liberal ideology and clerical preference contrasted with one another on key issues. The latter tended to support values promoting work directed to other-worldly ends, obedience, and loyalty to constituted authorities. The former underscored its aspirations of full national transformation with rebellious values and an insistence on individual rights, with the emphasis placed on the shortcomings of civil society and the need to swiftly eliminate them, and with the emergence of a new, imposing and self-reliant voice in every public debate.

The calls for hewing to tradition were countered by irate cries which presented a future based on the denunciation of the past – and its spokesmen. A “progressive” vision of Mexico was forged on the basis of insistent critiques of the inconsistencies, failures and flaws in the practice of Catholic doctrine and in ecclesiastical behavior. As Dale Baum has stressed, liberalism had a negative drive in practice, always opposing some aspect of the established order without offering clear alternatives. Since it set its sights on a libertarian dream of the future, liberalism disdained established values which threatened to endure. The present was seen as composed of an endless series of obstacles to overcome, but since liberalism's conquest of this future was far from complete, it found itself obliged to share the present with the spokesmen for an undying past.¹⁰

In the 1820s, incipient liberalism demonstrated its capacity for subverting existing ideological loyalties. For a time, it placed the Mexican citizen at the center of a sovereign reflection about the transformation of a shared material and civil existence. But it is essential to point out that in Mexico, one unexpected aspect of this transformation was that practically all of society's thinkers and leaders were agreed on the need for renewal to overcome national weakness.¹¹ Thus renovation became more complicated. The ideologues of the past could not be so easily discarded, since



they, too, had climbed onto the train of progress, were aware of past problems and open to negotiated change, and in short, were at least partly willing to undertake transformation.¹²

This was a transformation which implied the ongoing presence of these ideologues of the past in the new society being forged. How could liberals do away with a long-standing social force which had managed to agree to denounce the past, while remaining present and active in the new social arrangements? There is no worse enemy, one might think, than one who refuses the label. This threatened to take a strong and sustained wind out of the sails of Mexican liberalism.

From one perspective, what we are saying is not entirely new. Jesús Reyes Heróles dedicates the second volume of his magisterial treatment of Mexican liberalism to specifying the nature of what he calls "fluctuating society." But while Reyes Heróles is predisposed to criticize indecisive thinkers with liberal leanings, he overlooks the equivocating nature of the ideologues of the past.¹³ Alamán is often believed to have been an exceptional conservative. No doubt he was an extraordinary man, but it is likely that he was closer to the core of Mexican conservatism than is usually suspected. From our standpoint, it is not at all anomalous that a man so "progressive" in many aspects should have finally become the recognized leader of the conservatives, the very man who formed a ministry of development in the last Santa Anna government in 1853. The hatred Alamán provoked among liberals certainly was spurred by his progressive attitudes as much as by his traditionalism, since such attitudes were exactly what frustrated the ideological radicalization and acceleration of social transformation liberal spokesmen were calling for.¹⁴

The beginnings of this conservative attitude dated back to Bourbon governments. Although conservatives rejected the Bourbon label by the 1820s, this was because the label represented an attempt to portray them as supporters of bringing an heir to the Bourbon dynasty to rule in Mexico – rather than settling on Iturbide or a republican government. This accusation overlooked the real stance that Mexican conservatives developed with considerable coherence: the country had to be changed and developed, but without falling into the ideological commitments and clumsiness of dogmatic liberalism. Instead, the elements promoting change had to be isolated and imposed in such a way that society was perfected without risk of disintegrating or being torn apart. Changes were possible means for overcoming society's



contemporary challenges.; they were not a panacea, which only the ignorant expected for humankind. The wisdom of past ages might be incomplete, but its sound judgments never erred. By definition, they were worthy of being incorporated into all present and future arrangements. Why should one assume that only men of the present day were intelligent and knew how to think? Was that not the height of closed-mindedness?¹⁵

From this perspective, Mexican society was split more clearly over the means and timing of change than over more or less predictable social goals. In general, renewal was accepted as the objective to be achieved. Of course, there was considerable debate about what had to be renewed, and to what extent. But renewal was accepted; the aspiration to perfect man was considered legitimate. The true stumbling block was the principles behind radical change, the arrogance of philosophical reason. If man was held to be self-sufficient, capable of organizing society to fulfill goals he himself set by the lights of his own reason, then obviously this justification was ruled out by conservatives as ridiculous and unacceptable. If, on the contrary, this was a matter of improvement within the limits set by fragile human nature, then it represented a rather notable opportunity. And who was more identified with the progress of civilization than the Catholic Church?¹⁶

What to renew and how to go about it were moot questions, but not the idea of renewal itself. There was an arguable need to save, to be sure, the sound judgments of the past and the cultural heritage that had made them possible. Such an argument strengthened the idea of Catholic civilization as the greatest of international cultures and a certain and mature bulwark against the errors of reason and the passion of heretics, libertines and adepts of the so-called philosophy of the age. Conservatives did not deny that such errors might produce some positive results. Neither did they deny that the theoretical or practical diatribes launched against the Church had their grain of truth, and at times grew out of the recognition of genuine ills. Such positive insights, however, did not come from the correctness of their premises and procedures, but rather despite their erroneous principles and proceedings.¹⁷

The evil of humanity, its state of fallen greatness after original sin, produced such seeming contradictions. Man was incapable of advancing along the path of righteousness without stumbling into error and evil, but his stumbling did not indicate that traditional religious beliefs and established society were wrong. They, too, had human failings, but in the case of the Church these could never



include dogma, nor the authority, goodness and rightness of traditions properly understood.

Renewal was therefore a matter of containing the scourges of heretics, libertines and “philosophers” so that their better ideas, along with the efforts of people of sounder principles, might serve to improve the established state of things. That is why there was no insistence on flatly rejecting all dissident opinion.¹⁸ Criticisms were annoying and frequently went beyond what was necessary for viable social transformation. They led – in the case of “philosophers” – to fanaticism for change and complete irreverence towards constituted civil and religious authorities. They were a moral and individual matter subject to censure, on the one hand, but they were symptomatic of real flaws needing correction, on the other.¹⁹

With this attitude, the Church and conservatives yielded the initiative, the radical and brazen initiative, devoid of orthodoxy and respect for what had been achieved, to those dissidents whose power or anonymity allowed them to propose “wayward” alternatives for society. What they could not permit was for those dissidents, with their rudimentary truths, old and new, to establish their ideas in law, in teaching, in religious practice, and in civil and religious custom, without the intervention of the authority, decisive force and moderating reasoning of the Church and the most even-handed and sensible lay leaders. While the Church lost the initiative on the terrain of hypothetically possible changes, it would win it back on the terrain of probable and desired changes. In this view, the praxis of the Church would be strengthened by assuring effective control over societal change.

When the Inquisition existed, the moderating power of the clergy used to keep “errors” from reaching deep into society by blocking them, squeezing out whatever truth they might contain, and making that truth accessible to the flock. Once the Inquisition was abolished, this moderating power was also eliminated. Popular sovereignty and nearly complete freedom of speech and the press had made that impossible, especially within the overall push for social renewal promoted by every government since the Bourbons. Now the fight continued on a new social stage. The desk of the erudite and isolated censor gave way to the defense of “healthy principles” in the public forum of the printed word and on the practical terrain of the civil and religious transformations which would authentically benefit society and represent an improvement. Now the Church would have to



struggle to reclaim its role as midwife to social change in Mexico. It could hardly avoid conflict, as a result, with those who wanted to reduce it to the level of a mere body or corporation in political society and themselves assume the role of social pacesetter. In the Church's view, either there would be a properly conceived change, or error would be enshrined as a societal principle. In the first case, the Church would once again occupy the decisive role in society which the Bourbon Reforms had wrested from it. Therefore, it unleashed its greatest efforts to retake the helm of society, demonstrating its gifts for leadership in order to continue as the guide to society's moral existence.²⁰

In order to fulfill this role as helmsman in society, the Church needed to recover its own ecclesiastical history and institutional integrity. The critical times of an independent society in transition demanded the presence of a self-critical Church capable of reforming itself and coming to terms with changes. Telling the history of the Church meant establishing the basis of its autonomy from the state and civil society. What role did the Church play in the past? What position did it take towards the state and towards its own weaknesses? What were the prevailing parameters for interaction between the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the priesthood, and the flock – or what should they be? Only a profound self-critique could place the Church on the road to its historical reconstitution, fully up to date with the age and popular aspirations. This was a unique opportunity and a singular challenge. It placed the Church face to face with the history of Councils and Concordats. This self-questioning significantly influenced the basic premises of the Church's polemical pamphlets, and also of its pastoral letters during the period after Independence.²¹

For their part, the liberals, with their tendency to argue from principles and in reference to the United States and Northern Europe, fell easily into a sense of timelessness and placelessness that was dangerous to their cause. Wanting to take things apart, they offered constructive projects which, more often than not, turned out to be impractical and likely to cause society as much trouble as good. In Mexico, unlike other places, liberalism did not harvest the rich set of changes that had already taken place in society. It was a new project, substituting for, rather than fulfilling, older projects. Liberalism could be perceived as quixotic and was in danger of ending up with nothing but pipe dreams without any ties to real society. It partook of the complex character of utopias.²² If the purest intellectual projects of liberalism turned out



to be chimerical, did that not palpably demonstrate the need for moderation and for a respectful adherence to all that was best about the past, whose reliability made it worthy of continuation?²³

Society matured, adding an element of unfettered reason and defiant rebelliousness against the patterns of the past but making only minor adjustments and emendations in practice. A self-satisfied society gave way to a tense society, prisoner of its own struggle for renewal, but averse to self-destruction. Social reconstitution was thus a more difficult affair than was sometimes thought. It was not simply a matter of adding new values and ideas to society and easily spurring minimal real change. On the contrary, there was a recognized need for fundamental transformations, although their pressing demands had to steer far from a complete liquidation of the past.²⁴ Mexico was in a quandary.

For the Church, the perfecting of social man was seen to call for deep transformations, but these threatened to lead human subjects astray. When properly understood, the past was a guide for man and an indispensable anchor in storms of rootless reason and passion. Rejecting the past meant negating Catholicism, and therefore the most perfect sources of human civilization and improvement. It meant returning to brutishness and the reign of individual whim. On their way to the final meeting with the Creator, both man and society would have to struggle to achieve and perfect themselves as much as possible. The root problem, original sin, could not be overcome, although the final objective was the restitution of the freedom and ability of primitive man. The history of man was the history of this struggle, continuous and unending in its own right. Only the end of this history, its teleological and theological consummation, could remedy this.²⁵

Therefore, the Mexican clergy faced several tasks in their effort to remain present and relevant during the crisis of society in the transition from monarchy to popular sovereignty. The clergy had to forge their own vision of the history of the Church and its relationship with the state and civil society. The clergy had to conceive and put into practice a program to reform the discipline and training of priests. They had to clarify, step by step, their attitude towards the changes proposed by liberal dissidents, promoting or rejecting each in theory and practice. They had to come to terms with the views of Mexican society, in its struggles, triumphs and sacrifices, in order to later offer their own view, thus legitimating major national goals and the transformations directed towards achieving them. They had to maintain and consolidate



their multiform presence in political and civil society: to provide guidance on political measures, to participate in elections, to take public posts, to serve in committees formed to study this or that problem, and to make written appeals to the government when political struggle required it.²⁶ The clergy reprinted treatises about the Church and society, produced or allowed the production of pamphlets defending points judged to be important, accused, applauded, denounced, and, above all, never ceased to stress ecclesiastical autonomy, the Church's sovereign right to reform itself, and its own authority as bellwether and moral guide of political and civil society. The Church asserted itself publicly with great force, to keep from being pushed aside. This aim was incompatible with tolerance for other forms of worship, or acceptance of the image liberals offered of themselves as disinterested philanthropists of society. The goal was the rebirth of a Church of distilled purity and of undisputed hegemony over societal mores. Otherwise, it was sure to be pushed aside, and the dynamic tension between change and continuity, between a past open to criticism and a future best based upon that past, would collapse into chaos, precipitating the ruin of all values and convictions.

The struggle taken up by the Church in Guadalajara may have failed to achieve the drive and success some wished for. Internal dissension among the clergy themselves is still not well understood, but the dynamics of clerical leadership must be considered to be an important element in understanding the real historical development of the country.²⁷

From the Praise of Reason and Erudition to Outright Wrangling:

1822–24

Clerical worries about the ideological situation resulting from the principle of popular representation begin to appear in 1822. Once again, the first writings were printed in Mexico City and shipped to Guadalajara. One of these began attacking

[t]he many talents prostituted to the extreme of endeavoring to confuse liberty with licentiousness, and therefore to persuade [readers] that certain practices of Christian religion which may be in contact with its most respectable dogma are opposed to the healthy principles of liberty today adopted by the people to establish their respective governments.²⁸



The problem was more serious still, because those who spread such ideas blended them with fully acceptable ones in such a way as to confuse right thinking “with the indecent errors by which a false zeal has commingled sinful pretense with the precious patrimony of the faithful.” Of course, this perfectly fit the pattern of “an age of reason and philosophy in which errors are usually introduced in the shadow of that [Enlightenment].”²⁹

The author then dedicated the rest of his publication to reproducing a letter sent to the Spanish newspaper *El Universal* by the auxiliary bishop of Madrid. The tone of argument was not changed by the shift: fulminating against the free and indiscriminate sale of “a multitude of impious books and pamphlets,” the bishop called on “whoever wants to keep the faith of their fathers, that is whoever claims to be a constitutionalist.”³⁰ One should avoid reading such publications but for all who succumbed “to the temptation” of reading them, the bishop prayed that they would

[s]uspend judgment and do not give any credit to the events, quotations, and maxims their authors so confidently provide. Instead try to examine them in light of history and reason under the firm knowledge that Christian religion does not flee from the light (as such as these libelously contend), nor does it demand blind and untested obedience, but rather the exact opposite, it asks for rational conviction, the *rationalis obssequium* of Saint Paul, since God has deigned, as Saint Jerome says, to subject himself to the examination of reason, rather than to subject the examination of reason to himself.³¹

With the divine foundations of Christian religion proven, reason would have to bend its knee to it, in the tradition of the sages of Christianity.³²

Another publication, printed in 1823 and reprinted in Guadalajara in 1824, set out to contest Lizardi’s defense of Freemasons.³³ The approach did not differ much from what we just analyzed, except that here the rebelliousness of human reason was seen in a more firmly social setting:

Every religion, sect, or community, every spiritual direction which does not recognize the tribunal of the Church (whatever one may think of the tribunal of the Inquisition) as its true legitimate judge, which does not humbly reveal to that tribunal its inner workings, which does not subject itself to that tribunal’s direction and correction, is thereby cast out of the heart of the Catholic Church, said Jesus Christ.³⁴



As a consequence, and speaking, as the author stated, only to Catholics, leaving aside matters of state and constitution, the pamphlet concluded that “every Catholic ceases to be one in the very act of professing the Masonic sect and swearing his oath to it.” Thus not only pagans and self-expressed heretics were outside the framework of the only salvific Church, but also any group that did not explicitly subject itself to the Church. From the standpoint of either the constitutionally Catholic state or simply the true Church, by early 1824 war had been declared on the rebellious reason of individuals and groups in Guadalajara and surrounding areas.³⁵

The central theme of clerical thinking would be precisely this stress on clerical authority versus unrestricted reason. This might be seen as the exact counterpoint to the liberal idea that took popular sovereignty to be absolutely free will over matters of both reason and government. Clerical writers were not long in recognizing that the polemics liberals started about various public events – the fall of Iturbide, the establishment of the republic, the elaboration and signing of the state constitution – were products of a broader range of values, attitudes and reasonings which went well beyond the immediate matter under debate. They realized that the true, if not always the most apparent, problem was this new orientation as a whole. It had to be made visible for the Church to criticize it effectively.

When the Guadalajara Church felt strong and secure, its discourse had a notably different tone from the one it would take on in later years. While clearly setting out its viewpoint, clerical discourse was signally even-handed, measured and self-confident. Later on, signs of uncertainty and indignation would become evident, along with a tendency to adopt a more aggressive and cutting discursive style, but there does not seem to be as much change in the content of its statements as in their tone. The clergy’s proposals were coherently articulated, with mostly stylistic changes corresponding to shifts in the relative strength of opposing groups. Discursive statements therefore appear as means of struggling for hegemony.

In 1824, the Guadalajara Church clearly set out four themes needing resolution regarding the ties between society and the state, on the one hand, and society and the Church, on the other. Four chapters of Count Muzzarelli’s work, *El buen uso de la lógica en materia de religión*, offered a vision which was orthodox, but balanced and open to dialogue, on religious tolerance, the wealth



of the clergy, the legal immunity of the clergy, and the intervention of the Church in temporal affairs. Muzzarelli asserted that Catholicism could not be saved if measures were taken which led to turning the secular life of man into an end, not a means. The presence and guidance of the Church in all of social life, including its alliance with the state, were understood to be an integral part of the practice and preservation of the faith, which was the ultimate end of man. In exchange, the Church provided important reinforcement for the secular "city" of mankind and its political government.

In a chapter entitled "Indifference to Religion," Muzzarelli forcefully rejected any religious tolerance towards non-Catholics, identifying it with "scandalous indifference" to questions of faith.³⁶ The reasons for tolerance did not matter, since it was inappropriate once true religion had been given due weight in the life of man. The Count's text declared:

If a Catholic Prince or Magistrate cannot block religious freedom without causing a greater harm to the public good, he can tolerate it as a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil which would necessarily follow if it were not tolerated. For that reason, in order to avoid greater disorder, in some places public prostitutes are tolerated. Moreover, for the same reason, if in order to end a civil war, which brings great harm to a state and cannot otherwise be concluded, the Prince reaches agreement with heretics to tolerate religious freedom, he should keep his agreement in order to avoid greater public ills and to maintain public confidence. That is what our theologians, along with Saint Thomas and other holy doctors, concede to you. But ... it is contrary to all divine and human laws to introduce into a state dominated by the Catholic religion, without an indispensable need, that religious freedom which tolerates all, which makes all equal without distinction in favor, privilege, employment, and congress, Catholics with Turks and heretics, and which in order to increase the population, make commerce flourish and other similar motives, does not prevent dangers to the faith, nor the scandal and perversion of its own subjects. The Church has always denounced such deplorable charity; reason has always impugned it, and the laws have battled against it countless times.³⁷

Muzzarelli's tone was notably more measured when he came to the matter "of the wealth of the clergy."³⁸ In between the lines, one can sense that the debate among Catholics had already



advanced more here than on religious freedom, and tempers flared just as each cited the Scriptures to support a specific position. In fact, disputes about ecclesiastical riches dated back to before the Protestant Reformation and subsequent vitriol. If on matters of tolerance towards Protestants or other religions the argument was ferociously negative, on the question of clerical riches an appreciable space of negotiation opened up. The wealth of the clergy was seen as a divine concession to human weakness, and as a resource potentially useful to the whole of society. Its misuse was a sin, and invited the sacrilegious reprisals that God authorized to purify his Church when it deserved it.

Muzzarelli declared that, once arguments for and against clerical wealth had been “impartially” taken into account, it was clear that divine providence had wisely intervened on the matter:

[Providence] has seen that not all can follow the counsel of the Gospels in full rigor, and has taken pity on human fragility, permitting a portion of the clergy to possess goods, while providing it at the same time the means to keep from abusing these possessions and to remain useful to others.

[Providence] has seen that a few assisted by divine grace would practice a voluntary and rigorous poverty, and therefore has instituted a few regular orders, separated from the dangers which indigence tends to bring along with it, in which this profession [of poverty] is attended to rigorously. [Providence] has seen that the state of mediocrity was not reducible to a useful and constant practice, and therefore has left each with his own freedom to aid the priest, and to augment his faculties, according to his own prudence, piety and charity. Finally, [providence] has seen that some of His ministers, abusing the riches they were entrusted with, would perhaps reverse divine intentions, and therefore has allowed from time to time that His clergy be dispossessed by violent reprisals, not only of that which was superfluous, but even of that which was necessary. [Providence] permitted the evil of the sin of sacrilegious usurpers of ecclesiastical goods, in order to accomplish a great good by that natural path: in order that His ministers might come to realize they had strayed, and might be alerted to become more faithful in their dispensations from then on.³⁹

Muzzarelli based his argument in favor of the personal legal immunity of the clergy on the rights and convenience of the sovereign. One well-formulated question brought both aspects



together: "What reason could be given that the officials of the King should be respected by the King himself, receiving abundant reward for their services, yet the Church, spiritual mother of kings, should deserve no affection from those kings for all the ministries it exercises on behalf of their souls?"⁴⁰ Insinuating a parallel between service to the King and the transcendental role of the priesthood, Muzzarelli carried his argument so far as to conclude that:

[w]e find that not only the obligation, but also the interest of princes themselves persuade them to keep ecclesiastics immune from taxes and trials. Suppose that the princes, governing themselves according to the impious maxims of their flatterers, forcefully equaled ecclesiastics with their other subjects. I do not say that in that case the Church should take up arms to defend its rights, but rather I maintain that this would not conform to the spirit and precepts of Jesus Christ. I only entertain the idea that in this case it remove ecclesiastical power from its aid to the temporal power; I do not propose that it drive the people to rebellion, only that it leave them to their own counsel and that, now as lowly as the mass of subjects, it leave the people their common weapons. In my mind, I am saying, I suppose all of this could easily happen, and accepting this fiction, I ask myself: in this case, who would lose more, the clergy losing its privileges, or the prince losing his best defense in the clergy? The clergy in reality would only have to weep over the disdain for its dignity.... But monarchs would suffer because not only would this not enrich them, they would soon find themselves lacking, along with religion, the obedience and fidelity of their remaining vassals.⁴¹

From this standpoint, it was clear that no sovereignty has such solid foundations so as not to require the aid of Christian doctrine. By means of the priesthood, that doctrine propagated automatic obedience to the legitimate sovereign, without applying too close or prolonged scrutiny dedicated to demanding careful accounts of his lawful bearing and behavior.

The fourth publication by Muzzarelli, nominally concerned with excommunication, became in fact a short treatise on the Church's right and obligation to intervene in certain matters of a temporal nature. First, he justified the prudent, just and exemplary use of the tool of excommunication.⁴² Then he went on to affirm:



The mutual commerce between body and soul, the need that each has of the other in our present state, so connects and unites their actions, that thus connected and united they are called the action of man; therefore, if the Church were only to command the spirit its jurisdiction would be invisible, secret, solitary and useless, and no action which is only done through invisible substance can be judged. And if the Prince only commanded over the naked and senseless body, his jurisdiction would be like that the Poets imagined for Orpheus, a jurisdiction over the tops of mountains and the plants of the forest. No, it is not like this: the Church commands men; the Prince commands men. But the Church commands in the spiritual order; the Prince commands in the social order. From this it follows, to return to my proposition, that spiritual actions do not rule out the intervention of the body, nor do temporal ones exclude the intervention of the soul....

There can be no doubt: if ecclesiastical power is restricted to the spirit alone, and temporal power to the body alone, then both become worthless and useless for the ends God created them for.⁴³

In opposition to the tendency which would subject the Church to the state, seeing it as an arm of the state, in reality the Church was “prior to the state, in age and dignity.” Even more importantly, the Church had primacy in its relative weight in the overall order, because while both Church and state ultimately pursue the same goal, “eternal life,” the immediate end of the state was temporal, a “lesser end.” Therefore the Church, because of its jurisdiction over the spirit, was authorized “to force the flesh to an honorable and superior end, such as the worship and glory of the Creator.” Within this view, excommunication was a powerful instrument of the Church, which perforce had to intervene in temporal, and not only spiritual, life. Despite some lamentable abuses, excommunication should be obeyed as a legitimate power, until errors were corrected in keeping with tradition.⁴⁴

Behind these apparently concrete and specific themes lie great abstract issues about man’s life in society. Opposing perceptions produced different categories. The concerns established were different. Since this line of thinking was not properly speculative, but instead practical, directed to defending specific interests of the clergy, the treatment of conflicts was anchored in immediate problems, and therefore partly obscured the underlying theoretical dynamic. But there is no doubt that these writings contained



coherent theoretical proposals based on specific ecclesiastical interests. The theme of tolerance, which kept the Catholic clergy in exclusive control of religious matters, was based on a clear hierarchy of social values. Here self-interest, which liberalism saw as a driving motor, had limited room for expression, since the goal of society had to be transcendence, not immanence. The theme of clerical riches allowed the Church to stress the simple truth – a very important point – of the humanity of the clergy and its usefulness to society. Clerical immunity was an issue which allowed stressing the utility of the priesthood and Church not so much to society as a whole, as to the sovereign, that is to say the government, in particular. The Church did not come before the temporal power with empty hands! And finally, the matter of excommunication enabled emphasis once more on the hierarchy of social values, in which the spiritual should order the temporal, and not the other way around.

With the increasing struggle to influence a heterogeneous and partly unwilling public we can better gauge the contentiousness over how social phenomena should be understood. There was a growing need for pamphlets to go beyond their own socio-theoretical system in order to appeal to those influenced by the opposing system. The reach of contrary values had to be thwarted in this way. We have already seen some of this in the sermons and pastoral letters analyzed in the first chapters of this study. In some of these publications, the authors had started from an obviously hegemonic system, in which they could assume the basic agreement of their listeners to a single, shared socio-theoretical scheme. In this context, the voice of the clergy was an authorized voice meriting particular attention. Despite this particularity, before and especially after 1810 a new note emerged, foreshadowing the texture of the polysemic texts after Independence. Worries about how the public perceived reality were already growing, and the clergy did not settle for mere exegesis, moral exhortations, or eloquent restatement of principles considered irrefutable.⁴⁵ After 1821, it was no longer a question of teaching an unquestionably loyal public, or of appealing to the goodness and convenience of the King and his counsel of experts. Instead, the Church had to carefully shape how reality itself was understood by a more heterogeneous and less constant public.

For the larger, civil public, the pamphlets created a stage upon which this aspect of the most polemic sermons was even more intensified. Going beyond the framework of exhortation and



implicit threat, or rebuke and instruction, they dedicated themselves to open dispute. They made their point through irony, frontal and biting attacks, and the clear and detailed exposition of questions under debate. One reprinting, titled the *Representación del Arzobispo de Valencia a las Cortes*, is an indication of the discursive transition in pamphlets. In this case, it was a matter of sparring with the enemy about clerical reforms which, by all indications, neither the archbishop nor the liberal Cortes were ready to see as unnecessary or superfluous.⁴⁶ How to undertake reforms? What repercussions would they have for the social order and its very premises? Was it true that the only way to respond to abuses was by expunging them with the power of the state, and that such a state intervention was justified and based on sound precedents? According to the Archbishop of Valencia, the unmistakable problems did not justify the solution the liberal Cortes wanted. In fact, he claimed, the two powers had always kept their autonomy on such matters. He added:

There were, it is true, in our country, although much less than in others, some times of turbulence and misunderstanding between the two powers, in which there were attempts like the present one to arrange ecclesiastical affairs by civil laws. So it occurred in the turbulent years with which the reign of King Philip V began, but from that very disorder, order was later even more firmly reestablished, and so shone truth with greater brightness when that religious monarch, rightly informed, ... recognized his error, and revoked the ill-advised decrees which he had issued contrary to the discipline and laws of the Church....

Therefore it is indisputable that establishing and sanctioning rules for its discipline corresponds to the authority of this Church alone; that only She can alter already established rules; that only She must resolve and decide on ecclesiastical matters and affairs.⁴⁷

The *modus vivendi* the Archbishop of Valencia wished to defend was legitimated through careful argument that was surely in the finest tradition of pontifical lawyers. He had to establish through precedent and logic that there was no reason for “an undue acquiescence to the Princes of the age.” But the Archbishop characteristically resorted to those he considered true authorities on the matter, that is to say, to the Church Fathers. He found them “willing to obey [Princes] as their sovereigns in everything concerning the civil order, but not recognizing them



as more than faithful subjects of the Church, in the order of Religion." How could the bishops of Spain allow the Cortes to treat matters of this nature, when they were only properly treated in an "Ecclesiastical Congress," that is, a Council?⁴⁸

The Archbishop brandished the weapons of the law and the Church's own authorities to make an irrefutable impression. At the time, everything about the life of man in society was controversial. Demands made on the basis of appeals to rights and justice would soon lose their meaning in a world in which different rights, and different justices, were finally emerging from a background of radically opposed visions struggling over the very basis of human life. What influence would this growing breach have over the future course of struggles to win the understanding and allegiance of the people?

Significantly, the task of shaping understandings of reality had to be directed at the lower clergy as well as the lay public. Dennis Ricker states that in the years after Independence, the lower clergy were patriotic "often even to the point of opposing ecclesiastical policies." Yet by the mid-1840s, this had changed. After that point, the lower clergy are seen as more favorable to ecclesiastical policies and ideas than to government preferences. The evolution of clerical discourse and the careful reform of seminaries undoubtedly influenced this change.⁴⁹

In this sense, it is important that the effective tendency of Church discourse was directed towards a broadening of the scope of its general outlook. That is to say, the Church, very much in keeping with tradition, made an effort to keep abreast of the new state of affairs, blending new linguistic terms with its venerable lines of argument. This is not to suggest that the process was uniform or unidirectional. Instead, it took place as a far-sighted and defensive search with deep roots in the Platonic and Scholastic history of the Church which could hardly be fully appreciated from a liberal perspective.⁵⁰ Of course, this movement gave ecclesiastical discourse a multiform and shifting character which was especially unsettling for those looking for a completely systematic, internal coherence in thought. This made clerical thinking particularly susceptible to attack as "opportunist." The usual clerical response was, "Opportune, yes; opportunist, never!"

The Archbishop of Valencia, for example, was scandalized that the Cortes wished to do away with monasticism by means of a "mere decree." He recalled the services monks had given to the



Church *and* the state: they were mentors of the state in education and in their vision of social renewal; they also were exemplary not only in holiness but also in the “economic government” of material goods. Their knowledge included necessary and worthwhile Earthly things, not only theology and philosophy, and their lessons contributed to civil, as well as Christian, good conduct. The injustice of the abolition of monasticism, in addition, was shown by the fact that this profession had been “accepted by the Nation so many centuries ago” and that men had entered it “in good faith and by a kind of contract.” The expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain was not, as one might think, a precedent justifying the abolition of monasticism; far from the result of free determination, that action had been the product of the “machinations” and “triumphs” of Frederick of Prussia and Voltaire, who had conspired to astutely attack the Church by means of a campaign plotted against the Jesuits. As proof of this, he quoted directly from the correspondence between the two men. In addition, the men of the Jacobin Enlightenment had debased the people rather than enlightening them, making a great mistake.⁵¹

The text went on to argue that it was unacceptable to put the clergy on state wage, imitating what had been done in France. Bishops, it argued, were not mercenaries: they had works of social charity to perform, and the protection of their dignity was not compatible with their subjection to “lay treasurers, who could retain their salary.” The Archbishop resorted to the words of Pius VI in fervently defending the property of the Church, and denying any validity to its alienation on any pretext, or based on any precedent. The legal basis of ecclesiastical power on this matter was once again linked to the Church Councils. In this way, he returned to a more recognizably traditional discourse. But nothing kept him from interweaving one discursive style with another as the argument continued. He could even offer some subtleties, in this regard. Thus he insisted that the Earthly goods of the Church “are like the essence of the Church, maintaining its external worship which are an essential part of it.” One could only maintain otherwise, he said, out of ignorance, interest or impiety.⁵² But he provided careful historical proof for his argument in French precedents, concluding that:

we know of the consideration that the clergy of France always received, especially in the age of the greatest lights of that Nation, when the Bossuets, the Fenelons and countless other great men



flourished. Everything we have shown proves sufficiently the inviolable immunity of the goods of the Church.⁵³

In opposition to the Enlightenment Voltaire had perverted, another emerged here, no less French and no less worthy of the favorable cultural connotations the name of that nation conjured up. And this Enlightenment was a strictly Catholic phenomenon.

There are other fascinating elements to the elaboration of this discourse. Endeavoring to defend the personal immunity of the clergy, the Archbishop of Valencia appealed to special services the clergy and the militia rendered to society. For special services, special privileges were warranted, because "otherwise the good order of society would disappear, and all vocations would be confounded." The fact that there were abuses of personal immunity did not invalidate it; since "ecclesiastics are men ... there must be some criminals among them." What had to be saved at all costs was the bulwark of the priesthood at the heart of society. Punishing criminals should not lead to any scandal, as that would weaken the priesthood's ministry. Doing otherwise threatened to turn that ministry over to "the intrigues of a powerful villain." The Archbishop claimed to have "overwhelming proof of the false testimonies given about priests by those who cannot suffer even their loving rebuke." Thus, the personal immunity of clergy should not be understood as fitting the category of "odious distinctions."⁵⁴ Such an error endangered the balance between the two powers, according to the Archbishop, and tore apart the Church's moral leadership of all of society:

The bishops are tripped up and blocked in their rule by [the usurpation by civil authorities] ... and perhaps ... this ill-disposes the two authorities towards each other while they should be tightly unified for the good of religion and the state. This is the cause of many failings, and of *disdain for the rigor of the Church and mockery of the dignity of the priesthood and the monastic profession*.⁵⁵

The attempt to make priests subject to military service and pay them salaries, thus eliminating tithing, also failed to respect the Church's overall role in society. Once more, the defense of the traditional place of the Church in society was made by appealing to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The Archbishop had no problem with citing José Moñino, Count of Floridablanca, in his praise for the charity and public works of the clergy, their



activity in the patriotic societies of the reign of Charles III, their generous alms, and their faithfulness and political subordination to the established political regime. If anyone doubted that all this was applicable to independent Jalisco, a note underlined how this last concept specifically applied to the clergy of the state. But the constant appeal to Enlightenment did not indicate a lack of direction in clerical thinking. By making Enlightenment and political reform its own, the clergy reserved the right to rule on their “abuses.” In this case, “the abuse of freedom of the press since a few years back” had perverted a principle the Church did not dare attack. The clergy preferred to distinguish between liberty and “licentiousness.” The fact that the latter was on the rise made it “indispensable that in the absence of the Inquisition more efficient measures be taken to replace it.”⁵⁶

The Archbishop of Valencia was undoubtedly voicing a broader concern that had first appeared in Spain and now in Jalisco, but this thorny matter could easily place the Church in opposition to the state itself, and not only to the most Jacobin factions in civil society. Recognizing that substantial and irreversible changes were taking place in civil life was unavoidable. How could the Church ally itself to the best – or less objectionable – tendencies, and thus forcefully counter the more extreme deviations from the path of Catholicism and the moral leadership of the Church over society? The eloquent Archbishop offered a solution whose achievement would require suspending all innovative laws on the Church–state relationship:

I already have indicated to the Government the utmost importance or need for the extremely delicate matters of the banning of books and investigations of faith to be always subject in Spain to an authority delegated by both powers which could thus proceed with fitting uniformity, expeditiousness and vigor. At the same time, I have expressed my desires that the Government might arrange this and other matters to the satisfaction of all by reaching an agreement with the common Father of all the faithful, or at least by celebrating the National Church Council already agreed to by the extraordinary Cortes in Cádiz. In this National Church Council, a legitimate authority would at the same time address the purely ecclesiastical matters pointed out at the beginning of this missive and prepare the most effective means for correcting the abuses that may have been introduced in ecclesiastical affairs. Results as healthy for the Church of Spain and its two clergies [secular and regular] as for the state are



to be expected from the resolutions of this Council, once it has been celebrated with due liberty and corresponding legitimacy and solemnity. For that reason I of course ask the Cortes to please quicken the pace in the part corresponding to them, and to facilitate the meeting of the Council. May God see fit to have it meet as soon as possible.⁵⁷

In the writings of both Muzzarelli and the Archbishop of Valencia there was an evident concern with preserving the Church's own sphere of action. This was a practical matter in the now open discussions of clerical reform by the Archbishop, and tolerance, ecclesiastical wealth, clerical immunity and the use of excommunication by Muzzarelli. This was a theoretical matter, as well, both in claiming higher authority for spiritual values and in establishing parallels between state and Church powers. Muzzarelli and the Archbishop recognized the humanity of the clergy, but not the immanent character of its ecclesiastical work. The transcendence of man required that the clergy lead him forward, naturally making use of material goods and the Church's autonomous sphere of authority. Both struggled with the need to make evident that the Church served the interests of the world, and thus its distinctions and privileges were fitting for the exceptional service it gave to society or the state. Both argued from a strong sense of the traditional prerogatives of the Church, and agreed to some extent that adjustments could or should be made, as long as they did not alter the Church's fundamental role in society. The Archbishop, more than the Count, seasoned his discourse with new terminology from the Age of Enlightenment. On this point the archbishop especially, whose discourse followed essentially the same premises as the Count's, was anticipating a new direction for ecclesiastical discourse in Jalisco. In an era of growing pressures from statism and liberalism, the Church had to vary the tone of its discourse to win the loyalty of the people and the government.

Modes of Wrangling:

Indignation

Other 1824 pamphlets pointed out various aspects of public debate and opened a range of options for the dialogue between the Church and the new forces in society. The appearance that year of the new Political Constitution of the state of Jalisco must have made citizens particularly sensitive. Article 7 of the



Constitution would be the specific spark for debate, but what was under debate were the underlying assumptions and fundamental values of society. The tone of these pamphlets is particularly noteworthy, as it reveals the transition to a new social discourse oriented towards a public whose understanding had to be carefully shaped. Indignation was the outstanding tone in one pamphlet. Titled *Pronta y oportuna respuesta al papel titulado "Hereje a la tapattá porque no flía,"* it insisted on the distinction between two powers, one civil and the other ecclesiastical, in the government of society. From this perspective, it was ridiculous to suppose that Congresses function as Church Councils, since the latter were instances of power incomparable to others in their field, despite "the mania for a popular aura ... [which had produced] such an ugly monster." The desire to purify religion was warranted, but first, and above all, religion had to be preserved. Inappropriate readings inspired "impious, irreligious and immoral feelings." The legislator, in particular, drawing on appropriate historical examples, should realize his need to "humble himself before the priest." He had no reason to meddle in ritual or other matters of a religious nature.⁵⁸

Selflessness and Diffident Self-Pity

Another pamphlet about Article 7 of the Jalisco Constitution was no less forceful, and also carried a firm threat of not recognizing the authorities who dared to violate clerical jurisdiction. On ecclesiastical income, it claimed that if the official aim was to take it from the Church, that was wrong, but if there was no intent to change it, then the issue was pointless. The established situation and the rights of the Church had to be respected. The author suggested it was unsuitable for the state to appropriate ecclesiastical income, or to cultivate suspicious interests on the basis of a jumble of ideas derived from dubious books. From the beginning of the pamphlet, the author claimed not to pursue "any pecuniary interest" and argued that the defense the cathedral chapter made of the Church's rights on income matters was not a question of "coffers," but of principles.⁵⁹ Moving from a tone of selflessness to diffident self-pity, he argued that if the financial dispute was not resolved in a way acceptable to the Church, that would be enough:



Without waiting to be told, *leave*, I would take up my staff, and whether or not my daughters in confession wept, I would head off looking for some little spot inside or outside the Mexican states where there is more respect for the Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic Church, the fatherland on this Earth which I recognize, venerate and love.⁶⁰

Enlightened Reason and Elitist Restraint

The discourse defending the Church was not limited to indignant and diffident reaction. Fear and suspicion were all too evident in this kind of discourse, along with the sense of rivalry and struggle over society's hierarchy of power and objectives. There was no shortage of other pens proposing a more flexible approach towards contentious issues and their backdrop of general values and attitudes about the structure and direction of society. The Church could skillfully deploy Enlightened reason and elitist restraint in defense of the faith and a moderately representative republic.

One such pamphlet directed at fighting against the editors of *La Fantasma* [*sic*] tried to persuade the public not to follow the errors of the age in their search for enlightenment and change. The Catholic religion did not deny reason and its victories, but neither did it subjugate itself to them. The errors of the editors of *La Fantasma*, the pamphleteer insisted, came from ignorance and lack of knowledge of the "foundations" of religion. The editors wanted to make their reason the measure of all things, leaving behind traditions, the Church Fathers and the Councils. They dared to confuse religion with its vices and moral backsliding. Considering that reason was "so imperfect, weak, and open to error," and therefore should be guided by religion and not try to subdue it, "our religion does not fear the light, nor shrink from the examination of reason, nor demand of us an irrational faith."⁶¹

The author of this pamphlet reserved the reconciliation of faith and reason to the philosophers and theologians of Christianity, since "it is enough for the common faithful to instruct themselves according to their capacity in religious dogma and morality, to believe both are revealed by God with a sincere, compliant and reverent faith, and to practice both with all the fervor of their spirit and all the strength of their soul."



Thus it was inappropriate to suppose that religious ideas and beliefs were subject to public debate, or that different beliefs could compete among themselves within society. The pamphleteer went into details. He specified that religious tolerance implied the error of believing in salvation through different sects. Religious tolerance was something for atheists and deists and civil tolerance – itself not worthy of condemnation – could only be permitted in certain cases. He conceded that one could speak of a moral or evangelical tolerance, which included “the fraternal charity with which all men should be treated, whatever their nationality or religion,” but he maintained that Catholicism had always practiced it.⁶²

The author of this *Preservativo contra la irreligión* accused the editors of *La Fantasma* of “artificial bad faith” because they proclaimed themselves Catholics but did not act accordingly. The tolerance they proposed was civil, properly speaking, but had the clear intention of spreading into religious and philosophical tolerance. Catholic Jalisco would be drawn into internal disagreements by the planting of impious, lascivious and sacrilegious ideas “in our cities, in our villages, in our towns, and even in the most hidden ranches in the depths of the forests.” That would be the result of denying the Catholic Church its coercive capacity on religious questions, and of ultimately turning education over to men like the anti-clerical Pedro Lissaute.⁶³

“Public tranquility” had been based on a united opinion in favor of Independence, after eleven years of “divergences,” and such a unity had been prompted by the “schismatic decrees of the Congress of Madrid” of 1820 and everything they augured. Now, countering all that, there emerged the threat of the “fire of a destructive anarchy and most bloody civil wars.” And such evil was justified by denouncing the “inhumanity” of Catholics in comparison with the supposed “moderation” of Protestants. The pamphleteer recalled that the Church acted preferentially by “means of persuasion, censure and whatever conciliation is compatible with the truth of dogma.” Force was its final resort against “the pride, arrogance, insubordination and whimsy of heretics.” Now that the “latter, calling themselves philosophers, follow their own prejudices instead of reason, they must be contained with a healthy barrier,” despite “the tastes of the present age.” It fell to the Church to apply “spiritual penalties”; it fell to the state to apply the rest.⁶⁴



On this point, he stressed that Catholic religion did not attack reason, since it only aimed to deflate the “bias” of the philosophers, and not their reason, nor did it have anything to do with penalties which were not spiritual. But the state was obliged to defend religion as “the basis of society,” since attacks on religion could only be considered “crimes against the nation.” “When society has submitted to a religion, giving it the character of social law, as has happened in every Catholic state,” then duty and justice demanded that the sovereign repress the impertinent religious dissidents. Following the tradition begun by “the Great Constantine,” governments should serve God by combating error. Finally, concluding his pamphlet in a progressively more common, indignant, discursive style, the author of the *Preservativo contra la irreligión* refuted the editors of *La Fantasma* who professed their respect for the opinion of the people on legal matters: “How then could the representatives of the people go against an opinion so widespread across the state?”⁶⁵ The people opted for intolerance because the alternative was

an attack against the most sacred property right. Thus the man who by means of impious writings tries to destroy the true religion of a state is a public bandit, and the one who in conversation tries to uproot religion from the heart of another, is a sacrilegious pickpocket.⁶⁶

Sarcasm and Aggressive Denunciation

A biting, sarcastic tone could be added to the desire to refute new thinkers and force them to listen to the Church. To that end, one pamphleteer wrote *Conversación familiar entre un sacristán y su compadre contra el papel titulado Hereje a la tapatía*. The reader’s curiosity was piqued and jarred from the beginning by finding that it was none other than the sexton himself who took the role of *Hereje a la tapatía*, arguing in favor of Article 7.⁶⁷ Obviously, the sexton was identified with the Church, because of his office, but he naïvely followed and believed all the arguments of those who would put the Church on the state’s payroll. His compadre took pity on him and, understanding his well-intentioned ingenuousness, tried to open his eyes. When offered the argument that now the state was virtually the independent people of Mexico, and that the people had always paid for the Church, the compadre raised a question:



Did I not tell you they would provide common-sense justifications, in order to deceive the ignorant? Tell me: is not the Church of Jalisco composed of the faithful of Jalisco, under the rule of its head? And are not the faithful of Jalisco the ones who have paid the expenses of worship? Therefore, the Church of Jalisco has paid those expenses. Then why don't they write "the Church will pay the expenses for worship?" Moreover, what would you think if they set out a constitutional article like this: The state will pay for and set the domestic expenditures of every family, and due to this, entered into your house to remove, change and set your economic laws?⁶⁸

It was not money that was at stake, but authority and jurisdiction. The congressional deputies might be trying to do the right thing, but there already were many people who had "the same feelings and thoughts" as the Protestants, and might in some future congress turn the best objectives around, "since you can already see that this is done according to the number of votes." Gradually, the sexton saw the light, and in response to the accusation of economic interest on the part of the Church authorities, came to find that the new thinkers must have "some little interest" of their own, and so "the author of that tract was only trying to trick ignorant people like me."⁶⁹ Now on the verge of winning the debate, the compadre aggressively changed his tone to denunciation:

Do not let yourself be tricked, compadre, let me tell you. Luther, the implacable enemy of our religion, called its dogmas and principles abuses and prejudices. And you know how he went about things? He extinguished the religious orders, and said he was removing an abuse from religion; he abolished the mass, and said he was removing another abuse from religion; he refused obedience to the Roman Pontiff, and made himself head of the Church, and said he was removing another abuse. In this way, he destroyed the religion of Jesus Christ, saying he was removing abuses. The same path was followed by Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot and others who set out to destroy our religion. The words "Enlightenment," "humanity," and "charity" were always on their lips, and they always denounced "superstition," "fanaticism," and "ignorance." And do you know what they understood those words to mean? When they said the first set of words, they meant impiety, licentiousness, and so forth, and when they said the second, religion, its dogma, and its commands.⁷⁰



The author of the pamphlet under attack thought – the compadre claimed – like a Protestant, and went so far as to compare Christianity with other religions. At the same time, he ignored Church authorities. The sexton concluded that “to reach the truth, I should conclude the opposite of everything these tracts say.” The compadre closed with this commentary:

You could do nothing better; that is what I do, and I am not wrong in my calculations: and so when you hear one of these scribblers say that they want religion to be pure, understand that to mean they want it to be a nullity, that is, they want no religion, and you will be right in this before God.⁷¹

An agreement with the Pope on the matter of patronage was to be expected, and this would allow abuses to be attacked and peace to be kept between the two powers and between citizens.⁷²

A Cry of Alarm on Sensitive Matters

One reprint from Puebla underscored the anguish important elements of the clergy must have experienced in trying to come to terms with the unavoidable changes in society without giving up the coherence and dignity of ecclesiastical affairs. The Congress of Veracruz was on its way to modifying the fees associated with the administration of the sacraments and was attacking standard practice in matters of alms and prayers for the dead. It was also attacking abuses in religious matters. The Bishop of Puebla struck a note of alarm on a sensitive issue: he admitted that the civil government had the right to intervene in setting fees, once patronage was agreed to, but he adamantly reserved the rest to ecclesiastical authority.

The Bishop was not worried that new fees be set or that the civil government claimed rights to do so, but that the new fee schedule, lacking clarity and uniformity, would become a motive for debate between priests who administered the sacraments and “the representatives of the people.” If a quarrel of this sort was sparked, the priests would seem like mere mercenaries. Everything became thornier still, because the new schedule did not adequately resolve the relationship between custom and formal agreement in established fees, so that conflicting interests could appeal to either local custom or to the overall agreement in defending their positions.⁷³



But what we should pay most attention to is that, if parishioners, as they have lost their affection for holy things, have refused to contribute to worship and to the support of their ministers, causing infinite work yet paying little for their services, in keeping with the times in which the current fees were set: what can we expect when they find themselves authorized to enter into contracts and adjustments which, as the law itself states, have been made for their benefit?⁷⁴

In reforming abuses, there was the danger of doing away with good practice as well as bad. But the key to all this was perhaps the “opportunity” of the changes introduced at a moment when all of society was experiencing a major shift:

I am of the opinion that until we have constituted and cemented across the country the federal system we have sworn to uphold, the authorities, and especially the ecclesiastical ones, are too weak – I will painfully say – to make themselves understood and obeyed by the people (pueblos). This is why, even with respect to the clergy immediately subject to me, I am frequently experiencing difficulties and excuses in having my orders followed, even when those orders are not directed in their objective, manner, or circumstances to anything more than common happiness and the assurance that my flock is not lacking for essentials.⁷⁵

Confronted with such a complex and worrisome situation, the Bishop asked for the overturning of the law on fees, committing himself to set a fee schedule to resolve the matter.

Unflinching Impartiality

The new setting of Independent Mexico did indeed worry prominent elements of the clergy, as shown by the pamphlets of another writer attacking Article 7. In one pamphlet, he reminded readers that whoever paid the clergy determined the number of parish priests, for example, and in the final analysis could plunge in and “suppress sermons, the preaching of God’s Word, and all the practices and exercises of devotion that the Church admits.”⁷⁶ The writer insisted on the effects the article would have, not its intentions. In brief, civil power would spread its reach and delve into matters not properly its own. But the pamphleteer avoided addressing more specific issues like tithing and its administration; declaring his desire for an unflinching “impartial examination,”



he stressed intrinsic concerns rather than formal matters. He was worried about jurisdiction and its consequences, not detailed arrangements. He finished his first pamphlet exhorting readers to “examine words, cut to the core to find if their meaning faithfully corresponds to the objective and ends they state, and to find how far they can extend and reach.”⁷⁷

Clarification for the Obstinate

But after seeing his good intentions misunderstood by a “defender of Article 7,” this pamphleteer dared to publish a new piece in which he further clarified his position to overcome obstinacy. In this new tone, he emphasized that the discipline of the Church was not subject to the “tribunal of reason,” but to “the appropriate ... authority.” He went on to say that the important distinction in Article 7 was the difference between “setting” and “paying” the costs of worship. The state, in fact composed of the faithful, had the obligation of paying for the expenses of the Church. That is why part of the question was necessarily complex. But paying did not confer the right to “regulate expenditures,” because that invaded ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In the expenses column it made no difference to speak of the state or the faithful, and it was necessary to see that the upkeep of the Church was attended to “in virtue of the obligation all incur by a tacit agreement on entering and remaining in the society of the Church.” Just as in “the other political spheres of society,” in the Church there was a difference between the representatives and those represented, and the latter had to pay for the former by means of contributions.⁷⁸

Needless to say, in the first case it is the represented who pay, and also those who set the expenses for their representatives by virtue of contracts stipulated in the Constitution. Beyond the fact that such identification is purely ideal, abstract and metaphysical, while distinctions between certain citizens and others are all too real and effective, causing different attitudes, active in some, passive in others, the same distinction holds in the society of the Church in which the faithful submit and subject themselves to the Church’s authority on every point concerning their spiritual government and well-being.⁷⁹

This rash comparison between civil and ecclesiastical affairs insisted on rigorous parallels and avoided assimilating one power to the other at all. To propose otherwise was to flirt with “heterodox propositions.”⁸⁰



Annoyance Tempered by Good Faith

Despite what the author of the previous two pamphlets had to say, the exact dividing line between the civil and the religious was not so clear to all. Could one resort to a parallelism between one and the other to support the symmetrical autonomy of both, without changing the content of these related spheres of the social existence of man? The liberal pretense of “democratizing” religious life and subjecting its functioning to the vox populi unsettled more than one clerical spokesman. In one pamphlet, entitled *También los callados suelen hablar*, the author stressed that the new freedom of thought should be restricted to politics, without spilling over into religious questions. It seemed more than evident to him that “the Christian religion is not a system or a problem, and on the contrary, its divinity is sufficiently proven.”⁸¹

This thinker manifested his annoyance at advocacy of any other way of seeing things, which he considered to be “impugning religion at its base.” The newspaper *La Estrella Polar*, the spark for his ire, had promised the public exactly “a few rudiments of public law” and “the means for consolidating laws.” The newspaper should be dedicated to fulfilling its promise, and to the question of schools. But its authors, feigning an erudition they did not possess, were meddling with religion, causing violent public reactions. This approach meant that the people would not be enlightened but that “over time we would be nothing more than beasts chained to other, larger beasts.” In the judgment of the clerical pamphleteer, the imprudent religious toleration upheld by the authors of *La Estrella Polar* promised to bring greater disorder to the nation. In reality, this implied a contest between “the health of the people” and freedom as those journalists understood it. In any case, the laws determined Catholicism to be the religion of state, which should eliminate the arguments of *La Estrella Polar*.

Without straying from the shining principles of Enlightenment and politics, we know that the People are the legislators, that the laws receive their authority and rigor from them, and ultimately the laws are nothing more than the will and expression of the People themselves. Yet [it is being argued that] the laws cannot determine which should be the religion of state!⁸²

Apparently, the liberating policies of the Independence period gave the people the right to choose their religion, but not to



determine its internal functioning. The author trusted that “a happily faithful people” would freely choose Catholicism as their only religion in such conditions. The author, who confessed he was not “erudite,” although he was “a stranger to prejudice,” counseled “prudence” and “moderation” on these matters. Sensitive to the pressures exerted by the editors of *La Estrella Polar*, he closed his pamphlet in a tone of good faith:

I am no more a fanatic than the many who share my ideas, nor am I superstitious, since I am a declared foe of puerile and minimal devotions. I look at religion on the grand scale, convinced that everything directed towards God can be nothing less than sublime. I bring this up because the words “fanatic,” “biased,” and “superstitious” have become commonplaces.⁸³

Self-Defense in the Eyes of the New Republic

Once clerics had realized that the battle of the moment required making popular sovereignty compatible with the Catholic religion, their imaginations could run wild with proposals, since they did not want to fall into openly inflexible, resentful or even reactionary positions. They needed to fight the liberals over the question of popular sovereignty and, by appealing to popular feelings about religion, create a common-sense vision of its reach and limits. At the same time, they had to make the people aware of the real workings of the clergy, so that the people’s vision of the Church was not based on what the liberals were saying. But since popular feeling was changing under the new conditions of Independence, they could not carry this out without a certain command of current policies and the principles they were based on.

Another extraordinary example of the Church’s discursive efforts to confront contemporary challenges can be seen in the pamphlet titled *La mala fe descubierta y herida con sus propias armas*. After defending the historical rights of the Church concerning the cost of services, the author added in a tone of self-defense:

The supreme head of the Church, and the remaining pastors, received from Jesus Christ, and not from the people, the power to rule over and govern the society entrusted to them. This is a sovereign legislative power, able to direct and preserve the commonwealth, and in use of that power the Church could and should



designate the means, and set the fees, by which it was supported. It corresponds to the sovereign legislative power of a society to attempt by all means to conserve the commonwealth, and one of those indispensable means is the distribution and setting of expenditures. It corresponds to each member of the commonwealth, as one of his indispensable obligations, to make the necessary contribution, to free himself of a portion of his possessions, not according to his own will, but according to the law established by the sovereign power.⁸⁴

If there were abuses in the distribution of ecclesiastical income, they should be remedied by Church Councils, and not Congresses. On this point, the necessary link between the spiritual and the temporal in the real world was clear, but that did not make it any less evident that the state should pay ecclesiastical expenditures, while the Church should set them. There was no proper reason to mock the ecclesiastical authorities and show them disrespect despite their moderation and their status as subjects of the state, in civil affairs, and “ministers of God on High,” in religious affairs. The canons of the cathedral chapter were being misunderstood, because they should not be seen as an aristocracy, but rather as the “senate” of the bishop. They were not idle, but devoted to worship. There was the same relationship between the canons of the cathedral chapter and the priests who usually administered the sacraments as between magistrates (alcaldes) and high-ranking functionaries of the civil government. Each was necessary, in its own right. To highlight the symmetry of this analysis, the author reminded his readers that the magnificent palaces in capital cities glorified the sovereignty of the nation just as the work of the bishop and his cathedral chapter gave magnificence to worship and divine sovereignty.⁸⁵

The author’s tone shifted from self-defense to flattery of the new republic. Despite the great wealth of America, the canons received little in income. It was “calumny” to claim otherwise. In any case, the Church and civil authorities should come together for any reform the nation wanted. The starting point for this unity would be the ecclesiastical immunity which was already defended by the Constitution.⁸⁶ Pushing the liberals from the discursive center of the debate even as he retained their language, the pamphleteer concluded:

You, Jalisco, who until now were a province of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, but now, emancipated like the rest of the nation, find yourself



restored to your pristine state in civil matters and having recovered in full your civil rights, you are sovereign, free, independent; you must promote the Earthly well-being of your members: no one, no one disputes you those rights, no one denies you the attributes of your civil sovereignty. The bishop, the cathedral chapter, the secular and regular clergy have subjected themselves to the established system of government, but keep in mind that you have remained and will remain Catholic, and so you are now just as you were before in matters of religion; that is to say, you are subject to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church; you are bound to recognize her authority, you must obey her laws, not only out of fear but also out of conscience.⁸⁷

Piety, justice and “true Enlightenment” counseled that a Concordat be signed within the tradition of shared Church–state authority over religious matters, so that “with each keeping to the limits of what is just, peace, sweet peace will unite us with ever-tighter bonds to make us formidable to our enemies, and strengthen the foundations of our government.”⁸⁸

Prudence:

The Appeal to the Harmonious, Social Whole

The author of *Sobre la cuestión del día* went even further in this debate. He established that the divide was between the “destructive genius” of societies and the “Americans’ efforts in the difficult task of organizing their social contract.” The words “religious reform” were confusing the issue at hand, and in their “malice” distorted “the interesting question of appropriate and necessary reforms” by straying from the established path for such reforms. Thus Mexico followed the dreadful example of France, which committed the same error despite being “the most cultured and one of the most humane nations on Earth.” The pamphleteer specified the origins of all this confusion: “If liberty, equality and property are rights seen as sacred, then the inviolability of the conscience of a people is the first of all rights.”⁸⁹

The cathedral chapter – so widely criticized by liberals – oversaw “so many educational, religious, and public charity establishments which owe it their subsistence.” Therefore, attacking the chapter meant going against the interests of the people, and revealed the ignorance of those who did so: “bold men, presumptuous politicians: you do not know the people you live among, nor the matters society is truly demanding that you address.”



In this, such men were following the bad example given by constitutional Spain, and the result would be upheaval and “the powerful ascendancy of a persecuted Church.”⁹⁰

Clerical possessions were the foundation not only of worship, the priesthood and charity, but even the credit of the public treasury. And the association some wished to make between clerical possessions and fanaticism was very suspicious:

The fear they want to induce, of the influence of fanaticism, is an illusion or a specious pretext; new ideas, and new institutions resist it. If a state wishes to prosper, let it be considerate toward customs, protect letters, cultivate the sciences, and respect religion; thus, we will be philosophers without impiety and pious individuals without fanaticism. Happily, Christianity has never opposed the inalienable rights of human reason; Christianity has civilized the ancient world and the new; Christianity announces that the Earth has been distributed among the sons of man, and leaves the world over to its controversies and nature to its investigations; Christianity gives rules to virtue and places no limits on the human spirit other than its beloved mysteries.⁹¹

Prudence counseled “a harmonious order,” without undue meddling between the Church and the state, “and it does not seem sound that in the name of sovereignty some want to induce them to follow doctrines they themselves resist.” The accusation that the cathedral chapter was agitating on behalf of the Bourbons was baseless; the true disturbers of the peace were those who attacked the Church. They resorted to questionable interpretations of the authority of the Holy Fathers and the Councils in their declamations against the clergy, demanding a return to the primitive traditions of the Church. But that was absurd, since the historicity of the clergy was one with the historicity of its people.⁹² Thus,

it is rash and shows a lack of healthy criticism, or sincerity, to want to return the current customs of the ministers of the sanctuary to those of the primitive days of the Church. The passing of time, the prodigious growth of the Church itself, and the successive changes in the customs of nations, have necessarily changed those of ecclesiastics, who have obeyed the influence of the peoples they have lived among, forming with them a single and identical society.⁹³



One example of this was the way the Church was governed. From primitive democracy, the Church had taken on “a kind of aristocratic form” to avoid “the confusion produced by the involvement of the multitude of the people in matters of great gravity.” In this context, the cathedral chapter dated from the days of the Apostles. This is where the right to tithes came from, even if in the diocese of Guadalajara they were collected “with the greatest leniency and spirit of deference.” But it seemed like the historicity of the Church did not imply a new democratization after Mexican Independence. The author of this pamphlet insisted that novelties had to be contained within the political sphere, lest they incur error and agitate consciences by touching the religious. The conclusion was obvious: “let us not break with dangerous experiments that sacred bond which, uniting the Earth to the Heavens, brings us closer in love and in social relations.”⁹⁴

Refuting their anticlerical opponents by using their own arguments and symbols, turning them to serve the cause of religion, was not only an ingenious move but a necessary concession to the age and to the men of Mexican Independence. Revealing the breadth and flexible nature of ecclesiastical discourse, this calls into question the vision of a Mexico unavoidably polarized between an obscurantist Church and a popularly supported liberalism. On the other hand, the range of responses by clerical writers to this era is also evident. The variety of opinions and their notable contradictions on certain points are no less interesting than their overall agreement with Count Muzzarelli on the basic points of institutional loyalty. Two more examples of ecclesiastical discourse will point to its ability to question the logic of the spokesmen of liberal reason and even its daring in risking everything by publicly refuting such weighty opposing thinkers as Montesquieu.

Blunt Rebuttal of Wayward Thinkers

The accusations of liberal malice and ignorance were not entirely new, but in *El error despojado de los adornos y aliños de la virtud y presentado bajo su propia forma*, they took on new dimensions. The author began his pamphlet with the statement that some editors were “very poor reasoners” who damaged religion and society, ambushing the people like wolves dressed in sheep’s skin. They



wanted to do away with the Catholic religion, the only true religion and “the tree of happiness.” The blunt rebuttal he offered was succinct and direct: “O philanthropy, much vaunted philanthropy.” Reason was subject to disputes, to the most absurd errors and the most monstrous crimes, and demanded the “brightest torch of revelation” to purify it and allow man to find “the true path to happiness.” But the writers he was fighting against violated the constitution to attack the intolerance which granted the Catholic religion its proper place in society. By contrast, “what would someone who had written an iota against Independence deserve?” They fallaciously argued that intolerance only held in public, but spoke against it privately.⁹⁵ Such inconsistency by wayward thinkers endangered the people’s trust in government in this new age:

Let us be honest, gentlemen editors: all the people have embraced the current system under the firm promise they were given that the Apostolic, Roman, Catholic religion would be kept untouched and without mixture with any sect, and that we would spill our blood in her defense. Under that guarantee, they conferred power upon the deputies, and if we do not honor that promise, the entire world will rightly say we only meant to deceive, and will not give credit to our most solemn vows; from this will be born distrust, insubordination, and frightening division; disorder and endless abominations will prevail.⁹⁶

Intolerance was based on the Gospel, and not on Voltaire, and faith and customs were entrusted to the care of the Church pastors. In the face of this situation, “how is it possible that, when all find protection in the laws, this tender Mother alone [the Church] is persecuted and unprotected?”⁹⁷

Others wanted to “impudently” attack the Church, “flaunting their wisdom” when they spoke without any basis, disregarding the care the civil powers of a Catholic country had to exercise over the faith. They forgot what Saint Thomas had established, that “receiving the faith is voluntary, but retaining it after receiving it, is necessary.” Tolerance was to be based on “evangelical charity,” and that was the ultimate offense: “Considering you are such excellent logicians, such sublime theologians, such distinguished scribes, and such profound politicians, we wager you do not know: *what is charity?*” God was the first object of charity, and then one’s neighbor, but liberals had turned that around. But “why reverse ideas so



maliciously, and make humanity the principal or sole object of this virtue and not remember God, or place him last?"⁹⁸

Thus in pursuit of his opponents, peppering his text with expressions like "Excellent logic, gentlemen editors, worthy of the Age of Enlightenment!", the pamphleteer concluded that it was a matter of two opposing cultures: one directed towards God, the other towards man. In this sense, religious tolerance was really "indifference to religious worship."⁹⁹ This conclusion was based on the work of famous French thinkers:

But since you do not read, that is why you do not even know the arguments offered by the most capable opponents of religious intolerance. No wonder our ideas seem abstract and metaphysical to you, because you are like nocturnal birds, who are offended by the light of the sun, and enjoy the shadows of night.¹⁰⁰

Not content with distorting the Gospels and not knowing the sources of their own thought, wayward writers went so far as to cut short the texts they cited so as to twist their meaning¹⁰¹:

Oh, shame! Oh, the injustice of our Times! Though only a handful of libertines want to introduce sects to decatholicize and demoralize our nation, yet the desires and aims of these immoral and vicious men are listened to and applauded. But those members of an entire nation who only want and seek Earthly and Heavenly happiness are mocked and listened to with distaste.¹⁰²

These "ignorant and prideful scribblers" made fraudulent appeals to the Scriptures in order to mock the public and "a free people who look indignantly on those who protect deception and deceit." Thus the sad conclusion to be drawn was that the pseudo-politicians of the day, "just as they assiduously promise to provide a theory worthy of noble and beautiful beings, ... degrade the dignity of man, to the extent of confusing man at times with beasts, or even with those of lower condition." Or to put it differently: "Truly, between the doctrine of the Holy Fathers and that of our journalists there is the same opposition as between light and darkness, justice and injustice, Christ and Beelzebub!"¹⁰³

Finally, the last publication analyzed in this chapter appeared as a short-lived newspaper, *La Cruz*, of which seven numbers survive. The newspaper dedicated itself to rebutting no less than



Montesquieu himself, based on a close reading of his ideas. First, the author specified that Montesquieu's analysis of religious matters only applied to false religions. After all, "superstitions cannot be universal," and were adapted to local conditions, including the climate, popular feeling, and government type. By contrast, the Catholic religion escaped the fate of superstitions:

Since the Catholic religion is not created in this way, nor the work of the hands of any man, it happens to be free of all such vices and defects. Since it has come from heaven, there is no country under heaven that can hide from its influence. It perfects all human governments in what they are, according to nature, and it purges all laws of the errors and vices they contract from their authors.... From this, one can see how wrong are those who think it best for only one kind of government, and even more, those who think it prejudicial to all forms of politics.¹⁰⁴

Directly contradicting Montesquieu in the second number of the paper, the author denied that Catholicism was more appropriate to a monarchy, and Protestantism to a republic. To reinforce his argument, he brought to mind the republics of Catholic Italy. Then he challenged the French author rhetorically: "how will Montesquieu respond to his own principles?" If "virtue is what builds up republics and its absence is what corrupts them, the religion which most truly professes the doctrine and practice of truth will be the best at preserving the vigor of a republic."¹⁰⁵

Could Montesquieu not know that all of Catholic religion depended on charity? Or that charity is the truest love for the common good, looking beyond one's self, and the ruin of ambition, of avarice, and of all the vices countering perfect love among the citizenry?¹⁰⁶

Thus, not only did Christianity escape from Montesquieu's decree that all religions were "born and formed in some state," but Catholicism, "without being born in any one state, kept the form of government of each," while Protestantism did the exact opposite. Thus "the Catholic religion is even more effective for aiding good policy, because it does not suffer from any suspicion that it was created by Princes, nor according to their tastes or interests." Catholicism had the good fortune that its "center" was precisely "in an orbit eccentric to the other orbits the world is divided into, each independent of the others, while the Church like the sun is the common center of all."¹⁰⁷



La Cruz closed its seventh issue with two statements emphasizing how Catholicism had defeated a disoriented Montesquieu and was useful for all nations and all governments:

It is quite true that the Catholic religion, which has saved many wise and powerful nations, and very strong governments zealous of keeping their mutual sovereignty and independence, could not place the dignity of the crown on any of these governments, but instead was exempt of all and indifferent to all. On this point hangs the salvation of many nations and their governments....

Just as by its nature this religion from Heaven is more independent than all Earthly powers, so it is all the more useful to those same powers. First, because no man, however wise and astute he may be, will find in Her any of the ambitious arts Princes have discovered for terrifying and subduing their subjects. What religion commands in favor and in honor of the secular powers, has not been established or conceived by them....¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Behind the growing variety of discursive modes employed by the Church we can glimpse various perspectives on resolving pending problems. This variety itself was a response to the need to shape, for a heterogeneous public, a convincing vision of the Church's role in society and towards the state. There was clear agreement on the Church's right to defend itself, but the style and details of that defense had not yet been set. Since the goal was not just to establish a coherent ecclesiastical position, but to influence a broad heterogeneous public, this was a sizable challenge. The declaration of a federal republic based on the principle of popular sovereignty was a major obstacle for the Church.

The greatest variance among these pamphlets can be stated in the following way: first, either the republic and the Church would remain united, in the traditional alliance, or the Church had the right to resist the state; second, the republic and the Church are parallel powers, with all comparisons adjusted to the republican style, but their mutual independence assured the divine sovereignty of the Church; third, if the state did not respect the Church, the latter could utilize republican principles to bypass the state to call directly on the people, in the name of the people and of popular well-being. Beyond this, the points raised by



Count Muzzarelli – on religious intolerance, clerical wealth, personal immunity for the clergy and ecclesiastical jurisdiction – were openly or tacitly held. The Archbishop of Valencia's leaning towards undertaking changes in clerical behavior, but under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, was also generally agreed to. His tendency to employ more up-to-date language was even deepened by other pamphleteers, but we should not assume that different rhetorical positions in the exalted polemics of 1824 were mutually exclusive. In any case, the presence of these differences within clerical discourse suggests a lack of overall cohesion and coordination. Since no officially sanctioned orthodox rhetoric yet existed, there was a range of possibilities, which could be eclectically blended to the taste of individual authors.