

Ghost hath placed you bishops *to rule the Church of God*" Acts 20' 28.—"These things *command* and teach" (1 Tim. 4' 11).—"Rebuke *with authority*: let no man despise thee" (Tit. 2' 15).

The duty of the Faithful of all ages and countries is thus tersely summarized: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them." Heb. 13' 17.

### Full Legislative Power Promised, Conferred, and Exercised.

[365] Christ *promised* the legislative power to His Apostles in the following words, which to the Hebrew as well as to the Catholic mind convey but one meaning, viz., that of full legislative authority.

"Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." Mat. 18' 18.

It is historically undeniable that the terms "to bind" and "to loose" were understood by our Lord's hearers to signify the power to make and to abrogate laws. Not Holy Writ alone, but the Talmud itself bears abundant witness that such was the traditional signification attached to these words by the Almighty and by His chosen people.

Our Lord himself in other passages of Holy Writ uses the words in question in their traditional sense, as He does here—*v.g.*, in the 17th verse of the 5th chapter and in the 4th verse of the 23rd chapter of S. Matthew. So does S. Paul in the 2nd and 6th verses of the 7th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans.

The plenitude of the power promised is evident from the very first word of our Lord's promise, "whatsoever"—which studiously eliminates all idea of inadequacy. The same appears from the divine assurance that their legislative enactments shall ever be ratified in heaven. If there ever was a truly sovereign power on earth, it is most assuredly that whose every act is promised the unreserved sanction of God centuries in advance and to the very end of all time.

"As the Father hath sent Me I also send you" (John 20' 21). The power *conferred* by these words is thenceforward *exercised* by the Apostles. For instance, we know that neither the law of nature nor the positive divine law obligates Christians to "abstain from the things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled" (Acts 15' 29). Yet, the Apostles, under the presidency of S. Peter, made a law enforcing such abstinence upon the hitherto exempt members of the Church. Again, S. Paul forbids the ordination of a certain class of men (1 Tim. 3' 2), and orders women to pray in the Church with "head covered" (1 Cor. 11' 3-10). He further writes to the Corinthians: "Now, I praise you, brethren, that ..... you keep *my precepts*." 1 Cor. 11' 2.