

### 6.1 Introduction:-

The word Christendom well describes the world of the Middle Ages. By birth, one was a member of a highly structured society, in which supreme political power belonged to the Emperor and supreme spiritual power belonged to the Pope. In a sense, even the existence of these two highest lords, one spiritual and one temporal, was an offense against medieval man's quest for unity, and we have seen how the Popes, after affirming their spiritual supremacy, went on to win political power as well. The medieval world had a center - Rome - and the power which radiated from that city held all of Medieval Europe in its sway.

Between the years 1300 and 1500, European unity came to an end. In the political sphere, the Empire lost whatever power it still had, after its disastrous encounters with the medieval papacy, for in the long struggle which had begun even before the time of Gregory VII in 1076 and lasted until the papacy of Innocent III in the early thirteenth century, the Popes were unquestionably the victors. The idea of a supreme authority in the secular realm, which would take the place of the old Roman Empire and govern the entire civilized world had lost its hold on the minds of men. The political mystique of Rome, which had inspired Charlemagne and the medieval Emperors, was dead. Dante's *De Monarchia* in the early fourteenth century was an eloquent defense of imperial power and its rights against the imperial papacy, but it was a document which looked to the past and not to the future.

The medieval papacy had succeeded in wresting secular power from the Emperors, but its very triumph called into existence counter-forces which were purely secular and often hostile. At the time of the Gregorian Reform, church authorities were struggling against Emperors who saw the propagation of the faith as their highest task and most serious responsibility, and who naturally claimed the rights which were consequent on these obligations. But when the church became, to all appearances, one secular power among others, its victory led to the emergence of political powers which struggled with it for control, and which could not have cared less about the spiritual mission of the church. The emerging nation states in England, France, and Spain were far more successful in controlling the church