

To Restore All Things

Essays of Catholic Political Thought

Joseph de Maistre, Juan Donoso Cortés, Hilaire
Belloc



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Juan Donoso Cortés (1809-1853) – *Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism, Considered in Their Fundamental Principles* (1851)

Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) – *Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* (1810)

Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) – *The Servile State* (1912)

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Edited by Austin L. Lambert

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Contents

Editor's Preface	1
The Supernatural Order and Catholic Civilization	
Juan Donoso Cortés	
1. Catholicism	6
2. Catholicity	17
3. Society under the Church	24
4. Catholicity is Love	38
5. Our Lord's Triumph	42
6. Supernatural Triumph	47
7. The Church's Triumph Over Society	58
Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions	
Joseph de Maistre	
8. Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions	67
The Servile State	
Hilaire Belloc	
9. Introduction	126
10. Definitions	128
11. Our Civilisation was Originally Servile	140
12. How the Servile Institution Was for a Time Dissolved	145
13. How the Distributive State Failed	154

14. The Capitalist State in Proportion as It Grows Perfect Grows Unstable	167
15. The Stable Solutions of This Instability	178
16. Socialism Is the Easiest Apparent Solution of the Capitalist Crux	182
17. The Reformers and Reformed Are Alike Making for the Servile State	190

Editor's Preface

The modern mind, trained in abstraction and habituated to rupture, operates within a conception of political thought detached from theology and foreign to the divine economy of grace. The essays in this volume stand within an older tradition, a world where the City of Man understood its dependence upon the City of God, and where politics existed as an act of obedience to a higher, enduring order.

Joseph de Maistre, Juan Donoso Cortés, and Hilaire Belloc, though separated by time and circumstance, speak with a common recognition that political collapse proceeds from spiritual decay. Each writes as a Catholic, treating the Faith as the soul and animating principle of civilization. Catholicism stands as the condition for political life capable of maintaining order, vitality, and justice. Societies built upon the life of the Church endure with meaning; those severed from it collapse into mechanical governance, stripped of interior purpose.

Joseph de Maistre's *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* advances the thesis that constitutions form through the slow and providential growth of peoples across generations. He depicts legitimate authority as an inheritance received through tradition, sanctified by time, and preserved by reverence for custom. Constitutions arise within the life of a people and express the mysterious work of Providence shaping their identity. De Maistre's argument unfolds as a rejection of modernity's illusion that society can be designed through rational planning and maintained by the calculations of human will.

Juan Donoso Cortés, in his *Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism*, examines the theological consequences of political rebellion. His analysis traces the progression from liberalism's flight from theological foundations to the

dissolution of political stability. Liberalism, by severing itself from the doctrines of original sin and grace, dismantles the very structures that sustain order and renewal. The resulting political life, deprived of its theological anchor, drifts toward either the chaos of socialism or the rigid compulsion of dictatorship. Cortés speaks not as an ideologue but as a witness to the spiritual laws governing history, knowing that rebellion against Christ leads always to the dominion of force. “Do not fear the sword,” he writes, “fear the spirit that guides it.”

Hilaire Belloc’s *The Servile State* extends this theological understanding into the economic and social realms. Observing the aftermath of industrial capitalism and the rising apparatus of the welfare state, Belloc describes a civilization in which liberty erodes under the weight of material systems. Both capitalism and socialism, though differing in their outward forms, converge in their reduction of man to dependency. Servility returns through economic structures that entangle men in webs of legal and financial obligation. Belloc presents no utopia; he teaches that the endurance of liberty depends upon moral discipline, religious life, and the widespread possession of property sustained by Christian custom. Where these foundations decay, freedom itself recedes into abstraction.

The essays presented in this volume concern themselves with first principles. Each author calls the reader back to the foundational truths upon which political life depends: that society must be ordered to the good, that the good exists as a living and divine Person, and that the political community fulfills its purpose only through reverence for this reality.

The work of renewal demands conversion before it demands reform. Memory must be restored before politics can be rebuilt. Prayer must precede any reconstruction of institutions. These writers, standing amid the broken remnants of Christendom, preserve the clarity that flows from fidelity to truth. Their witness upholds the enduring structure of reality: man enters into freedom through the life of God, and politics maintains stability through the rule of truth. Restoration begins with memory, matures through prayer, and finds its consummation, if God grants it, in the reconstitution of Christendom.

This volume serves that end.

Austin L. Lambert

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The Supernatural Order and Catholic Civilization

Juan Donoso Cortés



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Catholicism

In his *Confessions of a Revolutionist*, M. Proudhon has written these remarkable words: "It is wonderful how we ever stumble on theology in all our political questions." There is nothing here to cause surprise, but the surprise of M. Proudhon. Theology, inasmuch as it is the science of God, is the ocean which contains and embraces all sciences, as God is the ocean which contains and embraces all things.

They were all before, and they are all after, their creation in the divine understanding; for if God made them from nothing, He adjusted them to a mould which is eternally in Him. They are all there in that sublime manner in which effects are in their causes, consequences in their principles, reflections in light, forms in their eternal exemplars. In Him are the expanse of the sea, the beauty of the plains, the harmony of globes, the pomp of worlds, the splendour of the stars, the magnificence of the heavens. There are the measure, the weight, and the number of all things, and all things came thence with number, weight, and measure. There are the inviolable and sublime laws of all beings, and each is under the empire of its own.

Everything that lives finds there the laws of life;
everything that vegetates, the laws of vegetation;
everything that moves, the laws of motion;
everything that has feeling, the laws of sensations;
everything that has intelligence, the laws of understandings;
everything that has liberty, the laws of wills.

In this way, it might be said, without falling into Pantheism, that all things are in God, and God is in all things. This explains why, in proportion to the

diminution of faith, truths diminish in the world; and why the society which turns its back on God beholds all its horizons suddenly obscured by terrifying darkness. For this reason, religion has been considered by all men, and in all times, as the indestructible foundation of human society.

“Omnis humanae societatis fundamentum convellit qui religionem convellit,” says Plato in the *10th Book of his Laws*. According to Xenophon (*on Socrates*), “The most pious cities and nations have ever been the wisest and most lasting.” Plutarch says (*against Colotes*), “That it is easier to build a city in the air than to constitute a society without belief in the gods.” Rousseau, in his *Social Contract*, Book IV, Chapter 8, observes, “That there never was a State formed without religion serving as the foundation.” Voltaire says in the *Treatise on Intolerance*, Chapter 20, “That wherever there is a society, religion is absolutely necessary.”

Peoples rest on the fear of the gods. Polybius declares that this holy fear is more necessary in free States than in others. Numa, that Rome might be eternal, made her the Holy City. The Roman, among the peoples of antiquity, was the greatest, precisely because it was the most religious.

When Caesar one day uttered in full senate certain expressions against the existence of the gods, Cato and Cicero at once rose to their feet to accuse the irreverent youth of pronouncing words dangerous to the state. It is told of Fabricius, a Roman captain, that when he heard the philosopher Cineas mock the Divinity in presence of Pyrrhus, he uttered these memorable words: “Would to the gods our enemies may follow this doctrine when at war with the Republic!”

The diminution of faith, which produces the diminution of truth, does not necessarily carry with it the diminution, but rather, the extravagance, of the human intellect. At once merciful and just, God denies the truth to culpable intelligences, but He does not deny them life; He condemns them to error, but not to death.

Hence we have all seen pass before our eyes those ages of prodigious incredulity and high culture, which have left a track behind, less luminous than inflamed, in the prolongation of time, and have shone with phosphoric light in

history. Fix your eyes on them, however—look at them again and again—and you shall see that their splendours are conflagrations, and they illumine only because they are lightning. One would say their illumination proceeds from the sudden explosion of materials in themselves obscure but inflammable, rather than from the pure regions where is engendered that gentle light, softly diffused over the arches of heaven by the inimitable pencil of the Sovereign Painter.

And what we have here said of ages can be said of men. Denying or granting them the faith, God denies or grants them the truth. He does not grant nor deny them intelligence. The infidel's may be sublime, the believer's moderate. But the former is only great like an abyss, whilst the latter is holy like a tabernacle: in the first dwells error; in the second, truth. In the abyss, with error, is death; in the tabernacle, with truth, is life.

For this reason, there is no hope whatever for those societies which abandon the austere worship of truth for the idolatry of genius. On the heels of sophisms come revolutions; on the heels of the sophists, executioners. He who knows the laws to which governments are subject possesses political truth; he who knows the laws to which human societies are subject possesses social truth; he who knows God knows these laws; he knows God who hears what He affirms of Himself, and believes what he hears.

Theology is the science which has these affirmations for its object. Whence it follows, that every affirmation relative to society or to government supposes an affirmation relative to God; or, what amounts to the same, that every political and social is necessarily converted into a theological truth.

If all is explained in God and by God, and theology is the science of God, in whom and by whom all is explained, theology is the science of all. If it be, there is nothing beyond that science, which has no plural, because all, which is its subject, has none.

Political and social science do not exist, except as arbitrary classifications of the human understanding. Man, in his weakness, distinguishes what is united in God in the simplest unity. In this way, he distinguishes political affirmations from social and from religious affirmations; whilst in God, there is but one indivisible and sovereign affirmation.

He who, when he speaks explicitly of anything, knows not he speaks implicitly of God—or, when he speaks explicitly of any science, is unaware he speaks implicitly of theology—may rest assured he has received from God only the intelligence absolutely necessary to constitute him a man.

Theology, then, considered in its most general acceptance, is the perpetual subject of all sciences, as God is the perpetual subject of all human speculations. Every word which comes from the mouth of man is an affirmation of the Divinity, even that by which he blasphemes or denies Him. He who, turning against God, frantically exclaims, “I abhor Thee; Thou dost not exist,” lays down a complete system of theology, as well as he who raises his contrite heart to Him and says, “Lord, strike Thy servant who adores Thee!”

The first hurls a blasphemy in His face; the second lays a prayer at His feet: but both affirm Him, each in his own way, for both pronounce His incommunicable name.

In the manner of pronouncing that name lies the solution of fearful enigmas—the vocation of races, the providential mission of peoples, the great vicissitudes of history, the rise and fall of famous empires, conquests and wars, the different temperaments of nations, their physiognomy, and even their various fortunes.

Away there, where God is infinite substance, man, abandoned to silent contemplation, inflicts death on his senses and passes through life like a dream, fanned by sweet-scented and enervating breezes. The adorer of the infinite substance is condemned to a perpetual slavery and an infinite indolence; the desert will be for him something more sublime than the city, because it is more silent, more solitary and grand; and yet he will not adore it as his god, because the desert is not infinite.

The ocean would be his only divinity, because it embraces all, only for its wild turbulence and strange noise. The sun, which illumines all, would be worthy of his worship if only he could not take in its resplendent disc with his eye. The heavens would be his lord if it had no stars, and the night, if it had no rumours. His god is all these things together—immensity, obscurity, immobility, silence.

There shall suddenly rise, by the secret virtue of a powerful vegetation, colossal and barbarous empires, which shall fall one day, with rude noise, crushed by the immense weight of others more gigantic and colossal, without leaving a trace in the memory of men either of their fall or of their foundation. The armies there shall be without discipline, as the individuals, without intelligence. The army will be principally and above all, a multitude. It shall be less the object of war to determine which nation is the most heroic, than to discover which empire is the most populous. Victory itself shall be only a title of legitimacy, inasmuch as it is the symbol of the Divinity, because it is the proof of strength. So we see that Indian theology and history are one and the same thing.

Turning our eyes to the West, we see, stretched at its portals, a region which begins a new world in the moral, political, and theological orders. The immense Oriental divinity is here analysed, and stripped of its austere and formidable character—here it is multitude. The divinity was there stationary; here, the multitude seethes without rest. All was there silence; here, it is murmurs, cadence, and harmonies. The Oriental divinity extended through all time and over all space. The grand divine family has here its genealogical tree, and finds room on the small space of a mountaintop.

There is the repose of eternal peace in the god of the East; here, in the divine dwelling, all is war, confusion, and tumult. The political suffers the same vicissitudes as the religious unity: here, every city is an empire, whilst there, all the multitudes formed one empire. To a god corresponds a king; to a republic of gods, one of cities. In this multitude of cities and of gods all will be disorder and confusion. Men will have in them something heroic and divine, and the gods, something terrestrial and human. The gods will give to men the comprehension and instinct of the great and the beautiful, and men will give to the gods their discords and their vices.

There will be men of lofty fame and virtue, and incestuous and adulterous gods. Impressionable and nervous in temperament, that people will be great in its poets and famous in its artists, and will make itself the wonder of the world. Life will not be beautiful in its eyes unless surrounded by the splendour and the reflections of glory; nor will death be fearful, only because it is followed by

oblivion. Sensual to the marrow of its bones, it will look for nothing but pleasure in life; and will consider death happy if it occurs among flowers.

The familiarity and relationship with its gods will make that people vain, capricious, loquacious, and petulant. Wanting in respect for the divinity, it will be wanting in gravity in its designs, firmness, and consistency in its resolutions. The Oriental world will appear to it as a region full of shadows, or as a world peopled by statues. The East in its turn, regarding the other's life so ephemeral, its death so premature, its glory so short-lived, will call it a nation of children. In the eyes of the one, greatness is in duration; in those of the other, in movement. In this way, Grecian theology, Grecian history, and the Grecian character are one and the same thing.

This phenomenon is visible above all in the history of the Roman people. Its principal gods, of Etrurian origin, as far as they were gods, were Grecian; as far as Etrurian, Oriental. Inasmuch as they were Grecian, they were many; inasmuch as they were Oriental, austere and sombre. In politics as in religion, Rome is at once the East and the West. It is a city like that of Theseus, and an empire like that of Cyrus. Rome is like Janus: on its head there are two faces, and on its faces two countenances; the one is symbolic of Oriental duration, and the other of Grecian movement.

So great is her capacity of movement, that she reaches the confines of the world; and so gigantic her duration, that the world calls her eternal. Created in the designs of God to prepare the way for Him who was to come, her providential mission was to assimilate all theologies and to domineer over all nations. Obeying a mysterious call, all the gods mount the Roman Capitol, and the nations, seized with a sudden terror, bow their heads to the earth. All cities, one after another, see themselves deserted by their gods; the gods, one after another, see themselves despoiled of their temples and of their cities.

Her gigantic empire regards as peculiarly its own the legitimacy of the East—multitude, power—and the legitimacy of the West—intelligence and discipline. Hence it subjugates all, and nothing withstands it; it grinds all, and no one complains. As her theology has at once something different from, and something in common with, all theologies, Rome has something peculiar and

something in common with all the cities conquered by her arms or eclipsed by her glory. From Sparta she has severity; from Athens, culture; from Memphis, pomp; and grandeur from Babylon and Nineveh.

In a word, the East is the thesis, the West its antithesis, Rome the synthesis; and the Roman empire signifies nothing else but the Oriental thesis and the Grecian antithesis, which have become lost and confounded in the Roman synthesis. Analyse now the constitutive elements of that powerful synthesis, and you shall find that it is synthesis in the political and social orders, only because it is so in the religious order. In the Oriental peoples as in the Grecian republics, and in the Roman empire as in the Grecian republics and in the Oriental peoples, the theological serves to explain the political systems. Theology is the light of history.

The Roman greatness could not descend from the Capitol except by the same means which had served it in ascending. No one could put his foot in Rome without the permission of her gods; no one could scale the Capitol without first hurling down Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The ancients, who had a confused notion of the vital force which exists in every religious system, believed that no city could be conquered unless first abandoned by the national gods. Hence we find in all wars of city with city, of people with people, and race with race, a spiritual and religious contest which followed the fortunes of the material and political.

The besieged, whilst they resisted with the sword, turned their eyes to their gods that they might not abandon them in their misery. The besiegers, in their turn, conjured them with mysterious imprecations to abandon the city. Woe to the city in which was heard that terrible voice which said, "Thy gods are going; thy gods are abandoning thee!" The people of Israel could not be overcome whilst Moses kept his hands raised to the Lord; and could not conquer when they fell. Moses is the figure of the human race, proclaiming in all ages, in different formulas and ways, the omnipotence of God and the dependence of man, the power of religion and the virtue of prayer.

Rome succumbed because her gods succumbed; her empire came to an end because her theology ended. In this way does history place in relief the grand principle which is hidden in the depths of the human conscience.

Rome had given to the world her Caesars and her gods. Jupiter and Caesar Augustus had divided between them the grand empire of things human and divine. The sun, which had seen gigantic empires rise and fall, had never, since the day of its creation, beheld one of such august majesty and such extraordinary grandeur. All nations had received its yoke; even the rudest and wildest had bent their necks: the world laid down its arms; the earth hushed its breath.

At that time there was born, in a humble stable, of humble parents, a Child, prodigious in the land of prodigies. It was said of Him that at the time of His appearance among men a new star shone out in heaven; that He was scarcely born when He was adored by shepherds and kings; that angelic spirits had swept through the air and spoken to men; that His incommunicable and mysterious name had been pronounced in the beginning of the world; that the patriarchs had watched for His coming; that the prophets had announced His kingdom; and that even the sibyls had sung His victories.

These strange rumours had reached the ears of the servants of Caesar, and awakened a vague terror and dread in their breasts. That dread and that vague terror soon passed away, when they saw the days and nights prosecute as before their perpetual rotation, and the sun continue rising on the Roman horizon. And the imperial governors said to themselves, "Caesar is immortal, and the rumours we heard were the rumours of nervous and idle people." And so passed thirty years. Against the prejudices of the vulgar there is an efficacious remedy—contempt and oblivion.

But at the end of thirty years, the discontented and idle begin to find, in new and more extraordinary rumours, new food for their idle talk. The Child had become man, according to people's report. On receiving on His head the waters of the Jordan, a spirit like a dove had descended on Him; the heavens had opened, and a voice was heard on high, saying, "This is my beloved Son." In the meantime, He who baptized Him—an austere and sombre man, a dweller in the desert and an abhorrer of the human race—cried out without ceasing to the

people, "Do penance;" and pointing to the Child made man, gave this testimony of Him: "This is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

That all this was a miserable farce enacted by wretched clowns was a thing beyond all manner of doubt in the eyes of the "strong minds" of that age. The Jewish people was always given to witchcraft and superstition. In past times, when it turned its eyes—obscured with weeping—to its abandoned temple and its ruined country in the Babylonian slavery, a great conqueror, announced by its prophets, had redeemed it from slavery and restored it at once to its temple and its country. It was no way wonderful, then, but quite natural, that it should await a new redemption and a new redeemer, who should strike from its neck the heavy chain of Rome.

If there had been no more than this, the unprejudiced and enlightened people of that age would probably have allowed these rumours to pass, as they had the others, till time—the great minister of human reason—had dissipated them. But some evil spirit arranged things otherwise; for it happened that Jesus (this was the name of the Person of whom those great wonders were told) commenced to teach a new doctrine, and work extraordinary things.

His audacity, or His madness, went so far as to call the hypocrites and the proud, proud and hypocrites, and whitewashed sepulchres those who were whitewashed sepulchres. The hardness of His heart was so great, that He advised the poor to be patient, and then, mocking them, proclaimed their happiness. To be revenged on the rich, who always despised Him, He said to them, "Be merciful." He condemned fornication and adultery, and He ate the bread of fornicators and adulterers.

He despised—so great was His envy—the doctors and the sages, and conversed—so low were His instincts—with the gross and rude. He was so filled with pride that He called Himself Lord of the earth, the sea, and the heavens; and He was such an adept in the arts of hypocrisy that He washed the feet of a few miserable fishermen. In spite of His studied austerity, He said His doctrine was love; He condemned labour in Martha and sanctified idleness in Mary; He had a secret compact with the infernal spirits and received the gift of miracles in price for His soul.

Crowds followed Him, and the multitude adored Him.

It is evident, in spite of their good intentions, the guardians of the holy things and of the imperial prerogatives—responsible as they were, in virtue of their offices, for the majesty of religion and the peace of the empire—could no longer remain impassible. What principally urged them to take active measures was the report they had: on one hand, that a great multitude had been on the point of proclaiming Him King of the Jews; and on the other, that He had called Himself Son of God, and had tried to prevent people from paying tribute.

He who had said and done such things must die for the people. It only remained to prove the charges and clearly establish the fact. As to the tribute, when He was once questioned on the point, He gave that celebrated answer which disconcerted the curious: "Give to God what belongs to God, and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar;" which was the same as: "I leave you your Caesar, and I rob you of your Jupiter."

When questioned by Pilate and by the high priest, He ratified what He had said and proclaimed that He was the Son of God—but that His kingdom was not of this world. Then Caiphas said, "This man is guilty, and should die;" and Pilate, on the contrary, "Set Him free, for He is innocent."

Caiphas, the high priest, regarded the question in the religious point of view. Pilate, a layman, regarded it in the political point of view. Pilate could not comprehend what the State had to do with religion, Caesar with Jupiter, politics with theology. Caiphas, on the contrary, thought that every new religion must disturb the state, every new god dethrone Caesar, and that the political was involved in the theological question. The mob instinctively thought with Caiphas, and in its hoarse murmurs called Pilate the enemy of Tiberius.

In this state the question remained for the moment.

Pilate, immortal type of corrupt judges, sacrificed the Just One to fear, and delivered up Jesus to the popular fury, and tried to purify his conscience by washing his hands. The Son of God mounted the Cross amid mockery and insults; there were raised against Him the hands and tongues of the rich and the poor, the hypocrites and the proud, the priests and the sages, of women of bad life and of men of evil conscience, of the adulterers and fornicators.

The Son expired on the Cross, praying for His executioners and commending His spirit to His Father.

Everything was at rest for a moment; but then were seen things never before seen by the eyes of men. The abomination of desolation in the temple; the matrons of Sion cursing their fecundity; the sepulchres yawning open; Jerusalem without inhabitants; her walls levelled with the ground; her people dispersed through the world, and the world in arms.

The eagles of Rome were heard screaming wildly. Rome was seen without Caesars and without gods; the cities depopulated and the deserts peopled; as the governors of nations, men who did not know how to read, and were clad in skins; the multitudes obeying the voice of him who said at the Jordan, "Do penance," and of the other who said, "He who wishes to be perfect, let him leave all things, take up his cross, and follow Me;" and kings adoring the Cross, and the Cross raised on high in all places.

What is the cause of these great changes and transformations? What is the cause of this great desolation and universal cataclysm? What has occurred?

Nothing; only some new theologians are going about through the world announcing a new theology.

Catholicity

Catholicity is a complete system of civilisation—so complete, that in its immensity it embraces everything: the science of God, the science of the angel, the science of the universe, and the science of man. The infidel falls into ecstasy at sight of its inconceivable extravagance, and the believer at sight of its wonderful grandeur. If there be anyone who, on beholding it, passes by with a smile, people—more astounded at such an amount of stupid indifference than at that colossal grandeur and that inconceivable extravagance—raise their voice, and say, “Let the fool pass.”

All humanity has studied for the space of eighteen centuries in the school of its theologians and its doctors; and at the end of so much application, and the end of so much study, up to today the abyss of its science has not been sounded. There, it learns how and when all things and times are to end, and when and how they had their beginning; there, are discovered secrets which were ever hidden from the speculations of the philosophers of the Gentiles and the understanding of their sages; there, are revealed the final causes of all things, the concerted movement of everything human, the nature of bodies and the essence of spirits, the ways by which men walk, the term to which they go, the point from which they come, the mystery of their peregrination and the line of their journey, the enigma of their tears, and the secret of life and death.

Children suckled at its prolific breasts know today more than Aristotle and Plato, the luminaries of Athens. And yet the doctors who teach these things, and rise to such sublimity, are humble. It was given to the Catholic world alone to present a spectacle on earth reserved formerly to the angels in heaven—the spectacle of science bent in humility before the divine throne.

This theology is called Catholic because it is universal; and it is so in every sense, and under every aspect. It is universal because it embraces all truths; because it embraces all that all truths contain; because its nature is destined to extend through all space and to be prolonged through all time. It is universal in its God, and in its dogmas.

God was unity in India, dualism in Persia, variety in Greece, multitude in Rome. The living God is one in substance, like the Indian god; multiple in person, like the Persian; like the Greek gods, He is various in His attributes; and in the multitude of spirits (gods) which serve Him, He is multitude, like the Roman gods. He is universal cause, infinite and impalpable substance, eternal repose, and author of all motion; He is supreme intelligence, sovereign will; He is the container, not the contained. It is He who drew everything from nothing, and it is He who maintains everything in its being, who regulates all things angelic, all things human, and all things infernal. He is merciful, just, loving, brave, powerful, simple, secret, beautiful, wise.

The East knows His voice, the West obeys Him; the South reverences Him, the North hangs on His nod. His word swells creation; the stars veil their face; the seraphim reflect His light on their inflamed wings; the heavens serve Him for a throne, and the earth's globe is poised in His hand. When the time came, the Catholic God showed His countenance; this sufficed to cast to the earth all idols fabricated by men. And it could not be otherwise when we remember that human theologies were nothing more than mutilated fragments of the Catholic theology, and that the gods of the Gentiles were nothing more than the deification of someone of the essential properties of the true God—the biblical God.

Catholicity seized on man in his body, in his senses, and in his soul. Dogmatic theologians taught him what to believe; moral theologians, what he should do; and the mystics, rising above all, taught him to ascend on high on the wings of prayer—that ladder of Jacob composed of brilliant stones, by which God descends to earth and man rises to heaven—till earth and heaven, God and man, burning together in the flame of an infinite love, are blended in one.

Through Catholicity, order entered into man, and through man into human societies. The moral world found on the day of redemption the laws it had lost on the day of prevarication and sin. The Catholic dogma was the criterion of sciences; Catholic morality, the criterion of actions; and charity, the criterion of affections. The human conscience, escaped from its hampered state, saw through the interior as well as through the exterior darkness, and at the light of those three divine criterions, recognised the happiness of the peace it had lost.

Order passed from the religious to the moral world, and from the moral to the political world. The Catholic God, creator and sustainer of all things, subjected them to the government of His Providence, and governed them by His vicars.

St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. xiii: "*Non est potestas nisi a Deo*", and Solomon in the Proverbs, chap. viii, ver. 15: "*Per me reges regnant, et conditores legum justa decernunt.*"

The authority of His vicars was holy precisely inasmuch as it was foreign—that is, divine. The idea of authority is of Catholic origin. The ancient governors of the Gentiles built their sovereignty on human foundations; they governed for themselves, and they governed by force. Catholic governors, considering themselves as nothing, were no more than the ministers of God and the servants of the people. When man became the child of God, he immediately ceased to be the slave of man.

There is nothing at once more respectable, more august, and more solemn than the words pronounced by the Church in the ears of Christian princes at the time of their consecration:

"Take this wand as an emblem of your sacred power, that you may be able to support the weak, sustain the vacillating, correct the vicious, and lead the good along the path of salvation. Take this sceptre as the emblem of divine equity, which directs the good and chastises the wicked: learn from this to love justice and abhor iniquity."

These words were in perfect consonance with the idea of legitimate authority, revealed to the world by our Lord Jesus Christ:

“You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them; and their princes have power over them. But it is not so among you; but whosoever will be greater, shall be your minister, and whosoever shall be first among you, shall be the servant of all. For the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” (Mark x. 42–45)

All gained in this fortunate revolution—peoples and their governors; the latter, because having domineered formerly over people’s bodies by the right of force, now they governed bodies and minds, sustained by the force of right; the former, because they passed from the obedience of man to the obedience of God, and because they passed from forced obedience to voluntary obedience.

Yet, if all gained, all did not gain equally; for princes, in the mere act of governing in the name of God, represented the impotence of humanity to constitute a legitimate authority by itself and in its own name; whilst peoples, from the mere fact of only obeying God in the prince, were the representatives of the highest and most glorious of human prerogatives, which consists in freedom from subjection to any yoke but that of divine authority.

This explains, on the one hand, the singular modesty with which the fortunate princes whom men call great, and the Church, saints, shine in history; and on the other, the singular nobility and distinction which are marked on the brow of all Catholic peoples.

A voice of peace, of consolation, and of mercy was raised in the world, and had sounded deeply in the human conscience; and that voice had taught nations that the weak and the poor are born to be served because they are poor and weak, and that the great and the rich are born to serve because they are rich and great. Catholicity, by deifying authority, sanctified obedience; and by sanctifying the one and deifying the other, condemned pride in all its most tremendous manifestations—in the spirit of domination and in the spirit of rebellion.

There are two things totally impossible in a truly Catholic society: despotism and revolutions.

Rousseau, who had sometimes sudden and grand illuminations, has written these remarkable words: *“Modern governments are undoubtedly indebted to Christianity, on one side, for the firmness of their authority, and on the other, for the lengthened intervals between revolutions. Nor has her influence extended to this alone; for, acting on themselves, she has made them more humane. To become convinced of this, we have only to compare them with ancient governments.”* (*Émile*, Book IV)

And Montesquieu has said: *“There is no doubt Christianity has created among us the political right we recognise in peace, and the right of nations we respect in war, for the benefits of which the human race shall never be sufficiently grateful.”* (*Esprit des Lois*, Book XXIX, Chap. 3)

God Himself, who is the author and governor of political, is the author and governor of domestic society.

In the most hidden, in the highest, in the most serene and luminous point of the heavens, there exists a tabernacle, inaccessible even to the choirs of the angels; in that inaccessible tabernacle is perpetually verified the prodigy of prodigies, the mystery of mysteries. There is the Catholic God: one and triple; one in essence, triple in persons.

The Father eternally begets the Son, and from the Father and the Son eternally proceeds the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost is God; the Son is God; and the Father is God. And God has no plural, because there is but one God, triple in persons and one in essence.

The Holy Ghost is God like the Father, but is not the Father; is God like the Son, but is not the Son. The Son is God like the Holy Ghost, but is not the Holy Ghost; is God like the Father, but is not the Father. The Father is God like the Son, but is not the Son; is God like the Holy Ghost, but is not the Holy Ghost.

The Father is omnipotence, the Son, wisdom, the Holy Ghost, love; and the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are infinite love, supreme power, perfect wisdom. There, unity, dilating, eternally begets variety; and variety, condensing, is eternally resolved into unity.

God is thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; and He is sovereign thesis, perfect antithesis, infinite synthesis. Because He is one, He is God; because He is God,

He is perfect; because He is perfect, He is prolific; because He is prolific, He is variety; because He is variety, He is family. In His essence are found, in an unutterable and incomprehensible manner, the laws of creation and the exemplars of all things. All has been made to His image, and hence creation is one and various. The word *universe* signifies unity and variety in one.

Man was made by God to the image of God; and not only to His image, but also to His likeness: and hence man is one in essence, and triple in persons. Eve proceeds from Adam; Abel is begotten by Adam and Eve; and Abel and Eve and Adam are one and the same thing—they are man, they are human nature.

Adam is man the father; Eve, man the mother; Abel, man the son. Eve is man like Adam, but is not the father; she is man like Abel, but is not the son. Adam is man like Abel, but is not the son; and like Eve, but is not the mother. Abel is man like Eve, but is not the mother; like Adam, but is not the father.

All these names are divine, as are divine the functions sanctified by them.

The idea of paternity, foundation of the family, could not have been conceived by the human mind. Between the father and the son there is none of those fundamental differences which afford a base sufficiently broad on which to build a right. Priority is a fact, and nothing more; force is a fact, and nothing more; but priority and force cannot constitute, of themselves, the right of paternity—although they can originate another fact, the fact of slavery.

The proper name of the father, supposing this fact, is *lord*; and the name of the son is *slave*. And this truth, which reason teaches us, is confirmed by history. In the peoples forgetful of the great biblical traditions, paternity was never else but the proper name for domestic tyranny. If there had existed a people forgetful, on the one hand, of those great traditions, and not given, on the other worship of material force, in that people father and son would have called themselves—and would really have been—brothers. Paternity comes from God, and can come from God alone, in its name and in its essence. If God had permitted the complete oblivion of the traditions of Paradise, the human race, with the institution, would have forgotten its very name.

The family, divine in its institution and in its essence, has everywhere followed the vicissitudes of Catholic civilisation: and this is so certain, that the

purity or the corruption of the former is ever an infallible symptom of the purity or corruption of the latter, as the history of the various vicissitudes and transformations of the second is the history of the transformations and the vicissitudes through which the first has passed.

In Catholic ages, the tendency of the family is to perfection: from natural it becomes spiritual, and from the hearth it passes to the cloister. Whilst the children at the hearth prostrate themselves reverently at the feet of the father and the mother, the inhabitants of the cloister—children more humble and reverent—bathe with tears the feet of another father more exalted, and the sacred mantle of another mother more tender.

When Catholic civilisation is conquered and enters on its period of decadence, the family immediately decays, its constitution is vitiated, its elements are decomposed, and all its bonds relaxed. The father and mother, between whom God placed no other intercourse but love, create between themselves the intercourse of severe ceremony; whilst a sacrilegious familiarity suppresses the distance God placed between children and parents, destroying the intercourse of reverence. The family, then debased and profaned, is dispersed and lost in the clubs and casinos.

The history of the family can be given in a few lines.

The divine family, exemplar and model of the human family, is eternal in all its individuals. The human spiritual family—after the divine, the most perfect of all—exists in its individuals as long as time lasts. The human natural family, between father and mother, lasts as long as life; and between father and children, many years. The human anti-Catholic family lasts between father and mother some years; between father and children, some months. The artificial family of the clubs lasts a day, and of the casino, an instant.

Duration is here, as in many other things, the measure of perfection. Between the divine and the human family of the cloister, there is the same proportion as between time and eternity. Between the spiritual family of the cloister—the most perfect—and the sensual of the club—the most imperfect of all human families—there is the same proportion as between the brevity of a moment and the immensity of time.