

# TO RESTORE ALL THINGS

Essays of Catholic  
Political Thought

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Juan Donoso Cortes

*Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism  
and Socialism, Considered in Their  
Fundamental Principles*

Joseph de Maistre

*Generative Principle of  
Political Constitutions*

Hilaire Belloc

*The Servile State*

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## 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.

Editor

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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.

## Society under the Church

Constituted, on one side, the criterion of sciences, the criterion of affections, and the criterion of actions; constituted, on the other, in society, political authority; in the family, domestic authority—it was necessary to constitute another authority above all human ones: the infallible organ of all dogmas, the august depositary of all criterions; that should be at once holy and sanctifying, that should be the word of God incarnate in the world, the light of God dancing on all the horizons, the divine charity inflaming all souls.

Which should treasure up in a sublime and hidden tabernacle, to shower them on the earth, the infinite treasures of the graces of heaven; which should be the refreshment of fatigued men, the refuge of sinful men, the fountain of living waters for those who are thirsty, the bread of eternal life for those who are hungry, wisdom for the ignorant, for the wanderers a way; which should be full of warnings and lessons for the powerful, and for the poor full of love and mercy.

An authority placed so high that it could speak to all with power, and on a rock so firm, that it could not be shaken by the waves of this restless sea of the world; an authority founded directly by God, and which should not be subject to the fluctuations of human things; that should be at once ever new and ever old—duration and progress—and which God should bless with His special assistance.

That sublime, infallible authority, founded for eternity, and in which God feels eternally delighted, is the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church—the mystic body of the Lord, the happy spouse of the Word—who teaches the world what she learns from the mouth of the Holy Ghost; which, placed as it

were in mid-region between earth and heaven, exchanges prayers for gifts, and perpetually offers the Father, for the sins of the world, the precious blood of the Son in perpetual sacrifice, and in perfect holocaust.

As God makes all things perfect and finished, it would not become His infinite wisdom to give the truth to the world and then, entering into His perfect repose, leave it exposed to the injuries of time, the vain subject of the disputes of men. For this reason, He eternally conceived the idea of His Church, which shone on the world in the plenitude of time, beautiful and perfect, with that sublime perfection and sovereign beauty she ever had in the divine understanding.

Since then, she is for us who navigate in this sea of the world, boiling in tempests, as a luminous beacon placed on a high rock. She knows what saves and what ruins us; our first origin and our last end; in what consists the salvation and in what the damnation of men—and she alone knows it. She rules souls, and she alone rules them; she straightens the will, and she alone straightens it; she purifies and inflames the affections, and she alone inflames and purifies them; she moves hearts, and she alone moves them with the grace of the Holy Ghost.

In her finds no place, nor sin, nor error, nor weakness; her tunic is without stain; tribulations are for her triumphs; the hurricanes and the gentle breezes carry her to port.

Everything in her is spiritual, supernatural, and miraculous:

- It is **spiritual**, because her government is of intelligences, and because the arms with which she defends herself and slays, are spiritual.
- It is **supernatural**, because she ordains everything to a supernatural end, and because her duty is to be holy and to sanctify men supernaturally.
- It is **miraculous**, because all the great mysteries are directed to her miraculous institution, and because her existence, her duration, her conquests, are a perpetual miracle.

The Father sends the Son to earth; the Son sends the apostles to the world, and the Holy Ghost to the apostles. In this way, in the plenitude as well as in the beginning of time—in the institution of the Church as in the universal creation—the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost interfere.

Twelve sinners pronounce the words which sound mysteriously in their ears, and the earth is immediately disturbed: an unusual fire burns in the veins of the world; a whirlwind knocks nations out of their equilibrium, hurries away peoples, disturbs empires, confounds races. The human race sweats blood under the divine pressure, and from all that blood, and from all that confusion of nations and races and peoples, and from those impetuous whirlwinds, and from that fire which circulates through all the veins of the earth, the world comes out radiant and renovated, lying at the feet of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That mystic City of God has gates looking in all directions, to signify the universal calling. "*Unam omnium Rempublicam agnoscimus mundum*," says Tertullian.

For her there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, barbarians nor Greeks. In her find place the Scythian and the Roman, the Persian and the Macedonian, those who come from the east and from the west, from the northern zone and from the regions of the south. Hers is the holy ministry of instruction and of doctrine; hers, the universal empire and the universal priesthood. Her citizens are kings and emperors; her heroes, the martyrs and the saints.

Her invincible militia is composed of those brave warriors who conquered in themselves all the appetites of the flesh and its mad concupiscences. God Himself invisibly presides in her austere senate and in her holy councils. When her pontiffs speak to the world, their infallible word has been already recorded in heaven by God Himself.

That Church, placed in the world without human foundation, after drawing it from an abyss of corruption, withdrew it from the night of barbarism. She has always fought the battles of the Lord, and though hard pressed in all, came out from all victorious. Heretics deny her doctrine, and she triumphs over heretics; all human passions rebel against her authority, and she triumphs over all human passions. Paganism fights its last battle with her, and she brings paganism to her

feet. Emperors and kings persecute her, and the ferocity of their executioners is conquered by the constancy of her martyrs. She only fights for her holy liberty, and the world gives her empire.

Under her prolific empire, the sciences have flourished, morals have been purified, laws perfected, and all great institutions—domestic, political, and social—have flourished with rich and spontaneous vegetation.

She has had anathemas only for impious men, for rebellious peoples, and tyrannous kings. She has defended liberty against those who aspired to convert authority into tyranny, and authority against peoples who aspired to an absolute emancipation; and against all, the rights of God and the inviolability of His commandments.

There is no truth the Church has not proclaimed, nor error she has not anathematised. Liberty in truth has been in her eyes holy, and in error—as error itself—abominable. In her eyes, error is born and lives without rights, and for that reason she has sought it out, and persecuted it, and extirpated it from the most hidden folds of the human intellect.

And that perpetual illegitimacy, and that perpetual nakedness of error—as it has been a religious dogma—so also has it been a political dogma, proclaimed in all time by all the powers of the world. All have placed beyond discussion the principle on which they rest; all have called the principle which served as its contrast, error, and have despoiled it of all legitimacy and of all rights. All have declared themselves infallible in that supreme qualification; and if they have not condemned all political errors, it is not because the conscience of the human race recognises the legitimacy of any error, but because it has never recognised in human authorities the privilege of infallibility in the qualification of errors.

From that radical impotence of human authorities to designate errors, has sprung the principle of liberty of discussion, foundation of modern constitutions. That principle does not suppose in society, as might at first sight appear, an incomprehensible and culpable impartiality between truth and error: it is founded on two other suppositions, one of which is true, and the other false. It is founded, on one hand, on the fact that governments are not infallible, which

is evident; it is founded, on the other, on the infallibility of discussion, which is false in every light we view it.

Infallibility cannot result from discussion unless it be previously in those who discuss; it cannot be in those who discuss unless it be at the same time in those who govern. If infallibility is an attribute of human nature, it is in the former and in the latter: either all are fallible or all are infallible. The question, then, consists in ascertaining whether human nature is fallible or infallible, which is necessarily resolved into this other, viz., whether the nature of man is sound, or is fallen and infirm?

In the first case, infallibility, essential attribute of the sound understanding, is the first and greatest of all its attributes. From this principle the following consequences flow:

- If the understanding of man is infallible because it is sound, it cannot err because it is infallible;
- If it cannot err because it is infallible, truth exists in all men, whether considered in general or individually;
- If the truth is in all men, isolated or in general, all their affirmations and all their negations must necessarily be identical;
- If all their affirmations and all their negations are identical, discussion is inconceivable and absurd.

In the second case, fallibility, infirmity of the infirm intellect, is the first and greatest of human afflictions. And from this principle the following consequences flow:

- If the understanding of man is fallible because it is infirm, it cannot be certain of the truth, because it is fallible;
- If it cannot be certain of the truth because it is fallible, that uncertainty is essentially in all men, whether considered in common or individually;
- If that uncertainty is essentially in all men, isolated or united, all their affirmations and all their negations are a contradiction in terms, because they must necessarily be uncertain;
- If all their affirmations and negations are uncertain, discussion is absurd and inconceivable.



**Catholicity alone** has given a satisfactory and legitimate solution—like all its solutions—to this fearful problem. Catholicity teaches the following:

Man comes from God; sin from man; ignorance and error, like pain and death, from sin; fallibility from ignorance; from fallibility, absurdity in discussion.

But it adds: Man was redeemed—which, if it does not signify that by the act of redemption, and without any effort on his part, he escaped from the slavery of sin, it signifies, at least, that by redemption he acquired the power of breaking those chains, and of converting ignorance, error, pain, and death into means of his sanctification by the good use of his liberty, ennobled and restored.

For this end God instituted His immortal, impeccable, and infallible Church.

The Church represents human nature without sin—such as it came from the hands of God, full of original justice and of sanctifying grace: hence it is infallible, and not subject to death. God has placed it on earth, that man, aided by grace—which is denied to no one—may become worthy of having applied to him the blood shed for him on Calvary, by voluntarily submitting to her divine inspirations. With his faith he will conquer ignorance; with his patience, pain; and with his resignation, death. Death, pain, and ignorance only exist to be conquered by faith, resignation, and patience.

It follows from this that the Church alone has the right to affirm and deny, and that there is no right outside her to affirm what she denies, or to deny what she affirms.

The day when society, forgetting her doctrinal decisions, has asked the press and the tribune, newswriters and assemblies, what is truth and what is error—on that day, error and truth are confounded in all intellects; society enters on the regions of shadows and falls under the empire of fictions.

Feeling in itself, on one hand, the imperious necessity of submitting to truth and withdrawing from error, and finding it impossible, on the other, to ascertain what error is and what truth is, it has formed a catalogue of conventional truths, and another of imaginary errors, and has said, "I will adore the former and condemn the latter"—ignorant—so great is its blindness—that by adoring

the one and condemning the other, it condemns or adores nothing; or, if it condemns or adores anything, it adores and condemns itself.

The **doctrinal intolerance of the Church** has saved the world from chaos.

Her doctrinal intolerance has placed beyond question political domestic, social, and religious truths—primitive and holy truths, which are not subject to discussion, because they are the foundation of all discussions; truths which cannot be called into doubt for a moment without the understanding, on that moment, oscillating, lost between truth and error, and the clear mirror of human reason becoming soiled and obscured.

This serves to explain why the Church, and the Church alone, has had the holy privilege of fruitful and prolific discussions, whilst society, emancipated from her, has done nothing but lose time in ephemeral and barren disputes, which, having their starting point in an absolute, could result in nothing but a complete scepticism.

The Cartesian theory—according to which truth comes from doubt, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter—is contrary to that divine law which presides at the generation of bodies as well as ideas, and in virtue of which contraries perpetually exclude their contraries, and like ever begets like. In virtue of this law, doubt perpetually comes from doubt, and scepticism from scepticism, as truth from faith, and science from truth.

To the profound comprehension of this law of the intellectual generation of ideas are due the marvels of Catholic civilisation. To that wonderful civilisation is due all that we admire and all that we see.

Its theologians, even considered humanly, put to the blush modern and ancient philosophers; her doctors excite wonder by the immensity of their science; its historians, by their generalising and comprehensive views, cast those of antiquity into the shade. St. Augustine's *City of God* is, even today, the most profound book of history which genius, illuminated by the rays of Catholicity, has presented to the astonished eyes of men. The acts of her Councils—leaving aside the divine inspiration—are the most finished monuments of human prudence. The Canonical laws excel in wisdom the Roman and the feudal laws.

Who is before St. Thomas in science, St. Augustine in genius, Bossuet in majesty, St. Paul in power? Who is greater as a poet than Dante? Who is equal to Shakespeare? Who surpasses Calderón? Who, like Raphael, infused life and inspiration into the canvas?

Place people in sight of the pyramids of Egypt, and they will tell you, "Here has passed a grand and barbarous civilisation." Place them in sight of the Grecian statues and temples, and they will tell you, "Here has passed a graceful, ephemeral, and brilliant civilisation." Place them in sight of a Roman monument, and they will tell you, "Here has passed a great people."

Place them in sight of a cathedral, and on beholding such majesty united to such beauty, such grandeur to such taste, such grace to such delicacy, such severe unity to such rich variety, such measure to such boldness, such heaviness in the stones with such suavity in their outlines, and such wonderful harmony between silence and light, shade and colour, they will tell you:

*"Here has passed the greatest people of history, and the most astounding of human civilisations. That people must have taken grandeur from the Egyptian, brilliancy from the Greek, strength from the Roman, and—beyond the strength, the brilliancy, and grandeur—something more valuable than grandeur, strength, and brilliancy: immortality and perfection."*

If we pass from sciences, letters, and arts, to the study of the institutions the Church has vivified with her breath, nourished with her substance, maintained with her spirit, and sustained with her science, this new spectacle will present no less astounding marvels and wonders.

Catholicity—which ordains and refers all to God, and by referring and ordaining all to God converts supreme liberty into a constitutive element of supreme order, and infinite variety into a constitutive element of infinite unity—is, by its nature, the religion of vigorous associations, united together by sympathetic affinities.

In Catholicity, man is never alone. To find a man relegated to solitary and sombre isolation—supreme personification of egotism and pride—we must

leave Catholic boundaries. In the immense circle described by those immense boundaries, men live grouped together and obey the impulse of their most noble sentiments of fraternity.

The groups enter one into the other, and all into one more universal and comprehensive, in which they move with freedom and obey the law of sovereign harmony. The child is born and lives in the domestic association—that divine foundation of human associations.

Families group together conformably to the laws of their origin, and thus grouped, form higher groups called *classes*. The different classes dedicate themselves to different functions—some cultivate the arts of peace, others the arts of war; some seek glory, others administer justice, and others prosecute industrial pursuits.

Within these natural groups, others are spontaneously formed—composed of those who seek glory by the same path, of those who dedicate themselves to the same industrial pursuits, of those who follow the same business; and all these groups, distributed in their classes, and all these classes, hierarchically distributed among themselves, constitute the State—wide association in which all others move with freedom.

This in the social point of view. In the political, families are associated in different groups: each group of families constitutes a *municipium*; each *municipium* is the participation in common by the families who form it of the right of worshipping their God, of administering their own affairs, of giving food to the living and sepulture to the dead.

Hence each *municipium* has a temple, symbol of its religious unity; and a municipal house, symbol of its administrative unity; and a territory, symbol of its jurisdictional and civil unity; and a cemetery, symbol of its right of sepulture. All these different unities constitute the municipal unity, which has also its symbol in the right of using its coat of arms and unfurling its banner.

From the variety of the *municipia* is formed the national unity, which, in its turn, is symbolised in a throne, and personified in a king. Above all these magnificent associations is that of all Catholic nations, with their Christian princes, fraternally grouped in the bosom of the Church. This perfect and

supreme association is unity in its head, and variety in its members: it is variety in the faithful, scattered over the world, and unity in the holy Chair, which shines in Rome, surrounded by rays of divine light.

That eminent Chair is the centre of humanity—represented, inasmuch as it is various, by the General Councils, and inasmuch as it is one, by him who is on earth the common father of the faithful and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

That is supreme variety, sublimest unity, and most perfect society. All the elements which exist in disorder in human societies move in this harmoniously. The pontiff is king both by divine and human right: the divine right shines principally in the institution; the human right is apparent principally in the designation of the person. And the person designated pontiff by men is instituted pontiff by God; and as he unites the human and divine sanction, so also does he unite the advantages of elective and hereditary monarchies. From the one he has popularity, from the other, inviolability and prestige: like the former, the pontifical monarchy is limited on all sides; like the latter, the limitations come from within, not from without—from its own, not from another's will.

The foundation of its limitations is in its ardent charity, in its wonderful humility, and its infinite prudence. What monarchy is this, in which the king, though elected, is venerated; and which, though all have the capacity of becoming kings, exists eternally, despite the efforts of domestic war and civil discord to destroy it? What monarchy is this in which the king elects the electors, who then elect the king—all being elected and electors?

Who does not see here a deep and hidden mystery—unity perpetually begetting variety, and variety perpetually constituting its unity? Who does not see here represented the universal confluence of all things? And who does not remark that this strange monarchy is the representation of Him who, being true God and true man, is divinity and humanity, unity and variety, united in one?

The occult law which presides at the generation of unity and variety must be the highest, most universal, most excellent and mysterious of all, as God has subjected to it all things—human and divine, created and uncreated, visible and invisible. Being one in its essence, it is infinite in its manifestations: everything that exists appears to exist only to manifest it; and each one of the things that

exist manifests it in a different way. It is one way in God, another in God made man, another in His Church, another in the family, another in the universe; but it is in all, and in each and every part. Here it is an invisible and incomprehensible mystery, and there, without ceasing to be a mystery, it is a visible phenomenon and a palpable fact.

By the side of the king, whose duty it is to reign with independent sovereignty and to govern with absolute power, there is a perpetual senate, composed of princes who have their principedom from God. And this perpetual and divine senate is a governing one, and though a governing one, is so in such a way that it neither impedes, nor diminishes, nor eclipses, the supreme power of the monarch.

The Church is the only monarchy which has preserved intact the plenitude of its right, though perpetually in contact with a most powerful oligarchy, and is the only oligarchy which, placed in contact with an absolute monarch, has not broken out into rebellions and seditions.

As the princes come after the king, after the princes come the priests, charged with the holy ministry. In this wonderful society, everything is the reverse of what occurs in all human associations. In these, the distance between those who are at the foot and those who are at the head of the social hierarchy is so great, that the former are tempted by the spirit of rebellion, and the latter fall into the temptation of tyranny.

In the Church, things are regulated so that neither tyranny nor rebellion is possible. Here, the dignity of the subject is so great that the prelate's is derived from what he has in common with the subject, rather than from what he has special and peculiar. The greatest dignity of the bishops is not in their being princes, nor of the pontiff in his being king; but in pontiffs and bishops being, like their subjects, priests.

Their incommunicable and highest prerogative is not in governing; it is in the power of making the Son of God the slave of their voice in offering the Son to the Father in unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the world, in being the channels through which grace is communicated, and in the supreme and incommunicable power of remitting and retaining sin. The highest dignity is in

what all the dignitaries are, rather than in what only some of them are. It is not in the apostolate, nor in the pontificate, but in the priesthood.

If we consider the pontifical dignity isolatedly, the Church appears an absolute monarchy. If we consider her apostolic constitution, she appears a powerful oligarchy. If we consider, on the one hand, the dignity common to prelates and priests, and on the other, the deep abyss there is between the priesthood and the people, it appears an immense aristocracy.

When we fix our eyes on the immense multitude of the faithful scattered over the world, and find that the priesthood, and the apostolate, and the pontificate are employed in their service—that nothing is ordained in this wonderful society for the advantage of those who govern, but for the salvation of those who obey; when we consider the consoling dogma of the essential equality of souls; when we remember that the Saviour of the human race suffered the affronts of the cross for each individual and for all men; when we find the principle proclaimed that the Good Shepherd should lay down His life for His flock; when we reflect that the term of the action of all the different ministries is in the congregation of the faithful—the Church appears an immense democracy, in the glorious acceptance of this term, or at least, a society instituted for an end essentially popular and democratic.

And the most singular of all is, that the Church is all she appears.

In other societies, those various forms of government are incompatible with one another, or, if they ever are united, they lose many of their essential properties. Monarchy cannot be united to oligarchy and aristocracy, without the first losing its naturally absolute character, and the second, their preponderance. Monarchy, oligarchy, and aristocracy cannot live with democracy without the latter losing its absorbent and exclusive character, as aristocracy its influence, oligarchy its tendency to invasion, and monarchy its absolute character; so that their mutual union becomes their mutual annihilation.

In the Church alone, which is a supernatural society, there is room for all these governments—harmonically combined—without losing anything of their original purity or their primitive grandeur. This pacific combination of