

The Catholic Church And The Modern State

A Conversion Story

By Hilaire Belloc.

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The thesis that the Catholic Church is incompatible with the Modern State is in part true.

Three fundamental reasons are urged to show this incompatibility. The first — that the Catholic section of a state claims the right to destroy all religious bodies in disagreement with it — is unsound, being based on a misconception which can only arise from an ignorance both of Catholic doctrine and of the history of Catholic peoples.

But the other two reasons given are sound: one is that obedience to an external authority is contrary to that ideal of citizenship, which in the Modern State is based upon two ideas — that each citizen individually forms his decision and that a majority of these decisions binds all; the other is that the claims of the Church tend to conflict with the similar claims of the modern laical, absolute State. Hitherto the truth of these two reasons has been masked by the fact that the bulk of Catholic moral teaching has been retained in non-Catholic states. But this is changing, and conflict will result.

This essay is written in reply to one recently published in the United States of America, which supported the familiar thesis that the Catholic Church is incompatible with the Modern State; that the Modern State holds a doctrine of sovereignty such that the Catholic Church cannot be fully accommodated therewith, and such that a conflict necessarily arises.

The thesis is in part true. I am not concerned here to deny it as a whole, but to examine it; to see in what points the argument advanced shows knowledge of the Church's claims, in what they are misunderstood.

As I write in reference to an American article and as these lines will be read as much in America as in England, I must make due allowance for the special conditions of the American political system; but for the rest I think the debate applies to any sovereign country of the modern type.

I need hardly add that I attach no moral value to the word "modern." It only means "contemporary" and is mortal as other forms have been. I deal, then, with the Modern State not as with something having any unquestioned merit, such that anything unsuited to it is thereby condemned, but as only one of many forms of society which probably will not last much longer but which, while it lasts, the Catholic must consider. It may be called the "Electoral State" reposing on what are called liberal theories of government.

Let us first of all define the issue.

It is not a general issue, but one limited to terms of reference as opposed to which I here reply.

I find opposed to me three fundamental objections to any harmonious relation between the Church and the Modern State.

These are:

(1) That the claims of the Catholic Church to a universal right of judgment in faith and morals include both in theory and in practice the claim to destroy, by any means, other conflicting bodies in disagreement with it (pagans, schismatics, heretics). Therefore the Modern State, meaning thereby a State which is not officially Catholic — that is, not one in which Catholicism and citizenship are equivalent — stands in peril from the presence in its midst of a Catholic body. For that body, though but a part, must, by the nature of its claims and character, arrogate to itself the right of destroying the rest.

(2) That the subjection of the reason made by Catholics to a general authority outside the individual, and in particular to Papal authority, is incompatible with citizenship in the Modern State. For that citizenship is based upon two conceptions: (a) That all questions whatsoever must be decided by each citizen individually in complete freedom from any authority; (b) That such decisions being collected, a majority of them binds the minority to obedience.

(3) That the claims of the Catholic Church being universal, tend to conflict with the claims of the modern laical, absolute State, which are particular.

Perhaps my opponents will quarrel with my using the terms “laical” and “absolute.” “Laical” I can defend as meaning the conception that the Modern State is not allowed by its principles to adopt or support any one defined and named transcendental philosophy or religion. On this point, I think all will agree with me.

The Modern Electoral State does indeed always and inevitably support one general religious attitude and oppress its opposite very strongly, but by implication only, and indirectly; it would be shocked if it were accused of doing even that; and a defined and named religion it does not and, consistently, cannot openly adopt.

As for the word “absolute,” I do not use it in the sense of “absolute government,” but in the sense that the Modern Civil State, like the old Pagan Civil State of antiquity (to which it is so rapidly approaching in type), will brook no division of sovereignty. Its citizens are required by it to give allegiance to the State alone, and to no external power whatsoever. I think my opponents will also agree with me in this sense of the word “absolute.” The Modern State differs from the Medieval State in that it claims complete independence from all authority other than its own, whereas the Medieval State regarded itself as only part of Christendom and bound by the general morals and arrangements of Christian men. This absolutism of the Modern State began in the sixteenth century with the affirmation of the Protestant princes that their power was not responsible to Christendom or its officers, but independent of them. It had its immediate fruit in what was called “The Divine Right of Kings,” whereof the claim of a modern government, whether monarchical, republican or whatnot, to undivided allegiance is the heir.

Now, of these three fundamental objections I wholly disagree with the first, and find it based on a misconception. The fear that Catholics will, or should, work otherwise than by persuasion for the destruction of an established non-Catholic society around them can only arise from an ignorance of history and of Catholic doctrine.

With the second, I disagree partly, and partly agree. I agree that if there were, or could be, a citizenship based on the supposed independence of the individual from moral law and a State ruled in all things by majorities of citizens, each of whom should vote according to his private decision on

any matter, Catholics could not give implicit obedience to so strange a commonwealth. On the other hand, I disagree with this objection if it means that the normal duties of citizens (as we know them to be in practice) cannot be discharged in full by Catholics. The history of Catholics living within a non-Catholic State shows this, and the philosophy held by Catholics upon civic duties will make them, if they are good Catholics, better citizens, saving Catholic morals, than any others. For they alone will be able to give ultimate reasons for obedience to the laws, whether in a State upon the Democratic model (as in Andorra), the Oligarchic (as in England and all Parliamentary countries), or the Monarchic (as in [1931] Italy).

As to the third proposition, I find myself wholly in agreement with it. In my judgment, a conflict between the State claiming unlimited powers and the Catholic Church is inevitable. Whether the State be "Modern" or no, seems to me quite indifferent. Whether it be Democratic — as some small States can be; Oligarchic — as are all States dependent on elected bodies; or Monarchic — governed by one president or king, elected, imposed, or hereditary — the Civil State is always potentially in conflict with the Catholic Church. And when the Civil State claims absolute authority for its laws in all matters, then it will inevitably come sooner or later into active conflict with the Catholic Church.

Now let me deal with the first point — the only one in which I wholly disagree with the thesis: the idea that Catholics as individuals and as a body cannot but attempt to destroy by other means than persuasion whatever is non-Catholic in the State to which they owe allegiance.

I say that, as to this first point, I disagree. The fear that a Catholic body within a non-Catholic society will use all means to destroy the non-Catholic elements in the society around it and to reduce it by force or fraud to the Catholic discipline is baseless. The Catholic body will not so act; and its abstention will not proceed from fear, but from the nature of its own principles. It is true that as these principles by definition assert the truth and goodness of Catholic doctrine they necessarily imply the falsity and evil of anti-Catholic doctrine. It is true that a Catholic regards heretical and Pagan morals as things which do harm and which any society would be well rid of. But it does not follow that the Catholic will therefore act directly for the destruction of the evil by other means than conversion. And the reason should be clear. It is, that in any system, no one fundamental principle works alone, but all have to work in accordance with others. In this case the Principle that the Church is possessed of Truth and that dissent from Truth produces evil which should be eliminated, has to work in accordance with another Principle, that of Justice.

A Catholic society is amply justified by all Catholic Principles in fighting the beginnings of disruption within its own body; it is amply justified in making Catholic ideas and education, manners and all the rest of it the rule within a Catholic State. It is amply justified in struggling long and hard — as Catholic Christendom did for more than a century after 1521 — to prevent the break-up of a founded Catholic society such as Europe had been for many hundred years, and to save the unity of its civilization. But it is not justified by its own principles in so attacking a non-Catholic society already long established and traditional, because that society possesses rights — for instance, the right of the family to train the child — aggression against which would offend justice.

A Pagan society where the Church is a newcomer, a Protestant society where the Church forms but one particular body, alien in spirit to the rest, a Modern society becoming Pagan (as ours now is), in the midst of which the Church so finds herself, is certainly to be affected by Catholic efforts at conversion. Catholics always have and always will attempt to transform the society around them by

that process, wherein they may succeed, as in the case of the Roman Empire, or fail, as (hitherto) in the case of the Japanese; but this effort at converting a society traditionally anti-Catholic bears no relation to the forcible action justly and rightly exercised within a Catholic society in its own defense. A Catholic nation, a Catholic civilization, has a good right to check by force what proposes to destroy it: just as the State based on ownership has a right to check by force communism or theft. But a Catholic body in an anti-Catholic society has no right to attack that society. The two cases are not only not parallel, they are contradictory. For instance, if I can by force or fraud prevent a Mormon child today from joining his family and so being brought up Mormon, and if I exercise that force or fraud I am doing wrong. But if, in a monogamous State, I attempt by arms to prevent Mormonism, at its inception, from introducing Polygamy into a Monogamous society, I am doing right.

The distinction is simple and should be clear, but I see that an argument is found to the contrary in the recent Concordat between the Church and the Italian State. [The Lateran Treaty of 1929.]

This Concordat excludes from certain civil functions (notably teaching in State schools) unfrocked priests. It recognizes the Catholic Church as the State religion of Italy, giving no other ecclesiastical corporation or body of opinion that same position. It gives the Catholic Church entry into, and its doctrines a permanent position in, public education. This, it is said, shows what Catholic intention is in changing the constitutional law of the State. The contention is that the Catholic Church claims and would exercise tyrannical powers over large and established non-Catholic bodies within the State where it had power. Whether it be the action of a majority or no is indifferent. The point is that it is tyrannical.

Now, it is remarked by our opponents that the claims of the Catholic Church extend “over the whole world.” It is further remarked that, according to those claims, there is “no parity between Catholic and other religions”; that, “moral and educational authority” (as exercised by the Church) “are identified with the authority of God Himself,” whence it is concluded that all dissidence therefrom, on whatever scale and from whatever source, would be treated by Catholics as an enemy is treated, actively, and its suppression attempted by force. In the same way there is quoted the definition on heresy, the punishment and the extirpation thereof. It is remarked that “disobedience to the Pope is affirmed to be morally wrong”: (the idea that such dissidence necessarily involves damnation shows ignorance of the Catholic doctrine on the nature of salvation and its attainment). The conclusion is drawn in a sentence which seems to me to sum up the position. It is this, that “Catholic claims,” it is said, “submit the sovereignty of the State to the supremacy of the Catholic Church.” If for “submit”, we read “except from,” and for “the supremacy”, we read “the moral laws and doctrine,” I regard that sentence as accurate.

But these changes in wording are essential, and with regard to the whole of this point, the answer is simple enough.

It is indeed inevitable that any corporation claiming to be what the Catholic Church claims to be, to wit, the only Divine authority on earth in matters of faith and morals, shall by theory claim universal jurisdiction in these; but it is not true that this jurisdiction either is in practice or should be in justice, exercised as it is here imagined it would be. There is neither a conspiracy so to exercise it nor a desire so to exercise it; and the very examples given are proofs of this. The essential of action against heresy is that it takes place for the purpose of checking the inception and growth of something foreign to, and destructive of, Catholic society. The laws against heresy in Catholic

societies of the past, the struggle against heresy during the great religious wars of from three to four hundred years ago, were both of that nature. As against an established, permanent, large non-Catholic body there is no such attitude.

If you doubt it, look at the attitude of the Church towards the Jews. Here, if anywhere, there should have been, according to this erroneous theory of Catholic action, a policy of extermination. The Jewish community should have been forbidden to exist; its children should have been taken from it and brought up in the Catholic Faith wholesale; its worship should have been forbidden; it should have been the subject of a crusade. History is a flat contradiction of this. Alien and unpopular, the subject of violent mob attacks, treated as foreigners by the civil power, and therefore liable to expulsion, the Jewish body, when the Church was at the height of its power in Europe, was specially protected in its privileges so far as moral theology could protect it. When Jews conspired against the State or were thought to be so conspiring, as in Spain, the State persecuted them. But there never was, and there never will be, an effort made by the Catholic Church as such to absorb or destroy that hostile community by force. The same is true of an established heretical body, or for that matter of an established Pagan body. I mean by "established," forming a large and well-rooted corporation within the State, composed of myriads who are in good faith, and living a settled traditional life of its own, reposing upon long-secured foundations. It is perfectly true that the civil power will always tend to extrude what it regards as alien and hostile; but Catholic moral theology as such has never countenanced action against those bodies only because their faith and morals were not in full harmony with the Catholic Church.

What does happen, and naturally happen, is that where the whole code of a society is Catholic, laws and institutions will follow that code, and the recent Italian Concordat is a very good example of this. The Catholics in Italy are not a political majority any more than English-speakers in the United States are a political majority. Italy is organically Catholic, not mechanically. She is a Catholic country, not an arrangement of voters drawn up by party machines into Catholic and non-Catholic. She is a Catholic realm, in the same sense in which the Massachusetts of the Colonial period was a Puritan colony, or Japan is a Pagan empire today. It is normal in a country Catholic to the roots that an unfrocked priest should not be allowed to teach (public opinion alone, apart from laws, would see to that!), that education should be upon Catholic lines, and that the Catholic Church should be the established Church of the realm. The arrangements which apply to such conditions have no parallel in a community where those conditions do not exist.

But all this is not connected with mere majorities. In all this misconception, perhaps the gravest and yet the most characteristic is the idea that a "Catholic majority" in the modern political sense of that word would impose Catholicism over the "minority" standing against it. The whole idea is wildly wrong. Such an idea as the Divine right of mechanical majorities has no place in Catholic philosophy. It is one machinery of government. It is being widely questioned in Europe, though still preserving an uncertain life in some States. It may be right or wrong. But, anyhow, a Catholic majority would never, in Catholic eyes — unless it was so large as to be organically identical with the general tone of society (which is a very different thing from a mechanical majority) — give sufficient sanction for action against those who dissented from it.

So much for the first point; the imaginary peril which a Protestant or Pagan society is supposed to run from the force or fraud of Catholicism in its midst. That Catholicism in its midst is an alien thing is perfectly true. That men should dread its moral influence as something which disintegrates that Protestantism or Paganism which is the soul of their society is natural and inevitable. That they

should proceed to regard it as a conspiracy against them capable of aggressive action is extravagant and out of touch with reality.

As to the second point, that the Church produces a citizen other than that conceived as the ideal citizen of the Modern Electoral Liberal State, I agree.

According to definition, the ideal citizen of this Modern State must be free to act on his individual judgment of morals, must reach conclusions on all matters by that private judgment, but must accept the coercion of any law whatsoever when it has been decided by a majority of such individual citizens so concluding. For instance, of a hundred citizens in such a State, forty-nine, each thinking it out for himself, decide that each may, without moral wrong, eat beef; fifty-one decide that beef is unholy and must not be eaten. The fifty-one may morally coerce the forty-nine and forbid them beef (or beer, or coffee or whatever it may be).

It is pointed out with perfect accuracy that the Catholic does not decide moral questions in this manner. The Catholic belief in the authoritative claims of the Catholic Church to define morals prevents that. It is further pointed out with justice that the individual Catholic accepts as superior to his own judgment the judgment of the Church, and in certain cases the judgment of the Papacy, on the conception that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth. But there is in the general non-Catholic conception of what this attitude means one essential error. The error consists in the idea that the Catholic attitude is irrational or non-rational while the attitude of the non-Catholic is rational. The contrast is not of this sort. (Emphasis added.)

All men accept authority. The difference between different groups lies in the type of authority which they accept. The Catholic has arrived at the conviction, or, if you will, has been given and has retained the conviction (some come in from outside; some go outside and come back again; most receive the Faith by instruction in youth, but test it in maturity by experience) that there has been a Divine revelation. He discovers or recognizes a special action of God upon this earth over and above that general action which all who are not atheists admit. He discovers or recognizes a certain personality and voice — that of the Catholic Church — which conforms to the necessary marks of holiness and right proportion, and the ramification of doctrine from which is both consistent and wholly good. The incarnation of the Deity in the Man Jesus Christ, the immortality of the human soul, its responsibility to its Creator for good and evil done in this world, its consequent fate after death, the main rite and doctrine of the Eucharist — these and a host of other affirmations are not dissociated, but form a consistent whole, which is not only the sole full guide to right living in this world, but the sole just group of affirmations upon the nature of things.

To take up that position is to be a Catholic. To doubt it or deny it is to oppose Catholicism.

But that position is taken up under the fierce light of reason. It is indeed puerile to imagine that it could be taken up under any other light. A proposition so awful and so singular is not accepted blindfold; it is of its very nature subject to instant inquiry. It is not a thing to be taken for granted, as are ideals which all accept as a matter of course. On the contrary, it is of its very nature exceptional, unlikely, and not only requires examination before it can be accepted, but an act of the will. Nor is it true, as men ignorant of history pretend, that in barbaric and uncritical times (of which they think the Faith a survival) these truths were accepted without inspection, and that the argument from reason is a modern one. Throughout the ages from the first apologetic of the Church in the second century to the present day, without interruption throughout the Dark Ages and later throughout the Middle, and all through the high intellectual life of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth

centuries, the appeal to reason by Catholics has been universal and continuous. Today, in the twentieth century, Catholics are the only organized body consistently appealing to the reason and to the immutable laws of thought as against the a priori conceptions of physical scientists and the muddled emotionalism of ephemeral philosophic systems.

It is my own experience, and I think that of most Catholics who have mixed much with opponents of their religion, that nowhere outside the household of the Faith is the speculative reason fully active and completely free, save possibly, as a rare exception, in a few of the more intelligent skeptics. The Catholic may perhaps accept such a man as Huxley for an intellectual equal in this appeal to the reason. But he accepts very few non-Catholics as his intellectual equals. He cannot but note that, in the vast majority, non-Catholics accept their authority without inquiry. It is, for the bulk of them, a mixture of what they happen to have read, of common daily experience (which boggles at all mysteries and marvels), and running through it all is a pseudo-scientific attitude not far removed from materialism, which they have none of them analyzed and which only appears by perpetual implication: as when they presume without attempt at proof that what they call "natural law" is unalterable, or when they fall back upon a name or a book or "the latest criticism" in the place of argument.

So much for that. The Catholic acts upon reason when he recognizes goodness, holiness, and the authoritative Divine character in the Church, just as a man acts upon reason when he recognizes an individual voice or face.

Having accepted such authority, reason demands imperatively the subjection of one's own less perfect experience and less perfect power. I can arrive by my reason and by my experience of the world at a certitude that the Catholic Church is the sole Divine authority upon earth. I cannot arrive by my reason at a certitude that man's obviously corrupt nature can obtain eternal beatitude. My reason can only accept that at second-hand from authority. I meet a professional politician fresh from his last piece of villainy: blackmail or bribery, or other corruption. Certainly, it is not my reason that tells me such a creature is a candidate for eternal bliss. I am constrained to believe it on the Authority of the Faith.

A parallel instance (though an imperfect one) is the map. When we take a government survey and accept its authority there follows as a secondary consequence our acceptance of a particular point upon it, as that this town is north of that river, though we have no personal experience in the matter. I say that the parallel is imperfect, because no one, I hope, would give to a surveyor or any other human instrument the authority attaching to Divine revelation.

But though the Catholic bases his Faith upon Reason, that Faith, once held, certainly prevents him from playing the part assigned to the ideal citizen of the Modern State. Neither will he submit all things to separate and individual private judgment, nor will he necessarily and always obey as a moral duty laws arrived at by the mechanical process of majorities. On a multitude of things — for example, the nature and obligations of marriage — he will accept established doctrine and prefer it to any possible conclusions of his own limited experience, judgment and powers. Should a majority order him to act against Catholic morals (as, for instance, by a law compelling the limitation of families) he would refuse to obey it. It is equally true that if in some grave point of Faith or Morals not yet defined the Papacy decided Catholic morals to involve resistance to a new law, the Catholic would resist that law. For instance, suppose a majority were to order for all young children of the Modern State a certain course of instruction in certain sexual matters. The matter is subjected to

individual judgment. Some are for, some against. At last, it is solemnly and publicly promulgated from Rome that the proposed instruction violates Catholic morals. Then Catholics would thenceforward resist the decision of the majority and refuse to submit their children to such instruction in the State schools.

Incidentally, I may say that the position of the Papacy is misunderstood when it is regarded as a despotic authority acting capriciously. It is part and parcel of the Catholic Church, defining and guiding — not inventing — doctrine, and identified with the general life of Catholicism. Catholics act as they do, not because one individual has taken into his head to give them orders on a sudden, but because they are in tune with the whole spirit of the Catholic Church, of which the Pope is the central authority.

As an example of the misunderstanding, I may quote the attitude often taken by Non-Catholics towards the advice given by Leo XIII and subsequent Popes in the matter of Scholastic Philosophy. "Pius X," we are told, "ordained that a philosophy which flourished in the thirteenth century should be the philosophy of the twentieth," and this attitude is compared to that of an American fundamentalist denying the conclusions of geology. All that is out of focus. No such thing was ever "ordained." Cardinal Mercier's great revival of scholasticism at Louvain was approved and commended, and its study warmly supported. But no Catholic is bound to accept that particular system or its terms. I may say in passing that anyone who does adopt it seems to me wise, for it derives from Aristotle, the tutor of the human race, and it represents the highest intellectual effort ever made by man; nor is there conflict between it and evidence, nor any reason to believe that our own particularly muddled time with its disuse of reason is philosophically superior merely because it comes last. But scholasticism is only a human system of thought; it is not of revelation; and the idea that it could be thought equivalent to the Faith or that the Papacy was here imposing it as of Faith could only occur to one wholly unfamiliar with the ancient and abiding Religion of Christendom.

The Papacy directs in a great number of disciplinary matters, as of liturgy, ecclesiastical law, etc., which do not normally touch civil life. On those rare and grave occasions when it acts with plenary and doctrinal authority, it says nothing new. It defines and promulgates a truth always possessed.

However, whether from the general authority of the Church, her spirit, traditions, annals or definitions, or from the particular authority of the Pope, it remains true that the Catholic cannot be an ideal citizen of the Modern State as defined above. He cannot pledge himself blindfold to accept any and every decision of a mere majority. He must envisage the possibility of such a decision traversing the Divine Law, and he will not (as does the Ideal Citizen of the Modern State) regard all subjects whatsoever as matters for private judgment changeable and reversible at will; for some subjects are to him of their nature fixed and changeless.

From this it will be seen that on the third point I am wholly in agreement. If there is ground for conflict between Catholicism and the ideal of the citizen in the Modern State, still more is there, and has always been, ground for conflict between the Church and any form of Civil State which regards itself as absolute: and that conflict may appear, in a future perhaps not very remote.

I have already said that a non-Catholic may quarrel with my use of the word "absolute," and indeed, there is a danger of ambiguity in that term. It may be pointed out that the Modern Electoral State is not "absolute" in the sense of "arbitrary." Its power proceeds in a certain limited fashion according to a certain guiding machinery; but it is absolute in the sense that it admits no other authority than

its own, in whatever province it chooses to exercise that authority. And this claim of the Modern State to absolute authority is the more remarkable because the Modern State is but one of many. It is not a universal state; it only exists in a restricted area, has only existed for a short time, may not endure even where it is today most blindly accepted, and yet it acts as though it had complete, unlimited and eternal rights over the soul of man.

The old Pagan Roman Empire in its war with Catholicism did at least claim to be universal, and its original quarrel with the Catholic Church, of which all the first three centuries are full, was due to a conflict between two universal authorities.

Each Modern State is but one among many rivals; yet does it claim greater powers than ever the State claimed before, and with those powers I submit that the Catholic Church must inevitably come into conflict sooner or later; not because the State is modern, but because it claims unquestioned authority in all things.

I notice, for instance, that certain of our critics are particularly shocked by the admirable statement issued on the part of the English Catholic bishops just before the late General Election in Britain, where they say that it is no part of the State's duty to teach, and add that authority over the child belongs not to the State, but to the parent. Nothing could be more odious in the ears of modern Nationalism — because nothing is more true. In the face of this tremendous claim of the Modern State, a claim which not even the Roman Empire made, the right to teach what it wills to every child in the community, that is, to form the whole mind of the nation on its own despotic fiat — our critics cannot maintain that the Modern State does not pretend to be "absolute." It is in fact more absolute than any Pagan state of the past ever was. What is more, its absoluteness increases daily; that is why its conflict with Catholicism seems to be inevitable.

The issue is very well stated when abhorrence is expressed (by implication) of a recent authoritative Catholic pronouncement, that "if certain laws are declared invalid by the Catholic Church, they are not binding." Here, as we have just seen, is the whole point. Where there is a conflict between civil law and the moral law of the Catholic Church, members of the Catholic Church will resist the civil law and obey the law of the Church. And when this happens, you get that active dissension between the Church and the State which history records in all the great persecutions. That was the very crux between the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church before Constantine. In the eyes of the civil power, the Christians were rebels; in the eyes of the Christians, the civil power was commanding practices which no Catholic could adopt. It was demanding duties which no Catholic could admit.

That the quarrel has not yet broken out into open form (save here and there in the shape of a few riots) is due to the fact that hitherto the bulk of Catholic doctrines have been retained in States of non-Catholic culture. But as the moral distance grows greater between the Catholic and the non-Catholic, as the Modern State reverts more and more to that Paganism which is the natural end of those who abandon Catholicism, the direct contrast cannot fail to pass from the realm of theory to that of practice.

It is inevitable there should appear in any Absolute State, not alone in States which still trust to the machinery of voting, but in all States, Monarchic or Democratic, Plutocratic or Communist, laws which no Catholic will obey. One or two tentative efforts have already been made at such laws. When those laws are presented to Catholics there will at once arise the situation which has arisen successively time and again for nearly two thousand years; the refusal on the part of Catholics, which refusal in the eyes of the State is rebellion.

There will follow upon that what the State calls the punishment of disobedience, and what Catholics have always called, and will once again call, persecution. It will be accompanied by considerable apostasy, but also considerable heroism; and in the upshot, the Faith's power to survive will lie in this: that devotion to the Faith is stronger, more rational, better founded, more tenacious, more lasting in substance, than that hatred which the Faith also, and naturally, arouses.

Our Thanks to the Catholic Truth Society of London.
