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The Church *and the* State

WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.

Editor-in-chief of AMERICA

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By the
REV. WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.
Editor-in-Chief of AMERICA

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THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

I

The Church, Society and the Individual

A GREAT change has come over the state of anti-Catholic controversy. The Church used to be attacked for its doctrines. Purgatory, Indulgences, the Mass, the invocation of the Saints, the devotion to the Blessed Virgin—these used to be the field on which the Catholic defender was called on to repel the enemy. It is not so any longer. The line of fire has shifted, and we must face around to meet it. The layman whose life is lived among non-Catholics has known this for some time. Instead of being accused of holding doctrines which were absurd, idolatrous and blasphemous, he is now accused of being unpatriotic, an enemy of the State. Just as he was once held up as traitor to the truth, he is now pilloried as traitor to his fellowmen. It is to help him to cope with this new attack that this pamphlet is written.

The root-cause of this onslaught, the basis of Catholic doctrine badly misunderstood, the true sense in which any Church may rightly take its place in public life—these are the matters which I will treat.

My first topic will be the "Church, society and the individual." Now the Church, as an independent social

entity composed of men and women of every type and age, has two very special relations which must be kept in mind whenever you think of it. It has a relation to society in general and it has a relation to the individuals who compose it and with whom they come into contact. That is why I put the Church, society and the individual all together under the present title. These two relations yield up two very important truths, which will be found at the root of everything I will have to say.

TWO DOCTRINES THAT CAUSE OPPOSITION

If you look at the individuals who compose it you will find that the Church tells them that to belong to her is necessary for eternal salvation, because she teaches them that she is the only true Church and founded by Christ as such. If you look at the society of mankind or at any group of men in any State, you will find the Church defending the doctrine that she is what we call a "perfect society" and as such has certain rights which the State may not touch. I know that these things are looked on as highly controversial, but the truth must be faced at any cost.

Now these two doctrines are at the bottom of all the opposition met by the Catholic Church. Nearly all of this opposition is due to the fact that we do not explain them rightly to those who are not Catholics, we do not show them just what they mean and what they do not mean. Moreover, it happens that when non-Catholics do not get them exactly, with all the necessary shades of meaning of an extremely delicate matter, they naturally attack them as unnatural, un-American, irrational. Then we Catholics in turn put these non-Catholics down as bigoted and intolerant, whereas the truth is that if our doctrines were

as they see them we would be against them ourselves and reject them just as others do. Consequently, I want to explain them just as they are, so that Catholics can go and explain them to their non-Catholic friends, and thus maybe do a little bit toward lessening that part of all the bigotry which is due to misapprehending just what we really do hold.

THE SOLE TRUE CHURCH

The very foundation stone of the doctrinal position of the Catholic Church is her claim to be the sole true Church founded by Christ. I know very well we are put down as uncharitable, intolerant, even preposterous, when we say that. But at least this can be said about it, it is nothing new. The Church has always said that since the beginning. There are certain facts which should be considered before it is rejected altogether.

FACTS PLAIN ON THE SURFACE

There are certain facts which are admitted by everybody, because they are plain on the surface. First of all, the Catholic Church is the oldest Christian Church. How old, I need not say here, but everybody admits it is the oldest. Then, it is the most comprehensive Church in positive doctrine. Some churches hold this positive doctrine and some hold that, but only the Catholic Church holds them all. In fact, in the main, the only thing about doctrines which distinguishes the Catholic Church from the Protestant churches is that they deny some doctrine or other that we hold. Practically every positive doctrine they hold we hold, too; it is only in what they deny that we disagree. The Catholic Church is therefore the most comprehensive in doctrine. Another thing which must be admitted by all

is that our Church is the only one which is really universal, that is, all over the world. Many churches have missions in many parts of the world, but only the Catholic Church is organized in every part of the world. That is, of course, only to say that the Catholic Church is the Catholic Church, for catholic means universal. It is also the only Church, all of whose members hold the same doctrines. The last fact which must be admitted by all is this: The Catholic Church is the only Church which boldly claims to be the exclusive Church of Christ, and has always claimed to be so.

OTHER FACTS

There are other facts which will not be admitted by all, but which we would have to prove, before we get a hearing for them. I will merely list some of them for the present. For instance, we claim that the Catholic Church is the only Church which fulfils all the specifications laid down by Christ in the Gospels for His Church, a visible, organized, hierarchical society existing all over the world and united in the same Faith and the same government under the one head. The very efforts now being made by so many Protestants to reunite the scattered parts of Christendom are a proof, according to us, that these are the specifications of Christ for His Church. Again, the Church claims that she alone contains all the means which Christ left behind Him for the salvation of men's souls. These are, besides Baptism, Confirmation and Matrimony, particularly the Sacrament of Penance for the cleansing of sin in Confession, and the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the life of the soul in Holy Communion. Another fact, which is not denied by many, is that the Catholic Church is at present perhaps the only organized

body whole-heartedly defending the Bible as the unchanging Word of God.

All this is, as you understand, the position the Church takes up in regard to the individuals who compose it or who approach it in any way. This is also the origin of that much misunderstood phrase, "Outside the Church there is no salvation." Of course, this does not mean that everybody who is not a Catholic is surely destined to eternal damnation or that every Catholic is sure to be saved. What it does mean is that if anybody is saved it is because he or she really did belong to the Catholic Church, in spirit at least. These last four words are important.

THE CHURCH A "PERFECT SOCIETY"

In regard to society in general, the Church takes up a further attitude, for which she has been much criticized. It is that the Church is a distinct, sovereign entity, just as any State is a distinct sovereign entity, or what we call a "perfect society," each one existing not by any grant or privilege from any other society whatsoever. What the Church, however, does not hold on this point is just as important as what she does hold, and it is this that is not always understood. The Church, like the State, is a perfect society, but neither of them is an absolute society. Neither of them has entire control over any man, because they each act in distinctly separate spheres—one in the temporal sphere and one in the spiritual sphere. For the Church to surrender her claim over the spiritual allegiance of her members would be just as great an act of treachery as for the State to hand over the civil allegiance of her citizens to the Church. Just as the individual is composed of two elements—one material, the body, and one spiritual, the soul—so society which exists only for the benefit of

the individual, must have two functions—one temporal, the civil government, and one spiritual, the Church. Each is separate in its functions, by its very nature, and that is what I mean by saying that each is a perfect society, yet neither is absolute. One covers the temporal sphere, one the spiritual; neither one covers both, each one complements the other. But each must respect the other's sphere.

I make bold to say that if this doctrine of the Church were well understood much of the apparently reasonable opposition against the Church would vanish. We do not at all hold that the Church should exercise any direct influence whatever over civil or political affairs, in spite of the fact that some say we do. Even where in a Catholic country the people by their constitution should agree to have what is called "union of Church and State," even there it would mean merely that they would work together, each protecting and respecting the rights of the other, the two mutually cooperating for the common good, but each in its own sphere. This would be the realization of the Divine plan formulated by Christ when He laid down a policy for His followers: "Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are of God."

Separation of Church and State merely means that the two agree not to cooperate together mutually. Such a situation is highly necessary in a country like ours, where there are Jews, Catholics and many varieties of Protestants. This situation the Church naturally wholeheartedly accepts and indignantly rejects as untrue any accusation to the contrary. What the Church cannot admit is that the State is supreme, even over conscience, or that individuals or societies merely exist by sufferance of the State, or derive their rights from it.

II

The Church and Her Enemies

IN the preceding article I pointed out two fundamental reasons why conflict and quarrel arise concerning the Catholic Church. I said that they were lack of complete comprehension of our stand on doctrinal matters on the part of many who are not Catholics, and consequent irritation and sometimes unjustified accusations of bigotry on the part of Catholics against those who cry out at what they would rightly deem to be unnatural and un-American principles. This, I said, was true particularly of two doctrines of the Catholic Church which cause the most irritation, precisely because they are not rightly understood. They are the claim of the Church to be the only true Church of Christ, and the other claim to be a perfect society, deriving its rights just like any individual, not from the State, but from God. These two doctrines are often presented in such a light by those who only partly understand them, that any right-minded man would fight them to the very end, when thus falsely explained.

Consequently, we find ready to our hand the subject of this second article "The Church and Her Enemies." You will understand me, of course, when I say "enemies." I am going to name no names, attack no person. When I say "enemies" I mean something more to be feared than persons, I mean doctrines and movements which are inimical to the Church, particularly on the basis of the two doctrines mentioned before. It is these two movements which in any given country overthrow the Church or at least cause its eclipse for long periods of time. I will

name them. They are indifferentism, leading to naturalism; and a false liberalism, leading in time to what we call, for want of a better name, Bolshevism.

EVIL OF INDIFFERENTISM

I can best describe the evil of indifferentism by repeating the oft-heard phrase, "It makes no difference what you believe if you merely do what is right." Let us see just what that means in reality. It means that there was no Divine Revelation given by Christ telling us what we are to believe and what we are not to believe, for if there was, it does make a difference. That phrase means that Christ left behind Him no deposit of His teachings as a test of being His followers, so that each man may know in every succeeding age what really are God's commands for him; for if He did leave one, it does make a difference what we believe. It means, too, that for this deposit of His teachings He left behind Him for our use no authoritative interpreter as to their meaning, especially as to their meaning in regard to the ever-advancing mass of human knowledge; for if there is such an authoritative interpreter, it has rights over our minds as God's mouth-piece, and it does make a difference whether we believe it or not. Lastly, that saying means that Christ never intended that there be a united body of believers, owing obedience to His name and to those whom He left behind as the spiritual rulers of His society. If then it were true that Christ gave no Revelation, if He left no body of truths for His followers to accept, if He left behind no interpreter of those beliefs, then it would be true also that it makes no difference what one believes. The Catholic Church is founded on the fact that Christ gave a Revelation, which all men are bound to accept when it is placed

before them as His word. Indifferentism is then the Church's greatest enemy.

To prove this, let me show you what it inevitably leads to. I have said that the ultimate result of such a doctrine is naturalism, which I will now explain. Naturalism is the denial of supernaturalism; and by supernaturalism I do not mean, of course, what many people mean by it nowadays, namely, the existence of wonders, occultism, spiritism, etc. These things are preternatural, not supernatural. The supernatural means that God has destined us to no mere natural happiness as our last end, but to a happiness which transcends our natures, and consists in the enjoyment of Him face to face, as St. Paul says, by a sort of actual communication of His own nature, superior to ours, in this life by possession of sanctifying or justifying grace, and in the next by the Beatific Vision. The Fall of Man, Original Sin, the Sin of Adam, all mean that man by sin forfeited his right to obtain this supernatural happiness in the next world, unless a Redeemer came to win it back for him. The Redemption or Atonement means that such a Redeemer did come, to make atonement for man and redeem him from sin, a Redeemer who was both God and man: God because only God could truly by His acts meet the measure of the infinity of the evil which had been committed; man because only a man could atone for what a man had committed.

WHAT A NATURALIST DENIES

These three things, the supernatural destiny of man, his fall from that destiny, and his winning it back again are the three things which the naturalist, once he has denied the existence of them as God's Revelation, is the first to deny. But in denying them he denies the whole of Chris-

tianity, for they are the essence of Christianity. He denies them for the simple reason that he sees no reason for holding them. He certainly does not see the real and only reason for holding them, namely, that God has revealed that they are true, and that what God has revealed man is bound to accept. He does not see this, because he began by rejecting the existence of an authorized interpreter of God's Revelation, to put his trust wholly in a book, a Bible, which, being dead, cannot interpret itself. Then, realizing that it could not interpret, he went on to reject the Bible, too, as God's word, and with it the whole structure of God's Revelation of the supernatural destiny of man and the means given for each man to realize it for himself. In a word, to cover up his loss of religious certainty, he invented the phrase, "It makes no difference what you believe, if you merely do what is right." This indifferentism is not merely the greatest enemy of the Catholic Church, but of Christianity itself. The other slurs cast on us, dogmatism, servility to authority, loss of personal independence, are also nothing but catchwords invented to cover up that loss of religious certainty which is the religious disease of the modern world. The substitutes for certainty, namely, interior illumination, religious emotion, "experience," are but frail reeds to lean upon in such a momentous matter as the personal happiness of the individual in by far the largest part of his existence, that part which comes after death.

FALSE LIBERALISM DOES HARM

So much for the opposition which exists to the Catholic Church in its relation to the individual. In its relations with society as a whole, it is not so much indifferentism as a sort of false liberalism which does the harm. There is a liberalism, of course, to which I give my whole-

hearted acceptance. It is the liberalism which is expressed in our great State papers, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Washington's Farewell Address, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, etc. As a Catholic I find it very easy to give this acceptance, because I know historically that they were derived from the great stream of European tradition which was formed in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

The liberalism to which I object and which I see as the great menace not only of the Church but of our country as well, is an alien thing. It is a comparatively new thing—it comes from Germany in Kant and Hegel, and from France in Rousseau and Voltaire, but it has nothing to do with our American traditions. Most unfortunately, this pseudo-liberalism is getting a strong foothold in this country through university professors educated in France and Germany in the new and un-American tradition of the French Revolution. Its first dogma can be expressed in a few words. It is that there exist no rights prior to and apart from society, and that any rights which may be called such are not true, inherent, inalienable rights but mere grants and gifts of society, as represented by the State. Our own American Revolution was fought in opposition to that theory. Recall the very words of the Declaration. The struggle in Mexico today between the Church and Calles is between those two philosophies: with the Church insisting on the existence of inalienable rights which no State may take away because no State granted them, and Calles insisting on the theory that the State is the source of all rights. When that fact once becomes clear; you will see a quick change in American public opinion. The undeniable fact is that the Church in Mexico is actually fighting the fight of American principles and we are too blind to see it.

III

The Church and the State

A FEW weeks ago a Unitarian paper, the *Christian Register*, published the results of a referendum among Protestant editors on the question of admitting Catholics to public office, particularly the Presidency of the United States. I answered this referendum in an article in *America* (Feb. 5, 1927) entitled, "Are Protestants Americans?" in which I took the stand that these editors were untrue to their own American principles, and that, moreover, in regard to the Catholic Church, they had been misled as to the real meaning of the doctrines of Catholics on the relations of Church and State. This is the same point I am making in these articles, that the Catholic doctrines, when fully known, are fully reasonable, and are opposed principally because they are usually mistaken for something else which, as good Christians and good Americans, we would reject ourselves.

My present subject is precisely this, "The Church and the State," and I propose to attempt to answer such questions as "What is union of Church and State?" "What is separation of Church and State?" "Do Catholics want union of Church and State?" "Should the Church interfere in political matters?" and the like. These are highly controversial topics, but nothing is to be gained by being mysterious about them, still less by allowing the whole thing to go by default. They form one of the acute religious questions of the day.

In this discussion one side of the question is usually put this way: "The Catholic Church stands for union of Church and State. But this doctrine is utterly opposed to our American principles, and therefore the Church is an un-American institution." My objection to putting the

matter this way is that the first sentence is not entirely exact. It is too blunt and too sweeping, and therefore is one of those half-truths which are worse than falsehoods and do far more harm. To make this clear let me ask a few questions.

UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE

What do you mean by "union of Church and State"? The phrase has many meanings. Some cry union of Church and State when the Church opens its mouth or exercises its influence on any political or semi-political question. In that sense we have union of Church and State right here in the United States. Well known instances are the Anti-Saloon League on Prohibition; the Federal Council of Churches on the Lausanne Treaty and the Disarmament question; and several denominations on the Mexican question. The objection against the Church cannot refer to this indirect influence upon the State, for no one can fairly deny to others a right which he exercises himself. It is recognized by everybody that one of the functions of the Church is to guide the conscience and the conduct of its members in public affairs, and every Protestant Church acts on this assumption.

Another way in which the words are understood is that churchmen put actual pressure on officials to obtain their ends, or even enter political campaigns, either to defend religious interests or even to put across some purely social or political legislation. This is not union of Church and State either, though it is sometimes called so. To speak of the Catholic Church, it forbids its clergy to take direct part in politics as such, excepting only to instruct its people on ethical questions or those where religious rights are

clearly menaced. But this is merely an instance of the former indirect influence which all admit.

Union of Church and State, properly understood, is something entirely different than either of these two instances. It means that the people of the Nation, by their constitution, declare some one church to be the official church of the State, grant it certain privileges, and defend it against unjust aggression, without allowing the church to interfere in purely political matters, and not interfering itself in purely religious matters. An instance of this is had in England at the present day, except for the fact that the State interferes rather more in religious matters there than would be tolerated by any Catholic thinker. Another kind of union of Church and State is had where the Church is the government of the State, and the rulers of the Church the rulers of the State also. All Catholic thinkers reject such a union, and always have, outside of the former temporal domain of the Popes in a part of Italy, where the Pope was recognized as a King as well as a Bishop. The Church has never demanded a theocracy.

• What now is "separation of Church and State?" Here again we find a considerable divergence of ideas. According to some it means that no churchman must ever express his opinion about any civil or political matter, or exercise any indirect influence over those matters. Very few, even among Protestants, stand for this kind of separation. Another meaning given to the term is that the Church has no rights except those which the State is willing to grant it, and is in everything directly subject to the State. The only ones holding to this form of "separation" at the present day are the Bolshevists in Russia and Calles in Mexico. It is not really separation, but really subjection of the Church to the State.

A FREE CHURCH IN A FREE STATE

Separation of Church and State, as ordinarily understood in this country, means our American system of "a free Church in a free State," in which each respects the rights of the other and neither interferes in the sphere of the functions of the other, and neither, on the other hand, officially cooperates to forward the interests of the other.

Does the Catholic Church want to bring about union of Church and State in the United States? An honest answer to this question is "No." But since the matter is clouded with so many misapprehensions, I must explain the answer. The Church, in its teachings, following the teachings of her philosophers, contemplates two entirely distinct sets of circumstances. One of these is where all or the vast majority of the inhabitants of the country are Catholics, and the other is where this is not the case, as here in the United States. In considering the former situation, where the State is in fact Catholic, there is in fact union of Church and State; the citizens of the State are members of the Church. May this Catholic State have a government which is Catholic? Or a Constitution which recognizes the fact of the State being Catholic? Or a system of laws whereby each agrees mutually to cooperate to the common good of the Nation? Why not? It is the Catholic doctrine that the consent of the governed is the rule which determines the form of government. It happens also to be the American doctrine, derived from the old European tradition formed by Catholic thinkers. Monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, republic—it is all one—the people of the State are the ones who alone may determine that. Why may they not, in a Catholic land, in accord with our American ideas, declare for any of these four forms along with mutual cooperation or union with

the Church? Should they? In theory they should, of course. Such a Catholic people, even considered as a State, would be bound to secure the spiritual well-being of itself by suitable laws, and thus to bring about that mutual cooperation which we commonly call "union." But even here the governments of both the State and the Church would be strictly bound to respect the spheres of each other, one temporal and the other political.

This, then, is the theoretical system which naturally arises from the consideration of this first set of possible circumstances. It is this system which is set forth in the Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII, in the teachings of the medieval Popes and theologians, and which has been misunderstood by some modern writers as the Church's actual program for this country, where a totally different set of circumstances exist, from which a totally different theory would follow, as will be shown.

Is such a theoretical system anywhere possible or practicable at the present time? Or at any future predictable time? It is hard to say. Certainly not anywhere at the present time. All the foregoing is, as I have made clear, only for the realm of speculation. It is what would be true if such and such circumstances existed. The Popes and Catholic writers have always been careful to see that the abstract truth of that theoretical doctrine be safeguarded. But it is one thing to preach a theoretical and abstract doctrine, and another to adopt that doctrine as a concrete program for immediate or future acceptance. One thing is certain, there would never be any question of urging its adoption unless and until the people of the nation became almost wholly Catholic. But if that happened anywhere the matter would settle itself, or rather the people would settle it by their own free will and consent. According to our own American principles of the

consent of the governed, such a system of "union" would be perfectly allowable and probably highly desirable.

Meanwhile, we exist in the second set of circumstances spoken of above, where the people of the nation are not all Catholic. Here the doctrine of the Church is just what you see in practice: full acceptance of the situation. Why, even in Mexico, where nearly all are Catholic, the Church is demanding merely the American system as a practical system. In fact, this whole question of union of Church and State is merely a bugaboo; one of those fake ghosts which, upon your actually touching it, turns out to be merely a bed sheet draped over a grinning human head.

Therefore, all that has been quoted by controversialists from Pope Leo XIII on the subject of union of the Church and State is merely the expression of a theoretical doctrine applicable solely to the case where all the people are Catholic and of their own free will bring about this union. The other utterances, which are said to mean that the State is subject to the Church, will be shown in the next chapter to refer merely to an influence of the Church upon the State which is purely indirect and admitted by all, Protestants and Catholics.

IV

Influence of the Church on the State

DR. S. PARKES CADMAN was quoted by a Chicago paper as having uttered the following words: "The day is past when any realm of our economic, industrial, social, political or international life will be regarded as outside the sphere of responsibility of churches." Whereupon this Chicago journal made the following comment:

The policy thus stated has been steadily taking shape and gaining strength for the last quarter of a century. We believe it to be a dangerous policy. In effect it means encroachment of the Church upon the power and authority of the State. This encroachment will continue during the coming years. And as it continues there will arise an opposition to it, until the Church-in-State issue may become the foremost cause of controversy in American politics.

There has arisen an opposition to this policy and it has already become an object of controversy, as witness the recent speech of Congressman Free of California on the Federal Council of Churches, and a recent article by Washington Pezet in the *Forum*. It is true that before these incidents, and since them also, much of this opposition has been directed against the Catholic Church. It is significant that the same opposition is now being raised against Protestants also, and upon the same grounds, namely, that the policy described encroaches upon the American doctrine of separation of Church and State.

AN UNFOUNDED ACCUSATION

Now I have already in these papers shown two things: That the accusation that the Catholic Church wants union of Church and State in its true sense in this country at this time or at any predictable future time is unfounded, and

that what is frequently called "union of Church and State" is no real union at all, but rather that indirect influence of the Church upon the State which is practised by most Protestant churches and admitted by all of them as perfectly allowable. I further stated that no one can justly say that the Catholic Church has practised or desired to practise any other form of "union of Church and State" than just this same indirect influence.

Consequently, the present question is: "What is this indirect influence of the Church upon the State?" "Is such indirect influence allowable?" and "What are the just limits of this indirect influence?"

What do I mean by indirect influence of the Church upon the State? I mean by it an influence upon the conscience, and therefore upon the conduct, of the citizens of the State exercised by any religious group through the preaching of the doctrines of Christianity and their practical application to the questions of the day. Christianity was never meant to be a religion to be confined between the covers of books or to the secret and private lives of individuals. Christianity presents itself also as the savior of society and its guide and spiritual ruler. You will have to ignore half the Gospels or half of history to be convinced of anything else. The doctrine that religion is merely a private affair is not a part of Christianity, but the teaching of the eighteenth century atheistic liberalism. It was not the doctrine of the founders of the republic, nor of many Americans, until long after its founding. For the first fifty years of our independence all our schools were under church direction and the non-religious public school system was an added growth, as any history of education will inform you.

EFFECT OF FALSE LIBERALISM

Religion, morals, right public conduct, public prosperity were from the days of Washington held to flow one from the other. It was the influx of the false "liberalism" of Europe which changed our ideas on this subject. The doctrine of the Catholic Church on all these matters is well summed up by Cardinal Tarquini thus :

The civil society even though every member of it be Catholic, is not subject to the Church, but plainly independent in temporal things which regard its temporal end. . . . Temporal happiness falls only indirectly, or so far as the spiritual end requires, under the power of the Church.

This is just the doctrine enunciated by Dr. Cadman, and all the stock utterances of Popes and medieval theologians about Papal claims are reducible to this.

Now this influence is not an influence exercised by individuals of the Church upon individuals of the State, but of ideas and principles taught by the Church to the collective members of the State. Moreover, it is not an influence which concerns itself with every temporal affair of the State, or with any temporal affair, unless that affair has a religious aspect or an ethical aspect which flows from a religious consideration. Still further, this influence is exercised not by force, armed or political, but merely by the reasons adduced and the call to the conscience. Such influence is continually exercised upon the public mind either by religious groups, Protestant or Catholic, or by a group-theory, such as pacifism, communism, modernism, Hegelianism or Kantianism. The Catholic Church, as a religious organization, never contemplated any other relation with the State than this, and it is in this sense that it is said to be the founder of modern civilization.

Now the question arises, "Is this indirect influence of the Church upon the State allowable?" I take it this word "allowable" has two meanings. Will it be countenanced by public opinion? And is it in accord with the spirit of the American laws and Constitution? If by public opinion we mean the organized consciousness of Christian bodies in this country, then by their very actions we have the answer. The very mission of the Church is, among other things, this guiding and enlightening of people's minds on the great issues of the day: economic and social justice, international peace and fair dealing, purity of public life, the safeguarding of our Constitution against radical tampering with it contrary to the spirit of our history and our traditions.

SEPARATION RECOGNIZED

Neither is it against our American spirit for the Church to be the teacher of the country in matters that regard modern ethical problems in public affairs. That this is the traditional mission of the Church is evident from our history and the present practice of all Protestant bodies. For the Church speaks from the authority of wisdom, of principles and of ideas, and not from the authority of force. There is no union of Church and State here, but rather, from the very indirectness of the influence, a recognition of the fact of separation.

Now I take it that no one would think of denying to the Catholic Church, if it chose to exert it, the influence which all men allow to other religious bodies. The chief word of objection heard is that the head of the Catholic Church is an alien and as such debarred from any influence in our affairs. But this is a barren objection. Apart from the fact that no one ever heard of the Pope interfering in

American affairs, even by his advice, nor is any one likely to hear of it because of the very constitution of the Church, there is a more cogent reason still. The influence we are speaking of is one of ideas, of principles; and ideas and principles are transcendental, they have no national limits. It is naïve to suppose that ideas are English or Italian or French, or allied with any other nation whatever. Otherwise the foundation of the evangelical churches, the Bible, should be dismissed immediately as alien; for it is Hebrew. Ideas and principles are not "foreign," they transcend national limits, and so does the influence which they exercise. The ideas and principles which the Catholic Church preaches to the common mind of the country are the common ones of Christianity. They are not mere arbitrary notions, but known and calculable, drawn from the common store of mankind.

But this influence has limits, and well-defined ones, too. It is limited by the nature of the affair under discussion, and also by the manner in which it may be exerted. Thus, apart from certain imaginable flagrant cases, the Church does not pronounce such or such a war unjust; but it does lay down the principles according to which a war is just. In the same way, it does not, apart again from cases clear to all the world, pronounce such or such a law unjust, and therefore no law; but it does lay down the conditions for a just law, so that all men may judge for themselves. The Church deals with principles, not with concrete cases; likewise, it deals with religious and ethical principles, not with purely economic and political ones. Nor may it.

And note well, even where it is within the allowed sphere of its influence, it does not exert it by force or by any political authority. It merely has the authority of enlightened tradition, of common sense, of reason. Its

arms are the arguments it uses, its ascendancy over the consciences of men, and in its effects it remains where it started, in the sphere of the spirit.

V

How the Indirect Influence Is Exercised

I HAVE been discussing what I called the indirect influence of the Church on the State. This indirect influence I called an influence on the conscience, and, therefore, the conduct of the citizens of a country exercised by some religious organization through the preaching of the doctrines of religion and its practical application to the questions of the day. I took up this discussion because this indirect influence is often wrongly confused with union of Church and State, and also because it is something very widely exercised by both Protestants and Catholics and yet its limits are not very well understood.

Here I want to show just how that influence has been exercised in the past and how it is still being exercised today. There is a very real sense in which it can be said that the Church is the mother of civilization itself, and in particular of Western civilization. In the East, in Turkey, India and China, people understand this very well and take it for granted; in fact, in those countries religion and civilization are one and the same thing, or rather two sides of the same thing. But for the last 300 years, during which the State in the West has been progressively secularized, we have been forgetting to what we owe our origins. Nowadays also men are prone to look more and more at the person and character of the preacher who has a message for the world and less and less at the system and corporate thought which he merely represents. Sometimes they would reject the system and its thought and our whole past along with it. That is the harm which a book like "Elmer Gantry" can do. People forget that without tradition there can be no progress,

for you can only go ahead by starting at the place to which your past efforts have brought you.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

It is true that the Church does not exercise the same influence it used to, due to the facts I have mentioned, but it is also true that it exercises a stronger and wider influence than most people suspect. Let me take three instances in the past before I take up the present. These are the restoration of civilization in Europe after the barbarian invasion, the Crusades, and the Rise of Nationalism. In each of these crises it was the Church which applied the ideas and often the men who drove the world into new fields. The old Roman Empire of the Cæsars held together up to about the fifth century. But the Romans, invading the North, taught the people there the arts of modern war, just as we have taught the Chinese, and gave them a taste of the delights and riches which existed further south. That gave them a start, and when they began to move everything fell before them. Laws perished, law courts, police, education, production of wealth, architecture and the buildings it had produced, everything we call civilization disappeared, and for 200 years chaos ruled in Europe. We call those the Dark Ages. But little by little the Church began to take hold, opened schools, then colleges, and universities, hammered out a system of laws for the new conditions, taking all that was best in the new and the old, and by 200 years more a newer and higher civilization appeared, which in many things was the highest the world had ever seen, in the thirteenth century. In all this it was the Churchmen who had to do the work, for the rest of the world was unlettered and almost savage. They taught, they ruled when it was necessary,

and it often was; they built churches and civil edifices, and impregnated untutored minds with ideas of justice and social welfare. This was the first case of the influence exercised by the Church.

A NEW WAVE OF INVASION

But after this first wave of invasion had been thoroughly tamed a new one rose on the horizon. It came from the East this time, in the form of a race which drew its civilization from back of the Black Sea in Asia and its religion from Mohammed. The Turks in their turn now cast eyes on Europe and started to invade it. In Rome they saw the danger immediately, just as soon as the Turks arrived at the Bosphorus and threatened to cross over from Asia. Rather than allow the old thing to happen, when the Roman Emperors allowed the Northerners to engulf them, the Popes called on Europe to go out and meet the invader before he got fairly started. It is often said that the crusades were only a raid into Turkish territory for the purpose of winning back the Holy Sepulchre. This was the slogan which was given the people, it is true; but the real purpose was to stem the tide of invasion before it got fairly started and to have the fight on the enemy's territory rather than on their own. Through centuries the Turks came on, even reaching as far as Poland and Vienna in Austria, but each time Christian Europe, urged on by the Pope, hurled them back, and thereby saved Europe from a worse fate than had befallen it several centuries before.

Meanwhile in Europe little by little different countries were forming and arranging their national boundaries and swearing allegiance to rulers, emperors and kings. People more and more lived in cities, usually gathering about

some cathedral and a university. It was in these universities that laws were thought out, social problems solved, political systems created, and the thinkers and creators of these systems were without exception the clergy. The kings, the generals, the prime ministers merely carried out the ideas which were presented to them. These ideas were merely the preaching of Christianity and its application to the problems of life as they arose. City government, State government, National government, all of it issued from the universities governed by the Church. Our own American political system owes its origin to those days.

HOW OUR FOREFATHERS ACTED

This point is well worth remembering. Our forefathers who made this country did not sit down and think out some entirely new ideas of government. They held the truths they fought for "to be self-evident," as they said in the Declaration of Independence, and to be denied only by a group of selfish politicians in London.

These ideas of self-government, of the equality of man, of liberty, and of the purpose of government being the welfare of the citizens, even the idea of division of sovereignty between a Federal and a local government, all of these they inherited from those who went before them. Now it happened that those from whom they directly inherited them were the Whigs in England, to which political party most of those in this country belonged. These Whigs were fighting in the kings of England the idea of the divine right of kings, which was historically a Protestant, not a Catholic doctrine, and it happened that it was being fought at the same time by all the Catholic thinkers on the Continent, and the books of these thinkers,

which merely printed ideas inherited in their turn from the Church universities of the Middle Ages, fell into the hands of the English Whigs. These adopted their ideas on political government and handed them on to their friends in America, who overthrew the English government with them and set up a new government. The line of succession is complete; our own American political ideas come directly from the Catholic Church.

These are only examples of how the Church exerts her indirect influence on citizenship and government. All the social problems of past and present times have been the problems of the Church also; in present times less than formerly, because nowadays both education and government are largely secular. Yet for all that, the main ideas that rule us and that exist imbedded in our Constitution are ideas still operating and yet derived from the Church.

BACK IN PAGAN DAYS

When you look back on pagan days and see how many thousands of slaves were in Europe and Asia and Africa, you realize that it was ideas taught by the Church which freed them. When you look back on the condition of women in those times, and even in recent times, it was the teaching of the Church which raised them. The home itself as we know it is the creation of the Church, and when in modern times divorce, race suicide and false eugenics threaten to destroy it again, it is the Church which is the only thing that stands between it and ruin. Every painful step which has been taken by the laborer and the poor to raise their condition is inspired ultimately by the teachings of the Bible and the Church which expounds it. The barbarous custom of dueling, a relic of

pagan times, was finally crushed out by influence wielded by the Church. The custom of one day of rest a week, which the cupidity of wealthy men would always do away with, is steadfastly defended by the Church. The plague of white slavery and international dealing in women is being painfully conquered by ideas supplied by the Church. It was, also, only when the social and political influence of the Church was weakened that the present worse than barbarous methods of waging war were introduced. In the same way moral plagues such as the licentious stage, the use of narcotics, the printing of bad books, usury, all the things into which we are so prone to fall back again and again, all these are the rightful province of the Church, and to the Church the world looks for leadership and guidance in the proper principles to be followed. These are some of the ways by which the indirect influence of the Church governs the consciences and therefore the conduct of men. It is political, if you will, but it is indirect. The direct action by which all these things are brought about is left to the State and its rulers, to whom it belongs as their rightful province. All the churches exert this influence, and if it were not exerted the world would be a worse place to live in.

The idea which we, and particularly Americans, have to resist is that civilization is a purely material thing. This age of machinery, the absolutely marvelous strides made in applied science, the conquest of the air, the transmission of sound on electric waves, all the other astounding inventions of this period, have made us too prone to think that progress consists only in taming the forces of Nature and subjecting them to our daily use. If this were true, then indeed we would have need only of science and the scientists to effect the salvation of society.

But society will not be saved by science. Rather will

it be wrecked by science, if no higher force controls it. Civilization, progress, the salvation of society is an affair of the spirit, not of material force. The most insidious poison which could creep into the body social and politic would be the general acceptance by the people that the possession of wealth, of comfort, of quick transportation and of all other wonders offered us by science, are the sole signs of progress in civilization.

All these material benefits are to be used, of course, and developed to the limit. They were given to us for that purpose. The evil is in not being able to see beyond them and beneath them. And this is precisely the social mission of the Church. The Church brings salvation to the soul of the individual; that is part of its mission. The other part is its social mission, the salvation of society, by the preaching to it for its acceptance of the ideals and principles of Christianity. Only when these ideals and principles are joined to material progress, illuminating it, guiding it, ruling it, will we truly be able to boast of real civilization.

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