

that; but you shall not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ until you have taken a certain oath of allegiance to the State. For all those who believe it to be wrong to take the oath under such circumstances (amongst whom are the whole body of the Catholic clergy), this amounts to saying to them, you shall not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ here at all. The clergy do what St. Peter and St. Paul did under similar circumstances: having received from God a mission to preach His eternal Gospel, they preach it in spite of the prohibition of the State. They nullify that law, and, of course, when arrested, suffer the punishment imposed.

"I may remark here, by the way, that it would be foreign to my subject to discuss the character of this oath, and the various objections to which it is open, for the reason that the clergy do not refuse to take the oath on the ground that it is objectionable in itself, self-contradictory, or for any of the many reasons which may well arise in the case of laity. They object not to *this* oath, but to any oath whatever, when imposed by the State as a qualification for preaching the Gospel. The oath might be the most innocent in its character,—an oath, say, to support the Constitution of the United States and faithfully to demean one's self as a Minister of God,—still no Catholic Priest could take it when imposed by the State as a necessary qualification for discharging the duties of a Priest:

because the Church cannot admit the right of the State to commission or pass upon the qualification of Gospel ministers. She alone is authorized by God to pronounce upon qualification for the ministry. She calls this an interference with her Liberty. She says that the State, in this, steps out of its sphere, and trenches upon the rights of the Church, upon the rights of God. She, therefore, disregards such laws; she tramples upon them, as she did upon the edicts of the Cæsars, and does now upon the exclusive laws of the Chinese Empire.

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"The contest between Church and State has been inaugurated in our midst. The temporary, here as elsewhere, is too apt to carry it over the Eternal. Yet we say, await the issue and let us hope that, in this matter, at least, the fighter will prosper rather according to his right than his might. Jestings Pilate, in his day, knew not the Truth though it stood before him incarnate in the flesh; there are many Pilates in these days and Herods too with whom they will make friends. But the *true thing*, after all, is strong. Man, after all, has a soul, not by hearsay only and figure of speech, but as a truth we know, one which, if practically acted upon, will make these men pause."

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