

The means to that end is the threefold authority to teach, to sanctify and to guide or rule—*i.e.*, to focus the minds, the wills, and the actions of men by one world-wide common impulse towards the Infinite End to be attained.

These supernatural means the Church derives directly from her Founder; no earthly power could supply them, since they transcend the whole order of nature.

[372] We have already observed that the right of the Church to material support from her members, and to sovereign independence from the State, if viewed exclusively as a God-given right, transcends all human authority. Viewed, however, as a natural right, it may be said to proceed from the natural law which requires us to keep a just contract (baptism), to return good for good, and to respect the God-given rights of others—especially when those divine rights, so far from clashing with, do positively promote the moral, intellectual and material interests of civic society and of mankind at large.

The very law of nature commands us to respect the rights conferred by the Creator of nature.

It only remains for us to draw the inevitable conclusion from the above premises.

The Church is a perfect society—*i.e.*, a society whose end is subordinate and subservient to no other, and whose means adequately respond to the end: therefore, the Church is entitled by the right of nature to Sovereign authority—which is but another way of saying that she has a natural right to exist.

A perfect society has the right to exist as such. It cannot exist without enforcing the use of the means to the end—for, if the means can be altered or changed, or replaced, or set aside, at the choice of each individual member—(a) they will fall short of the end; (b) differences and antagonisms are sure to arise; (c) the least evil, as a result, will be confusion and utter lack of concert of action. For, the mind is subject to so many aberrations, the will to so many vacillations, the heart to so many temptations and corruptions—that nothing short of a controlling authority can blend so many minds, and wills and hearts together in the use of the appointed means, and thereby save the union or society from disruption. Therefore, the use of the means must be made obligatory on all, or it will be a dead letter, and the society will fail of its desired end. Now, the authority to make the means obligatory is the authority to give them force of law—the legislative authority.

To recapitulate and close the argument:

By virtue of the natural law, the Church, as a perfect society, has the right to exist. She cannot exist without giving force of law to her ordained means of existence—which otherwise would be neglected or ignored, and would occasion end-