

## The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, OCT. 17, 1925

### AUTHORITY AND LIBERTY

It is a very common, yet startling, obsession with many that authority is the very antithesis of liberty. As a matter of fact authority is an essential condition of liberty. Without authority there is no liberty; liberty is impossible. The antonym of liberty is not authority but tyranny. And tyranny is the abuse of authority; the unwarranted invasion of rights and liberties of those subject to authority. Parental authority is recognized and sustained by a special commandment of God. Yet a father or a mother may abuse that authority; may act tyrannically. So may a priest or a bishop or any one else who has the indisputable and undisputed right to exercise authority. And, contrary to a very common misconception of democracy, the majority may be as tyrannical as any absolute monarch. Justice and right set a limit to all authority no matter by whom it is exercised. Prudence, too, as well as other virtues must often modify even the rightful exercise of authority.

But without authority of some sort there is no liberty; no liberty is possible.

This is borne out by all human experience. Even savage tribes have their chiefs, chosen, it may be, for their prowess in war, yet vested with all the authority necessary to safeguard the liberties of each individual in the tribe. Down through the ages at all stages of social development the necessity of authority has always been recognized. In the present day, at least theoretically, the majority rules. But however effectively or ineffectively the people assert their right to select those who exercise authority, no one questions the existence of real authority nor the obedience that is due it.

We have only to imagine the impossible condition of a society without authority to see that every right, every liberty might be invaded without any possible redress. So, in civil affairs, at least in practice, every one recognizes the absolute necessity of authority. Without authority we have anarchy. And the common sense of mankind repudiates the vapors of anarchists. In the history of the world no society ever existed without authority; and only cranks or lunatics can even imagine the possibility of social order and freedom without real and effective authority.

So far as civil society is concerned all this will be conceded by every person of intelligence or good sense. But when we come to the spiritual order intelligence and good sense seem to be thrown overboard. "Liberty" is the watchword; authority is repudiated as the enemy of liberty. Such at least is the view of the heirs to the religious revolution of the sixteenth century with its anarchic principle of Private Judgment. Of course, national churches assumed and exercised authority. Tyrannically they attempted to coerce all into conformity. But a principle, once admitted, has a way of working itself out. So we have the multiplicity of Protestant sects, all assuming some authority over their members. While the basic principle of Protestantism is Private Judgment of the Scriptures any such assumption of authority was foreordained to futility; but such is the force of inbred and instinctive recognition of the need for authority that obedience was readily enough given to the authority in consequence and illogically assumed in spite of the basic principle of Private Judgment. Now our Protestant friends are face to face with the outright denial of the fundamental truths and facts of historic Christianity. They would fain coerce the Modernists into conformity with their creeds or force, them

out of their communions. But Private Judgment gives the same standing to the Modernist as it does to the Fundamentalist. And thus the repudiation of spiritual authority has finally led to the inevitable disintegration and dissolution, which was involved in the principle of Private Judgment.

All this is forcing itself on the minds of many who are outside the household of the Faith. And yet traditional distrust of the Catholic Church asserts itself and blinds them to the vision of the city set upon a hill. The popular Protestant misconception of Papal Infallibility further obscures their vision. Quite recently we read the statement of an Anglican clergyman that the Pope, in virtue of the doctrine of infallibility, could impose new dogmas on the belief of Catholics. One might as well say that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council or the Supreme Court of the United States could arbitrarily impose new laws. Indeed one sometimes hears it said that the Supreme Court of the United States is "above the Constitution." Nothing could be sillier nor farther from the truth; unless it be the notion that the Pope could arbitrarily make new dogmas. The Supreme Court of the United States, it is true, interprets the Constitution; decides when a law is unconstitutional; but this is far from setting the Supreme Court above the Constitution. As a matter of fact the judges of the Supreme Court are supremely bound by the Constitution, as the judges of every legal tribunal are bound by the laws they interpret, even though they think them unwise or unjust. So, also, is the Pope in his capacity of supreme interpreter of the deposit of faith supremely bound by that deposit.

Under the title, "The Principle of Authority in the Church," the Very Rev. Father Cuthbert, O. S. F. C., has a very interesting and illuminating article on this subject in a recent number of the Ecclesiastical Review. We quote some paragraphs:

"In all human societies, if they are to live and flourish, two principles demand recognition—the principles of authority and liberty. When authority is lacking a society becomes incoherent, a mere assemblage of individuals without corporate life; where liberty is unrecognized, a society is but a mere mechanism destructive of the sense of personal responsibility and consequently of moral character. In either case the society does not respond to the imperative need of the human personality: in the one case it lacks that corporate social life without which the human personality is incomplete; in the other it destroys the sense of individual responsibility without which personality is inconceivable."

"Now the Catholic Church claims to be the society of the children of God redeemed by Jesus Christ. It is not merely a school of thought nor an aggregation of individuals held together by a similar interest: it is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon earth: an organic society of which our Lord is sovereign ruler; in and through which the individual achieves the Christian life. As such the Church claims divine authority to teach and to govern and to dispense those means of grace which are necessary for the life in Christ."

"Yet it is a society of responsible human beings. No where has the law of liberty been more clearly proclaimed than in the New Testament: and no where, I venture to say, is the law of liberty more clearly recognized than in the Catholic Church."

"At once innumerable difficulties present themselves in face of this claim of the Catholic Church to contain within itself a full measure of Christian liberty. Fundamentally however all these difficulties are concerned with two radical claims which have been through all the Christian ages regarded by Catholic Christendom as essential to the very being of the Church: the one is the claim to infallibility in matters of faith; the other that authority to teach and govern is instrumentally placed by divine ordinance in the apostles and their successors. These claims to many minds seem incompatible with a rightful liberty and have led to the demand for a church without dogma and without popes whether Roman or otherwise."

"To no small extent, the opposition to these Catholic claims springs from a misunderstanding of the

Catholic position and from too external a view of Catholicism. . . . But the opposition to these Catholic claims in many instances comes from a more positive source, the denial of the supernatural origin and character of Christianity as it is understood by the Catholic. Take away this supernatural character and the Catholic position crumbles away. It is only in the belief that Christianity and the Church do not belong to the merely natural order of human existence but proceed directly from the mind and will of our Divine Lord, that we can reasonably accept infallibility and what for convenience' sake I will call apostolic authority, i. e., the inherent right to teach and govern which is vested in the apostles and their successors."

"So far all who accept a supernatural character for Christianity will accept the Catholic position. They will agree that the ultimate authority for the Christian life is Jesus Christ and that we can neither take away nor add to the revelation He has given us. He is the Master; we are the disciples."

"The corporate consciousness of a society is not the mass of individual opinions which float on the surface, but that deeper conviction which is the basis and soul of the social fabric; which in history proves itself by its persistence and consistency, whilst the mere opinions of men as individuals come and go with the passing moments, except in so far as they express the deeper conviction of the social organism itself. That is true of all organic societies and not merely of the Catholic Church."

"The most vital question which arises at this point is: where does the liberty which is essential to a moral conception of man come into the Catholic conception of the Church?"

"Undoubtedly there is a sense, as we have already seen, in which the Catholic conception of authority in the Church approaches to that conception of 'government by divine right' which we have come to reprobate in the secular governments of the world. Yet I trust that I have already made it clear, how essentially the Catholic conception of authority differs from the travesty of 'the divine right of Kings' which our English Stuarts and German Kaisers have endeavored to enforce. For the Church as a social organism rests explicitly upon the most democratic of all social conceptions, the substantive ultimate authority of the corporate consciousness or mind of the Church in its mystical union with Christ. The Catholic conception of the ultimate authority of Catholic Tradition has, in fact, anticipated the most democratic of our secular social theories."

"Thus the validity of a Papal dogmatic definition is derived on the one part from the divine authority which the Pope has in virtue of his apostolic order, and on the other from the fact that such a definition expresses not the Pope's individual conviction of the truth defined, but the corporate conviction of the Church itself."

We should like to quote further. We know that the article from which we have quoted is accessible to few of our readers. May we suggest that the Catholic Truth Society of Canada reprint the whole article?

### OUR COMPARATIVE HAPPINESS

By THE OBSERVER

We said last week that Canada had, in comparison with the countries of Europe, good reason to congratulate herself on having come through the trying period after the War with so little suffering. While the peoples of other countries have been enduring actual want and sufferings, while even in the great nation of England a million and a half of men are and long have been without employment and have been and still are receiving direct aid from the State, Canada, with no more than those inconveniences which were quite to be expected, has weathered the trying time without very much or very widespread suffering."

We should have been free from even those embarrassments that we have had, had we seen fit to take advantage of the good times to provide for the dull times which were sure to come. But that is an old story with mankind, and we cannot help it now. We can only hope that we may be taught at last by our latest lesson.

So far as governments are concerned, it is really pathetic to see people blame governments, on the one hand, for all that befalls a country; for every change from prosperity to dullness; and, on the other hand, confidently look to a change of government or to one's favorite party, for an instantaneous and sweeping alteration in public conditions as soon as one man becomes premier and another becomes leader of the opposition.

There is a good deal of the childish in us all; and it comes out in our readiness to blame a government for things that no government could possibly help, and on the other hand in our eager confidence that if another party were in office all would be well with the country. The worst politicians who ever lived were not without a desire to serve their country once they were put in power. But the ablest politicians who ever were put in power have never been able to prevent those changes in public conditions, which are usually world-wide, and which are commonly called bad times."

Take it for a starting point, then, as a matter of common knowledge and world-wide experience, that periodic transitions from good times to bad, are, in general and as a rule, beyond the reach of any government to prevent. Parties in power are less prone to promise largely than parties out of power. That is natural enough. As we have said, no man was ever put in office who did not, with his advent to high place and responsibility, begin to feel, if he never felt it before, the weight of his work and the limitations of human capacity. It would be fortunate for all concerned, and would save the public from a great deal of humbug and nonsense if there were less of accusation and less readiness to promise without limit in the campaigns of opposition parties."

This ought to be the case; because there are usually in the ranks of an opposition some men of intelligence and ability who have been at some time in power themselves. But it is only too common for an opposition party to carry on its campaign with unrestricted promises for itself; and unrestricted blame to its opponents for all that is wrong with the world."

One would suppose that occasionally it would occur to them that when they themselves had some experience of the ruling of a country they found it impossible to change bad times into good by a scratch of the pen; but it is a strange thing that politicians do come, in the course of an election campaign, to believe a great deal of what they say about their own powers and capacity, and do actually persuade themselves that if they can only get the portfolios, and of course the salaries, in their hands all that is wrong with the world will at once disappear."

As we have said, a party in power is not usually quite so ready to promise impossibilities as a party out of power. There is always, of course, when parties contend, some danger that there will be too many promises; and equally, of course, the elector who believes more than thirty per cent. of what politicians say about one another is only looking to be fooled."

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE FOURTH centenary of the publication of Tyndall's New Testament has just been celebrated, and the world has heard much about it through the daily press and from pulpit and platform. As usual with celebrations of the kind indiscriminate eulogy has been the prevailing mark. Tyndall suffered much and endured much for the sake of making the Bible known to the people, and, he possessed the heroism and all the virtues of the saints and martyrs. At least, so this generation has been confidently assured, and those historians of larger vision who have qualified this estimate have been significantly left out of reckoning. It may be profitable, therefore, to recall them.

As to English vernacular versions of the Scriptures the old fallacy that they were withheld from the people, and remained a dead letter until one John Wycliffe essayed their translation, still holds sway with the unthinking multitude, and no effort appears to be made by their instructors to undeceive them. This is aside from the question immediately before us, and it is sufficient to cite the testimony of Blessed Thomas More and Archbishop Cranmer himself to the contrary. Said Sir Thomas More:

"As for old translations, before Wycliffe's time, they remain lawful and be in some folks hands." Again, in his "Dialogues": "The whole Bible was long before Wycliffe's days, by virtuous and well-learned men, translated into the English tongue; and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness, well and reverently read." These are exact quotations but in modernized spelling.

THIS TESTIMONY of Sir Thomas More is well known to all students of Scriptural history. That of Cranmer, first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, is not so well known. It appears in the prologue to the second edition of what is known as the "Great Bible." It is worth reproducing in full, again modernizing the spelling. "If the matter should be tried by custom," he wrote, "we might also allege custom for the reading of the scripture in the vulgar tongue, and prescribe the more ancient custom. For it is not much above one hundred years ago since scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue within this realm, and many hundred years before that, it was translated and read in the Saxon tongue, which at that time was our mother tongue, whereof there remain yet divers copies found lately in old abbeyes, of such antique manner of writing and speaking that few men now be able to read and understand them. And when this language waxed old and out of common usage because folk should not lack the fruit of reading it was again translated into the newer language, whereof yet also many copies remain, and be daily found."

AND AS to Wycliffe, so long, so widely, but so fallaciously credited with the first translation of the Bible into English, there is much to be said. Those interested in the subject will find it fully discussed in Cardinal Gasquet's "Old English Bible and Other Essays," wherein strong reasons are produced for concluding that what has passed for Wycliffe's translation is really the old Catholic version of an earlier time. And of Wycliffe himself it is to be said that although he held views which if carried into practice would have been totally subversive of morality and good order, he never really separated himself from the Church and so far repented of his errors that he died while assisting at Mass in Lutterworth church, where he had long officiated. So much for his boasted Protestantism.

BUT TYNDALL was the first to print the Bible in English! So we are told, but this leaves out of account Caxton's "Golden Legend," the first or almost the first product of his press, in 1483. This contained most of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) and the Gospels. This was long before the Protestant revolt in England, and was read freely, as was its intention by those able to do so. Moreover this was with the sanction of the Church. The reason for those in authority later withholding approval from unauthorized versions of the Bible are too long to be gone into here. In brief they were that not only were these translations deliberately false in many passages, and intended to deceive, but that in the turmoil of the time, their indiscriminate circulation would tend to confusion and distraction, rather than to edification. Indeed, the new translations were so grossly abused, and made the occasion for "contentious disputations and wranglings in ale houses and other places" that it became necessary even for Henry VIII. to pass a law limiting their circulation. This is a fact conventionally kept in the background by modern advocates of indiscriminate Bible circulation.

WE ARE further accustomed to hear that Tyndall's Testament and other translations of the sacred books were so joyfully received as to render the production from the press unequal to the demand. The people kept clamoring for them. But what is the truth? Let Mr. J. R. Dore, whose account of these early versions published under the title "Old Bibles," tell us. This book, dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was published in 1878, by Eyre and Spottiswoode. "Her Majesty's Printers." It is an exceedingly candid and lucid account of the whole subject. "All

the statements made," to quote from the Preface, "are based on most careful investigation of original copies of the books to which they refer, and I have spared no efforts to ensure the utmost accuracy." His conclusions, therefore, have all the force of original documents, and as such they are no less interesting than instructive.

ON THIS point of the supposed hunger for Tyndall's Testament, he has this to say: "We must remember that the universal desire for a Bible in England, existed only in the imagination of the writers. So far from England then being a 'Bible-thirsty' land, there was no anxiety whatever for an English version at that time, excepting among a small minority." And as one proof out of many he cites George Constantine, Vicar of Llanhuadine, Registrar of St. David's and father-in-law of the Archbishop of York, who wrote: "How mercifully, how plentifully and purely hath God sent His Word to us here in England. Again, how unthankfully, how rebelliously, how carnally and unwillingly do we receive it! Who is there among us that will have a Bible but he must be compelled thereto." The statement made by Foxe in his "Book of Martyrs" that "it was wonderful to see with what joy this book of God was received," Dore affirms is not more true than are many other statements in that notorious book, which Cobbett stigmatized as the "lying Book of Martyrs." "If the people all England over were so anxious to possess the new translation," adds Dore, "what need was there of so many penal enactments to force it into circulation, and of Royal proclamations threatening with the King's displeasure those who neglected to purchase copies."

FINALLY, as to Tyndall's part in the affair, and his personal character, Dore may be again quoted. Copies of his Testament were burned by episcopal decree, and Tyndall made a great outcry against the iniquity of burning the Word of God. But it is incontrovertible that he himself was a party to this destruction and a "participator in the crime." His motive was mercenary. He sold the books well knowing the purpose for which they were being purchased. He wanted money to get out a new edition and was glad to make capital out of this ready sale. His hypocrisy is shown in the following extract: "I am glad, for these two benefits shall come thereof: I shall get money to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world will cry out against the burning of God's word,"—a grand advertisement for the new edition.

HIS DISHONESTY is further shown by his deliberate mistranslation of many words and passages which because of the protest against them were changed in subsequent editions. And when we learn that he was a coarse, violent man who quarrelled with everyone with whom he came in contact, and was most bitter against those who differed from him we begin to see the kind of "saint" his latter-day acclamers would have us believe him to be.

### TOUCHING INCIDENT OF THE RIFF WAR

By M. MASSIANI  
(Paris Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Reverend Father Charbonnet, S. J., chaplain of a Malgache regiment now in action in Morocco, has written to a friend the following account of a touching incident in which he had part:

"The other day I was in a camp near Fez. The heat was terrible, more than fifty degrees centigrade. I was trying, with great difficulty, to read my breviary, when I was called to a little wounded Malgache soldier who was brought in in a dying condition on a stretcher. 'I leaned over him: 'Are you a Catholic?' 'Yes.' 'Baptized?' 'No.' 'Have you studied the Catechism?' 'Yes, at Rennes.' I asked him a few more questions. I found that he knew the essentials and immediately I baptized him. Despite his extreme weakness his already haggard eyes were smiling. 'Soon afterward the humming of an airplane was heard. It was the sanitary plane coming to fetch him. The red cross shining on the cockpit carried the Sign of the Redemption above this death scene. The machine described a few spirals, turned some somersaults and landed near the wounded soldier, who was gently transferred to it. And the new Christian, baptized only a moment before, was literally carried to Heaven in all reality, for while flying through the azure spaces he rendered his soul to God. The plane, landing at the emergency hospital, brought only a corpse."

## MEXICAN CATHOLIC DEFENSE LEAGUE

ORGANIZATION HAS FORTY THOUSAND MEMBERS IN SIX MONTHS

By Charles Phillips  
(Special Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Mexico, City, Sept. 30.—Back in Mexico City after a tour of some three thousand miles over the greater part of the Republic, I discover that the new movement of an active Catholic life, evidences of which I have found everywhere I have gone, is daily taking on new strength in the national capital. It is curious, however, to study the difference between the conditions in the capital and in the provinces, as related to the Church persecution. This difference, in fact, is so marked that there might almost be said to be two kinds of anti-Catholic persecution going on in Mexico today, the "National" persecution and the "State" persecution. They are one, of course, in intent and purpose, and largely so in nature. The policy of the national government dictates the policy of the State governments. Each and every State government, like the national government, is dedicated to autocratic bolshevism; and each State vies with its neighbor to court the favor of the powers that be at Chapultepec by putting the screws on the Church.

Those governors who most rigorously prosecute their home territory the application of the anti-religious laws of the infamous Mexican Constitution are most in favor at Mexico City. But while they find such various means, and often such petty means, of annoying Catholics that one gets an impression of their officials sitting up nights to concoct some new style of proscription and intimidation, at the national capital the persecution for the present takes on more or less one particular form, and this is the encouragement of the Cismatistas in their attempt to establish a "national" church. This, of course, is more easily done in Mexico City than elsewhere, because here the servants of the government are directly under their masters' thumbs. Children of the Public Schools can be massed and marched to the schismatic church; soldiers and army invalids can be collected and trooped off to the heretical services of the pseudo-dissenters, more easily in the capital than in outlying cities. These things have actually been done, to boost the Cismatista movement and give it a semblance of popularity. It is in relation to this particular form of persecution that one finds the Catholic life of Mexico taking on new vigor.

### CATHOLIC DEFENSE LEAGUE

I once heard a good old pious priest declare that the fruits of the Klan's attempted persecution of Catholics were ultimately good, in that American Catholics, because they were threatened and attacked, woke up and came to a new realization of the precious thing they possessed in their sometimes too long neglected Faith. In the dispensation of God it may be that the present persecution of the Church in Mexico is a good thing for the Mexican Catholics, and for the same reason. At any rate, they are waking up. They have today something which they scarcely heard of, if it existed at all—a living Catholic consciousness among the laity. And this Catholic consciousness, this Catholic life, in one instance at least, has sprung directly out of the persecution. The instance is the foundation of what is popularly called the Defense League, officially "The League for the Defense of the Catholic Faith."

The Defense League is the newest of Mexico's many and steadily increasing Catholic lay organizations. It came into being only a few months ago; to be exact, late last March. And it came into being as an immediate result of the action of the government in promoting and protecting the attempt to organize a schismatic church. The story of how that attempt was first made is already too well known to require more than a mention of its chief and most dramatic event—the seizure of La Soledad church, the expulsion of its pastor, the riots which resulted from the installation of the "Patriarch" Perez and his colleagues, another unfortunate priest named Monje (who since has repented and made his submission to the Church); the final closing and dismantling of the Soledad church by the government which now proposes to turn it into a museum. The government can do such things, of course, since all church property, is government property, according to the Constitution.

But the Catholic people of Mexico City did more than resist with riots. The rioting at La Soledad was only the natural outcome and expression of the outraged feelings of the parishioners of the despoiled church. Back of them was the whole-hearted and now thoroughly aroused sympathy of the entire Catholic body. This sympathy very quickly took constructive shape. A few days after the La Soledad scandal the daily papers of the capital published a surprising document—surprising, at least, to the government, that what had imagined, perhaps, that whatever the masses might do in the way of spontaneous protest, the leaders of the Catholic body would submit supinely to the outrage and do nothing. The document referred to