

mands are opposed to the Divine law.

2. When laws are unjust, they are not binding in conscience.

3. It may become necessary to obey these laws from motives of prudence, that is, in order to avoid scandal and commotions.

4. Laws are unjust from some one of the following causes:—When they are opposed to the common weal; when their aim is not the good of the common weal; when the legislator outsteps the limits of his faculties; when—although in other respects tending to the good of the common weal, and proceeding from competent authority—they do not observe suitable equity.

The Church has always favored liberty properly so called; but she condemns all uprisings of peoples against their just and legitimate government; also, all uprising of a people though oppressed who have not a probable and reasonable hope of success, because a non-successful revolution may entail greater misery than oppressive government, as has happened in Ireland and Poland. Thieves, robbers, murderers, adulterers, drunkards and such like, cry out against tyranny when they are prevented from breaking the law or punished for its infraction.

A Government, illegitimate at first, may become legitimate by wise government and by the consent of the governed.

But is it lawful to resist the civil power or the government *de facto*, by physical force. In preaching obedience to the powers that be, the church speaks of such powers as have a legitimate existence. The absurdity that a fact, because ac-

complished, creates right, or that a thing obtained by force, because taken possession of, can be justly held, can never become a dogma of Catholicity. This would legitimize all usurpations. The world would be abandoned to a mere rule of force.

That degrading doctrine is not true, which derives legitimacy from usurpation, which says to a people conquered and subjugated by any usurper whatsoever, "obey your tyrant, his rights are founded on force, and your obligation to him on weakness." It is but a robbery on a grand scale. If it were true that resistance was unlawful in such a case, the highwayman would obtain a right to your purse if he succeeded in taking it by force; it would be a robbery, but this robbery being a consummated fact, you cannot now obtain any redress. It would be robbery to endeavor to arrest the purse from him.

We condemn the doctrine that upholds one law for the weak and powerless, and another for the powerful and strong.

The Scriptures command obedience to the authorities, but illegitimate authority is no authority, and therefore, when the Scripture prescribes obedience to the authorities, it is lawful authorities that are implied. St. Peter tells the early Christians to obey not only the good and gentle, but also the tyrannical.—1 Peter, II, 17. We conclude from that that they must obey even those who are bad, and the fact of a Prince being personally wicked does not give his subjects the right of rebellion against him, as has been asserted by John Huss, Wyckliffe, and others after them. Vice in the person of the