

order subservient to the material in the government of the world, to depose God from His throne and put the state-god in His place, must fail, must pass away as the last struggling remnant of heathenism and barbarism. It has reached a temporary ascendancy, because too many Christians become unmindful and unworthy of Christianity. But it is a usurpation of untruth and of violence, and it must pass. And they that now uphold it must pass with it into disgrace and oblivion, or return to the Author of our liberties, the immortal Prince of Peace. Of Him and His Church, and all who machinate against them, we can repeat the words of the psalmist: "They shall perish, but thou remainest. And all of them shall grow old like a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt change them and they shall be changed; but thou art always the self-same, and thy years shall not fail."

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### IS THE DREAM OF A UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC TO BE REALIZED IN OUR DAY?

**T**HE throne of the Brazilian Emperor has been overturned; and the vast and rich country over which he held sway is now under republican rule and governed by republican institutions. No crowned head can now be found in America. The nineteen nations that occupy this continent, from dusky Hayti to our own brilliant galaxy of Anglo-Celtic commonwealths, are all republics. And with the exception of those territories, comparatively small and unimportant, where colonial dependence from Europe is still in existence—and even, in some instances, within the limits of the latter—no spot can be marked upon the map of the whole western hemisphere where popular government is not recognized, and where, at least in principle, if not in practice, the government is not administered in the name of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie may write with dithyrambic inspiration and high patriotic rhythm the well-deserved praises of "Triumphant Democracy," and the echo of his voice can be heard, with sympathetic ears, by all the rulers of this continent. No more masters in America! The people is sovereign, and the chosen individuals upon whom it has been made incumbent to administer the govern-

ment, to preserve peace and public order, to promote the public welfare, are simply delegates, temporarily elected for that purpose, nay, in fact, nothing more than paid servants.

Enthusiastic admirers of republicanism hastened to hail with loud acclaim the changed condition of affairs in Brazil. Resolutions of sympathy were passed, or introduced, in the different deliberative assemblies which happened to be then in session. Rose-colored expectations were cherished and expressed in buoyant language. And, as nothing in this world can be exempted from at least a touch of sadness, gloomy recollections have been awakened in some minds. It has been said that the soil of the New World and its special atmospheres are not congenial to emperors; and the tragedies of Iturbide and Maximilian, and the overthrow of Dom Pedro, despite his liberal ideas and education, and of the profound respect which his own personal character universally won for him in his country and elsewhere, have been cited as evidences of the general proposition. The ambitious Spanish soldier and the misguided and forsaken Austrian prince stained with their blood the ruins of the structure which they had endeavored to erect or to maintain; and the noble, aged gentleman, who, in calling unexpectedly at the humble mansion of a Spanish dramatic writer,<sup>1</sup> begged him not to change in the least his own ways, or the familiar tone which befits a friendly visit, because "the nobility of blood is no higher than the nobility of mind and intellect," wanders now, throneless and homeless, among the nations of Europe, driven away from his country, and prevented from sharing anything in its destinies, as if he would constitute a discordant element for which there is no place.

On this side of the ocean, it is said, the triumph of republican institutions is secured; it will be followed, they add, and shortly indeed, by further and greater triumphs on the soil of Europe.

The purposes of this paper are not, by any means, either to join in this exultation, or pass an adverse opinion upon it. No stronger condemnation can be made of personal governments than the one which Almighty God Himself dictated to His prophet.<sup>2</sup> Self-government, and liberty, and independence are things too necessary, too beneficial, too natural, too legitimate, to be in need of recommendation or applause, or to admit of unfavorable criticism.

If the Brazilian republic, as well as any other republic, succeeds in preserving internal peace, in improving the condition of the people, in furthering its progress materially as well as intellectually and morally, in preventing liberty from degenerating into tyranny, in securing the ascendancy of law over the dreams of demagogues,

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<sup>1</sup> Don Manuel Breton de los Herreros.

<sup>2</sup> Kings, i., 8.

in treading with firm step upon anarchy and revolutionary methods, in never losing sight of the fact that God is, after all, the sole ruler, and that His kingdom is justice, and that this is the supreme aim and aspiration of the whole human race, *adveniat regnum tuum*, then, and, in that case, let it be welcomed heartily. Its establishment may be regarded to be a step forward, and in the right direction, on the road which all nations have to travel, in pursuance of the decrees of Providence, to accomplish the destinies which they have been called to fulfil.

It might happen, however, that a republic, even without falling into the hands of a dictator, or into those of certain reformers or tyrants who, under the name of presidents, rule with an iron rod, who understand freedom of conscience to permit of persecution of Catholics, of confiscating the Church's property, of suppressing religious orders, of forbidding public manifestations of worship outside the walls of the churches, or who, Nabuchodonozar-like, fill their countries with their own statues, and require absolute and unconditional submission on the part of those whom they improperly call fellow-citizens; then, and in that case, not joy, but grief, must be experienced.

The name of republic would, in this case, be a misnomer; and the people would find themselves in a still worse position than that which was predicted to the children of Israel when they, merely because the other nations were governed by kings, wanted to have one, and asked that he would be given to them. "Hearken to their voice," the Lord said, "and make them a king." "Hearken to their voice, but yet testify to them, and foretell them the right of the king that shall reign over them." . . . "He will take your sons, and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen, and his running footmen to run before his chariots: and he will appoint of them to be his tribunes and centurions, and to plough his fields, and to reap his corn, and to make him arms and chariots, . . . and he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best olive yards, and give them to his servants: moreover, he will take the tenth of your corn, and of the revenues of your vineyards, to give to his officers and servants, . . . your flocks also he will tithe, and you shall be his servants."<sup>1</sup>

Everybody is aware that in more than one republic the president is master and the people are his slaves. Neither shall we discuss in this paper the question of republicanism in Europe. On this side of the ocean there are natural advantages, dependent principally upon the comparatively recent date of the discovery of our continent, which greatly favor the establishment and growth of a repub-

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, chapter viii.

lic. On the other side, on the contrary, there are obstacles, consisting chiefly of habits, of traditions, of social elements, which have become incarnate in the body of the nation, and either choke the seed of republicanism or make its growth imperfect.

They say that England and Spain, for instance, are marching rapidly towards the abolition of monarchy and the substitution for that form of government of republican institutions. But, with all respect for those prophecies, some doubt must be entertained, at least as to their prompt fulfilment.

Spain, it may be safely said, is far from being prepared for democratic rule. The days of 1873 are not far enough away to make us forget that that soil does not offer safe ground for any growth of this kind. Not to speak of the tendencies towards disintegration, socialism, and anarchism, which so prominently manifested themselves at that time, and caused the soldiers of Pavia, when dispersing the Cortes at the point of the bayonet, to be hailed as liberators, the fact remains, well proved, that all things Spanish, good as well as bad, will combine to cause the experiment to fail. Even the mere system of monarchical constitutional representative government has proved to be in Spain almost an impossibility, and, as a distinguished ecclesiastic and scholar (Don Juan Nicasio Gallego) used to say, three or four centuries have yet to pass before Spain can get settled and satisfied under that form of government.

As to Great Britain, it might perhaps be proper to repeat what that great son of the Church, Count de Montalembert, has said. In his opinion, the struggle between aristocracy and democracy, which is supposed to be raging and becoming more and more intensified in that country, is no more than the fancy of superficial observers. "In fact," says that distinguished writer, "the ruling power in England is practically vested in the middle classes, from which for centuries the aristocracy has been recruited, and which permits aristocracy to represent at home and abroad the public authority and the national greatness, as a powerful sovereign, confident of his undisputed majesty and strength, willingly allows his grandees to show off with great pomp in far away embassies, or aspire to the honors of public offices."<sup>1</sup>

But, whether near or distant, whether desirable or undesirable, the triumph of democracy suggests to thinking minds an interesting inquiry: How far has it—if so it has at all—deviated from the laws of God? How does the Church of God look at it? How far is it consistent with Christian duty and with the rules of Christianity?

The enemies of the Church have often charged her with being

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<sup>1</sup> *Un Débat sur l'Inde au Parlement Anglais*, par le Comte de Montalembert. London, 1888, p. 101.

inimical to liberty. It has been said that she is the right arm of potentates, who call the men "my people," and who think themselves entitled under a right which they, by their own authority, call "divine." Persecution, which has been called "emancipation," has been thereupon started against everything which has the stamp of Catholicity.

And prominent statesmen have been found in South America who, without the slightest hesitation, have proclaimed in loud tones that the cause of all the troubles in those countries is to be found in their religion, and that the day on which they signed the constitutions under which they were launched into independent life and declared the Catholic religion to be their religion, they signed thereby their death-warrant.

In looking at this argument with the proper calm, the doubt comes to the mind whether such strange blundering depends upon real ignorance of history, or natural blindness, or wilful misrepresentation.

Who can ignore the radical influence which the Church exercised, not only in changing the laws of Rome, which were, and are still to a considerable extent, the laws of the world, and rendering them day by day milder and more and more in harmony with all the ideals of charity, fraternity, equality, liberty to which humanity may aspire? Who condemned slavery? Who sowed the seed which, implanted in that most dreadful institution, radically poisoned its blood and its life, and discredited it, and antagonized it, and brought it at last to utter ruin and extinction? Who created that essentially democratic militia, otherwise called religious orders, who sided at all times with the people and protected them against the petty tyranny of the local lords and barons, and even against the bishops who exercised temporal jurisdiction and feudal rights? Who sowed the seed from whence the legislative assemblies, and the whole system of representative governments, afterwards sprang up? Who put an end to serfdom? Who made the workingman not only a man, but a power, and a power before which, indeed, not only the rich capitalist, but kings and emperors, had to bow respectfully? Who created, and organized, and filled with astonishing vitality those admirable trade-guilds of the Middle Ages which remained in existence everywhere in Europe until the days of the French Revolution, when the despotism of liberalism and the demon of centralization abolished them? Who has furnished the standard, the only one true and permanent and universally admitted, by which all institutions, all laws, all political systems, all things whatever, either public or private, in the life both of individuals and of nations, are measured, and pronounced just or un-

just, worthy or unworthy, favorable or unfavorable, conducive or not conducive to the happiness and welfare of mankind?

"Know ye, constant slanderers of the Church of God," said the illustrious Bishop of Orleans, Mgr. Dupanloup, in one of his celebrated pastorals, dated April 2, 1865: "Know ye, and remember well that while the Church reprobates license and wild outbursts of passion and excitement, she dearly loves human liberty; and she does so because, in the designs of God, who did not make man to be an imbecile slave, liberty is the foundation of all virtue, of all moral greatness, of all civilization, of all progress. The Church, which is the true mother of human civilization, and the maker of modern society, deploras and rejects and disapproves all that degrades man and hinders the progress of the human race. Mankind is God's especial care,—and the Church of God has to bless, as she does, whatever tends to redeem her, to lift her up, to place her in a condition as near perfection as possible."

A writer, of an entirely different character, but who, in an apparently superficial style, has said many good things about the United States of America, sets forth that he has often heard that liberty and the Catholic religion could not exist together; but that, in looking around him in these United States, he has found that the statement has no foundation in truth; because nowhere in the world is there more liberty than here, and nowhere, also, has the Catholic religion more vitality and is more flourishing.<sup>1</sup>

The sermon which our great American Cardinal, His Eminence the Archbishop of Baltimore, delivered at his church in Rome when he took possession of his high dignity, might be sufficient by itself to establish, beyond a doubt, that the Catholic religion does not need any alliance with kings or emperors.

No word can be found in the "Syllabus of Errors Condemned," whose publication in 1864 so greatly enraged the enemies of the Church, which is antagonistic to human liberty or to democratic institutions. If, in paragraph LXIII, condemnation is made of the doctrine that "it is allowable to refuse obedience to legitimate princes, nay, more, to rise in insurrection against them," and reference is made to the Encyclical, *Qui pluribus*, of November 9, 1846, to the Allocution, *Quisque vestrum*, of October 4, 1847, to the Encyclical, *Noscitis et nobiscum*, of December 8, 1849, and to the Apostolic Letter, *Cum Catholica*, of March 26, 1860, the words "*legitimate princes*" simply mean "legitimate authority," authority legitimately constituted, that authority which, as the Apostle said, comes from God. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God; and those

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<sup>1</sup> *Uncle Sam and His Farm*, by Max O'Rell.

that are, are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."<sup>1</sup>

This brings the question squarely down to what is called "divine right," which writers and statesmen of the Liberal school have so bitterly criticized. But the Apostle's rule does not seem to mean that a power, no matter how illegitimate, no matter how badly established, whether through crime or fraud, is legitimate, and comes from God, because it is a power, and that for this, and for no other reason, it has the right at all times, and under all circumstances, no matter what it does or what it commands, to be obeyed, or at least not to be resisted.

When the constituted authority of the Jewish people, "their rulers, and ancients, and scribes,"<sup>2</sup> were gathered together in Jerusalem, and caused St. Peter and St. John to be arrested and brought before them, and ordered them "not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus,"<sup>3</sup> St. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: "Ye rulers of the people, and ancients, hear; . . . if it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye."<sup>4</sup>

Law and authority are one thing, and another thing is the *dictum* or action of a tyrant. Legitimacy and legality are not essentially identical. The standard of justice is not the standard of accomplished facts. And, while law is, and must be, sacred, and its authority is, and must be, divine, usurpation and tyranny cannot have the same attributes.

Of course, in this struggle between the divine authority of justice and law and legitimacy, whether in an empire or a republic; whether in a monarchical or in a democratic society—and the *de facto* power of a violator of justice and divine law, whether he is called an autocrat or a dictator, or is an oppressive minority, or a combination of unjust anti-Christian men, the Church cannot proclaim, nor has she ever proclaimed any other doctrine than that which prudence and wisdom, as well as justice, demand. The Church cannot preach injustice to counteract injustice. She cannot give her sanction to unlawful and unjust combinations to bring order where there is disorder, or to right what is wrong. She has to preach virtue, moderation, charity. She has to preach that prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance have necessarily to prevail and to conquer; and that no man can plunge his fellow-beings into the calamities of war and insurrection, unless it be in obedience to the will of God. Evolution, to use a fashionable word of our days, and not revolution, is the method most in

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, xiii., 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> The Acts, iv., 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv., 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, viii., 19.

accordance with Christian principles and law, to redress social wrongs and cure social evils. Cast the seed of the Gospe! to the four winds, and it, by its own force, will bring all things to their proper level.

But between this and the sanction of tyranny there is an immense difference. As there is a distinction between things *prohibita quia mala* and *mala quia prohibita*, so there is also a distinction between the authority which comes from God and the authority which comes from man. And it is for this reason that the "Syllabus of Errors Condemned," which we have quoted above, brands also with authoritative rebuke the doctrine that "authority is nothing else but the result of numerical superiority and material force." (§ LX).

A man can rise, and, like Alexander the Great, become, through force of arms, the master of the world. It may be said of him as the Holy Scripture says, with its usual sublime eloquence, when speaking of that conqueror, that the earth became silent before his presence—*et siluit terra in conspectu ejus*.<sup>1</sup> He may be like Antiochus, his successor in Syria and the adjoining regions of Asia, a tyrant of the worst type, an oppressor of the people, a violator of all laws. Could it ever be unlawful, and unjust, and worthy of censure to imitate those heroical Machabees, before whose glory few glories are not eclipsed, and do all things possible, no matter at what cost, to secure the triumph of justice?

Only one consideration might perhaps be in order in a case like that, and it is the one suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas. "The overthrow of tyranny," says he, "has not the character of a sedition, unless it is so untimely attempted as to cause the majority of the people to suffer more by it than by tyranny itself."<sup>2</sup>

"How was public power organized?" inquires Balmes. "Which were the stages through which it has had to pass? It is not different in this respect from all other great human facts. . . . Look at the formation of the modern states and you will understand that of the states of ancient times. Has Europe constituted itself under only one principle, which served her as a rule? Conquest, marriages, succession, cessions of territory, treaties, intrigues, revolutions, plebiscites, have they not been respectively the origin of public power in modern society? Force mixed up with right has presided over these arrangements. Even in our days are we not seeing constant changes of political forms and of dynasties, and revolutions, restorations, conquests, treaties, and a perpetual transformation of society, either through the influence of diplomacy, the action of an assembly, the force of the bayonet, or popular

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<sup>1</sup> I Mach., i., 3.    <sup>2</sup> *Summa Theologica*. Secunda secundi. Quest. 42, Art. 2.



outbreaks and commotions? This variety, these vicissitudes, no matter how much to be regretted, are inevitable. They depend upon the unceasing struggle which, by the very nature of things, all ideas, habits, and interests have to go through, and upon the greater or lesser excitement of passion, when mingling in the contention. Even that transformation which nations are constantly undergoing, some forward, some others backward, and all contributing their own share to the fulfilment of the destinies which God has assigned to the human race, while on their mission on earth, is a necessary cause of differences and an insuperable obstacle to be encountered by the foolish pretension that the facts of history, with all their immense variety, diversity, and amplitude, may be so fashioned as to allow themselves to be held within the narrow regularity of philosophical moulds. It is necessary to look at society from a high standpoint, and not to allow poor theories, purporting to explain and to rule the world, mere fables as swollen up by vanity, as deprived of truth, to dazzle our minds. In a word [says this illustrious writer], the object of public power is the satisfaction of a necessity of the human race; its moral worth and authority are founded upon natural law, which authorizes it and commands it to exist; but the mode of its formation depended upon circumstances, and has to be subject to the diversity and instability of human things."<sup>1</sup>

"Law," says in another passage the same distinguished writer, "is the rule of reason and justice, an expression of eternal truth, an emanation of the Infinite Holiness and Wisdom. Under this point of view, law is of *divine right*; and those who have antagonized and criticized this epithet, and looked at it as an emblem of servitude, proved to have been exceedingly superficial and short-sighted, because of their failing to discover that on the contrary that divine right of the law is the only guarantee, and the surest of all, if other could be found, for the preservation of liberty."<sup>2</sup>

This is exactly the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Aristotle of the Middle Ages, as Mr. Luz, of Cuba, used to call him, that high intelligence and really encyclopædic mind which honors the Church and the human race. *Omnis potestas a Deo*, it is true; but that does not mean that God has entrusted to a family, whether its name be Bourbon, or Hohenzollern, or Romanoff, the destinies of His people, or that He has prescribed any particular form of government. Reason, social interest, and circumstances of an entirely external character can only be invoked in favor of giving one particular form of government preference to another. Society cannot exist if all the members thereof are not kept together by a

<sup>1</sup> Balmes, *Elemental Philosophy*. Ethics, chap. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> Balmes, *Ibid.*, chap. xxv., 206.

power superior to each one individually, whose duty it is to preside over the welfare of all. Therefore power is as natural as society, and as society and all that is natural comes from God, power comes from God.

According to St. Thomas, there are four kinds of law, or to put it perhaps more clearly, the law can be manifested under four different aspects. These are the eternal law, the natural law, the human law, the revealed law. Eternal law is the expression of divine or eternal reason, is the rule with which the divine wisdom governs the universe. St. Augustine had defined it *summa ratio cui semper obtemperandum est*: the supreme reason, or rule, which always all things have necessarily to obey. This supreme universal code enacted by the Almighty, by which He exercises His providence, is perfect and unchangeable like its author. Nothing escapes its action, whether in the life of individuals or in the life of nations. According to it empires rise and fall, families go on or become extinct, individual men are raised to honor or plunged into dishonor. No rebellion is possible against its *dicta*; what is provided by that law is as imperative and as much to be enforced instantly as is the sound of that voice which exclaimed: "Let there be light," and light was made.

Human intelligence cannot read all that is written in that law. Most of it is a mystery to man. Philosophers, both ancient and modern, have come in succession, one after another, and attempted inquiries into the economy of the world, whether in its physical or in its moral aspect. Physics and metaphysics, or things material and not material, have been freely discussed. And while from the most ancient days there have been men who advocated, perhaps much better than those of our days, the doctrines of evolution, and others which seem to be now the only standard by which the learning of a man is to be measured; others, from Plato to Montesquieu and Vico and Count de Maistre and all other investigators in what is called the philosophy of history, have endeavored to find out the secret of the life of society, the laws which it obeys in its multitudinous manifestations, and the cause of its rise and its decline. While some pretend to have found that there is a kind of fatality, this word being taken as synonymous with things inevitable, under which all nations have to go through certain stages, and pass, as man does, from childhood to manhood, and then to old age, and then to death; and others think that human society, no matter how constituted, has to move in a circle and come back at a certain day to the same point from which it had started; and others, that there is a line of indefinite progress which mankind has to follow, whether willing or unwilling, making always man's aim

“ That each to-morrow  
Finds us further than to-day; ”

there is always the universal belief, irresistible, entertained even if denied (because, as Count de Maistre says with great reason, “ the pride of man makes him believe that he does not believe ”) that there is a law, supreme, unerring, sovereign, above all, which all things obey, which is diaphanous as light to its Author, but of which human beings can catch but an imperfect glimpse.

The ancient Egyptians had erected a temple to a divinity which they called Neith, and represented the principle of life of the cosmos and of man. Her statue bore this inscription : “ I am all in all, the Past, the Present and the Future, and my veil hath no man ever raised. ” So it is with the eternal law. No man has ever lifted the veil which covers it. He can only see the marvellous harmony which it causes to prevail. But when he attempts to explain it, if he is not blinded by pride, and calls himself a positivist, and refuses to see what is forcing itself through his eyes, no other way shall be left open to him than to do as Moses did when he saw the glory of God, to fall upon his knees, *curvatus pronus in terram*, and proclaim in humble reverence the supreme power of the Creator.

Whatever man can find written on his own conscience, and as constituting a natural element of his own existence respecting that law, is what St. Thomas calls natural law : *participatio legis æternæ in rationali creatura*. This law being, as it is, in conformity with the dictates of reason, and reason being one and the same for all men, there is no more than one law, as there is no more than one reason. Natural law is universal and unchangeable. Both attributes belong to it on account of its identity with the eternal law. It cannot be obliterated or erased from the human soul.<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine, in his “ Confessions, ” had said, speaking of this law : “ Thy law, O Lord ! is written on the hearts of men, and iniquity has no power to blot it out. ”<sup>2</sup>

Both laws provide for the establishment, preservation and progress of human society. In the admirable pastorals which our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII., when Cardinal Pecci, wrote for the Lenten season of 1877-1878, and which have been published under the title, “ The Church and Civilization, ” it is explicitly stated that “ it is evident, and the least reflection will suffice to convince any one of the fact, that man was created by God for society, and so constituted that without society he could not possibly exist. . . . Society, then, being composed of men essentially capable of im-

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica. Prima secundæ, quest. 94, art. 5.*

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions, i., chap. vi.*

provement, cannot stand still ; it advances and perfects itself. One age inherits the inventions, discoveries and improvements achieved by the preceding one, and thus the sum of physical, moral and political blessings can increase most marvellously. . . . Are not reciprocal relations (between men) vastly improved ? Has not the political system, in certain respects, improved under the influence of time and experience ? . . . It is, indeed, a fact that man in society goes on improving to the three-fold degree of physical well-being, moral relations with his fellows, and political condition. And the different degrees of the successive development to which men united together in society attain, is called civilization." <sup>1</sup>

The consequence to be drawn from these principles is not beyond the reach of any human intellect. There may be, as there are, among the nations of the world, a great many differences in the forms of government. There may be a personal ruler here, and a senate or an assembly there ; there may be a man or a woman sitting upon a throne, and called Majesty by the people ; or a fellow-citizen, our equal, and in many respects our servant, entrusted, both of them, with attending to the duties belonging to all executive powers, namely, to see that the laws are complied with, and through their enforcement that the life of society is preserved and its progress accomplished and fostered. All forms of government may be, therefore, good, and, under the circumstances, the most proper and desirable ; because politics is not a science of absolute principles, as said by Macaulay, but a science of compromises, and to a certain extent it might be said, with Pope :

" For forms of government the fools contest,  
The best administered is the best."

But if the government, whatever it is, tramples down any principle whatsoever of the eternal or the natural law, that government is not right, is fully and absolutely wrong, and is doomed to destruction.

Positive law, as defined by St. Thomas Aquinas, is the law which each society has formed for itself by drawing consequences from the principles of natural law, and making application thereof to the requirements of life. This law is also a necessity of our nature and a condition of existence for the social order. Whether written or unwritten, whether codified or expressed by general consent and the decisions of the courts of justice, that law is entitled to the utmost respect, and no man must dare to change it, unless upon mature reflection and after long and calm deliberation. The object of law is to insure justice, and cause equity and the com-

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<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Pecci, *The Church and Civilization*, 1st Pastoral, iv.

mon good to prevail ; and conservatism, in the true acceptance of the word, seems to be the best method even to undo the wrongs which the law may happen to do.

Revealed law, which applies to eternity, and is intended to secure the salvation of man, is, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, a law directly emanating from God, which goes as far beyond the nature of our faculties as eternity does—beyond the nature of our present existence, and is free from all errors, all fluctuations, all changes inherent in man. This law is necessary to complete the natural and positive law, because these two laws concern themselves with the things which belong to the natural and the social order ; that is to say, with things which fall under our natural faculties and regulate our relations with our fellow-beings, while the revealed law provides for other necessities and other destinies far above those relations.

Under the ideas which have been respectfully set forth, subject, however, to be withdrawn if authoritatively they are pronounced incorrect, it is easy to see the true meaning and character of divine right. There are powers and powers, some of them entitled to praise, some others whose existence is to be deplored. The standard for measuring them and drawing the line between the one and the other class is the law of God, the eternal and the natural law. "If now we bitterly deplore," said Cardinal Pecci, now Leo XIII., "the apostasy of governments representing social power, we cannot, however, ignore the fact that, besides the depraved official world that is without God, there is another real world in which there are many beneficent hearts, firm characters, and pure and lofty souls."

And to make it still plainer, the same great authority has uttered some phrases which now must be quoted, as a befitting complement of this part of the paper. "*Power*," the Church says, "*is from God.*" But if power is from God, it should reflect the divine majesty to command respect, and the goodness of God to become sweet and acceptable to all subject to it. Whoever, then, holds the reins of power, whether it be an individual or a community ; whether the functions be held by election or by birth ; in a democratic country, or in a monarchy, must not look to power for the gratification of ambition nor the vain pride of being above everybody ; but on the contrary he must seek the means of serving his brethren, even as the Son of God, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others. . . . The kings of nations have strangely abused authority ; their covetousness was unbounded, and they satisfied it by devouring the substance of the people and the fruits of their labor ; their will was law, and woe to him who dreamed of escaping it. Not satisfied with this, they assumed high-sounding titles, which were nothing but cruel and solemn irony, when compared

with the reality. . . . The Church is represented as the foe to the liberties of man, and the most humble servant of every power on earth. You can now estimate the justice of these charges. The Church most assuredly has no approval to bestow on abettors of disorders, nor on systematic enemies of authority; but the obedience she inculcates finds a powerful recompense in the transformation of power which, having become Christian, . . . finds *its limits in the justice of its commands*. If these limits are overstepped by invading the domain of conscience, a voice is heard exclaiming with the Apostles: *God must be obeyed before all*. . . . Liberty is a flower that springs up spontaneously in a sphere of society that is guided by the spirit of the Catholic Church."<sup>1</sup>

Under the circumstances above stated it may be perhaps easy to answer the question which suggested this paper. The dream of a universal republic has not much chance to be realized in our day, nor perhaps for a long time to come. Many a republic which is now in existence has either to undergo that Christian transformation which the eternal law provides, or to fall to pieces. Liberty cannot spring up within its limits and in its atmosphere; and liberty is the foundation of all morality and happiness. And while the transformation of society, and its becoming every day more and more Christian, and more and more in harmony with the teachings of the Church of God, shall end in securing the triumph of liberty and of popular forms of government, it will take no little time to be accomplished. As in the movement of a pendulum, the equilibrium will not be attained until after a series of actions and reactions, in exact proportion with each other, whether in intensity, duration, or any other character whatsoever.

The great aim of society is to secure that transformation, to become Christian, to attain as near perfection as possible, according to the standards of Christian law. The philosophers of the stoical school used to proclaim this principle: *Liberi estis, liberi semper estote ad servandum bonum, custodiamque ordinis*. Christian doctrine by the mouth of one of its greatest expounders, the immortal author of the "Following of Christ," put it still more forcibly: *Negotium nostrum . . . quotidie seipso fortioer fieri*. To become stronger and stronger every day is our business, our aim. Stronger to struggle against the evil, whether within ourselves, or in the external world; stronger to aid in the triumph of justice; stronger to secure emancipation from everything which degrades, or abridges, or oppresses, or prevents from being shown in all its brilliancy, the dignity of a creature which was made in the beginning to the image and likeness of God, and which even in its fallen condition is "little less than an angel."

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<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Pecci, *The Church and Civilization*. Second Pastoral, chap. vii.