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God and...
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GOD AND GOVERNMENTS

by

Wilfrid Parsons, S. J.



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by

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Five addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour, produced by
the National Council of Catholic Men through the courtesy
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	Page
I The Divine Right of Governments (Authority)	5
II The Right of Human Liberty (Liberty)	12
III Self-Government or Tyranny (Democracy)	19
IV The International Family (Peace)	26
V The Lord of the World (Christ the King)	33



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INTRODUCTION

The following papers, delivered as addresses in the Catholic Hour program of the National Broadcasting Company, over a national network, under the sponsorship of the National Council of Catholic Men, were intended to set forth in unphilosophical language the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church on the origin of political authority and its implications in modern life. In delivering them, the speaker strove to avoid those points of special interest which are still a matter of dispute among social thinkers.

In a matter which has caused so much confusion it is hoped that this traditional doctrine will do much to enlighten Catholic and non-Catholic alike on the burning question of human liberty. The fact that the doctrine is identical with that preached by the founders of the American nation may surprise some but should gratify all. The speaker has not been without the consciousness that an explanation of it might be the cause of an increase of mutual understanding among all classes and groups of our American people, at a time when such understanding is of so paramount an importance.

The twin questions of authority and liberty, and their conciliation with each other in the State, is the central question of our times. May these papers contribute to their solution in a mood of charity and common sense.

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF GOVERNMENTS

Address delivered on October 3, 1937

You would probably be considerably startled if I stated right at the beginning that the authority of the United States Government comes from God. Yet in a very special sense that is what I propose to do. The Divine Right of Governments is my subject.

No doubt you have heard of the Divine Right of Kings; and you have also heard that the American political system was set up precisely to put an end to that so-called right. That is true; and I have no intention of resurrecting that ghost of the past and rigging him up as a bogeyman for the present.

But what was the Divine Right of Kings? The Divine Right of Kings meant that King James or King Louis expected his people to believe that he, James or Louis, was personally and directly designated by God to rule the people of England or France. That was in their time a new idea in the world, and one that was unknown for many centuries before them. The notion that a ruler of the people derived his authority directly from the Creator was one that was false in reason and at the same time exactly contrary to the traditions of Western civilization. For centuries, even Kings and Emperors believed that they held their authority immediately from the people, and that their sole destiny was to rule the people in the name of the people and for the good of the people. They were trustees of the people's power, not its sole owners.

But that idea passed away with the rise of nationalism in Europe. Little by little, during the wars of religion, the people allowed their power to

be concentrated in the hands of their rulers, and we had in Europe the rule of the despots. It is one of the glories of the American nation that, many years before any nation in Europe, it was the first to reject this idea, and to restore the original idea that rulers derive their authority from the consent of the governed; that rulers are trustees, not sole owners. Once we Americans had set the example, the world followed suit, and the Divine Right of Kings was at an end.

What do I mean, then, when I say that the authority of the United States Government comes from God? Am I, too, in my little way, attempting to conjure back the old ghost and make an unexpected present of it to the Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court, who between them constitute our Government? No; I also believe that our Government holds its authority from the American people. But I also hold that the American people just did not pick up this authority on the streets, or even find it in their cupboards, ready-made and uncreated, or even manufacture it themselves as a whim of their will. For I hold that just as all men are created, so also any rights they may have are created, too. Their being, their body and soul, their nature in a word, are the work of a Higher Being, the Creator, God. That nature is our guide to all our knowledge about man. When we wish to ascertain his destiny, his rights and duties, we study his nature. From that nature we discover the will of Nature's God; and man's destiny, rights, and duties have their value only as our reason discovers that they are there, in our nature. For if they are there, then they were put there by Nature's God and Creator.

Now among the things that we discover that God

put in man's nature is that he was destined to live in society. Families just could not get along, or survive, by roaming the earth separately in search of its treasures; in their roaming they were sure to meet other families doing just that very same thing. There would be a clash of rights—war and extermination. From the beginning it was sane and natural for men to organize themselves into some kind of society, for the common good. Each family yielded some of its rights to all the others, so that all the families could enjoy what each had a right to enjoy, without any fear that it would be taken away from them. Even among the savages there was what we call a tribe, a group of related families organized to secure rights: life, liberty, and the peaceful enjoyment and development of the fruits of the earth. And they did this not only to protect what they had from the attacks of other groups, but also to secure each family in the sure possession of its own rights and goods against attacks from other families in the same group. Peace and order were the natural watchwords of mankind. That is why it was natural for it to organize itself into societies. It was a grant to man from God.

Now man quickly found out that in order to enjoy peace and order, it was necessary for him to have authority in his society. There had to be a custodian and guardian of his rights, who would see to it that those rights were respected by all. In other words, there had to be a government, with authority and the power to make that authority respected. This, too, was natural to man. Even the savage tribe had a chief to rule it. The people of any State had this authority as a normal result of their right to have a State. And so that right, and the author-

ity that went with it, also came from man's Creator, God.

But the ruler who exercises this authority, what about him? For many centuries before the advent of the absolute monarchs, everybody just took it for granted that he had this authority, not directly from God, but from those who possessed it before he did, the people themselves. It was they who were the repositories of it from God; it was they who gave it to the ruler to exercise over them. There was no divine right of the ruler or his descendants to be where he was; he was there, and he had the authority he did, because those who had it named him and gave it to him to keep for them and to exercise in their name. Voluntarily, the people submitted themselves to him for their greater and common good, and they handed over to him their own right of authority over their actions, for him to have and to use as long as he did it justly.

Now every people has the right to choose the form of government they think best for their own interests. If they choose to have a King rule over them, they have that right; if they choose to repose their authority in the hands of a small group of men, an aristocracy, they have that right also. And if they choose to retain the right to rule themselves, and to exercise that right in a democracy through their elected representatives, they have that right. No one can justly quarrel with the form of rule a people adopt for themselves, unless the form of rule be patently unjust. But in all these cases, in some way the authority has been transmitted from God by the people to the man or group whom they designate as their rulers. And after they have done that, these rulers, whether they be a King or a Parlia-

ment or a threefold form of government such as we have in this country, in all these cases, the government has true and authentic authority over the people, once the people have chosen the way they wish to be governed.

This is why I say that the United States Government has its authority from God. It was not God who designated the particular man or men who were to wield the power; that was done by the people. But the authority which those men wield, and which the people transmitted to them, this authority came from their own nature, and therefore from Nature's God, as the Declaration of Independence calls Him.

Now this may seem to you to be but an abstruse sort of idea at this late date. Yet pause a moment to examine what is involved in this tremendous truth. If government's authority comes from God, then two important facts emerge: that authority must be obeyed, and obeyed on a higher than a man-made obligation; and secondly, that authority may not be abused by those who hold it and exercise it.

I say it must be obeyed. In every well-ordered State, the authority it exercises is expressed by and in law. It does not issue from one man's whim or arbitrary will, to be changed whenever it suits him to have a change. Authority is written out in a code of laws, if for no other reason than that the citizens may know beforehand what they are obliged to do, and if they are accused of violating it, there may be a written record before the court of what they were supposed to do or not to do. It is through law that a people attains peace and order, and it is through law that authority rules with justice. If everybody were so completely in control of himself that he obeyed

the dictates of right and reason without any urging from the outside, there would be no need of law or of any authority to enforce it. In that case we would all recognize the voice of God in our consciences, and would do justice and right of ourselves. Alas, we are not all that perfect. We need the law, and the hand of authority to make us obey that law.

Now I do not mean to say, for instance, that every time the red traffic light turns against us, we are to imagine that it is the Eye of God barring our path; though I do think that it might not be once in a while an unprofitable occupation, while we are waiting for the light to change, to pass the time meditating on our Creator and His right over us. Laws are made by men, not by God, and they may be wise or unwise, or even unjust. If they are unjust, of course, we are not bound to obey them; but we are bound to obey a just law or take the consequences.

Now see what an extraordinary dignity this fact confers on the right of citizenship. As citizens, first of all we were the channels through which passed the awful majesty of the Divine Lawgiver commanding His creatures to do good and avoid evil. And as citizens we are not obeying the whim of some man. If I thought that I was doing homage to some man or group of men when I have to obey a law, I would not obey it. No man has of himself the sole right to bind me in my actions, to circumscribe my God-given liberty in a thousand ways. "Knowest thou not," asked the Roman Governor when Christ stood before him, "that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?" And Jesus answered him: "Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above"

(John, xix, 10-11). It is beneath the dignity of man to obey another man for himself alone; it is a glorious privilege to obey God. No man or group of men has any right to coerce me, to restrict my liberty. Only my Creator can grant that right.

But for the very same reason, that power over me may not be abused. There are limitations on that authority, and these limitations, too, come from God. They are the limitations that lie within what we call the natural law, the law created by God when He created man. If there is any authority in any government, it exists for the purpose of securing our liberty, not of destroying it. Peace and order can be abolished by abusing the power which governments have, no less certainly than they can be maintained by submitting that power to the rules of right and justice.

We must obey the authority conferred by the people on governments, but only because the people had that authority from God. If it came from man alone, it would be a usurpation and an injustice. It is because it comes from God that we obey it, not for any other reason.

Governments must keep their authority within the limits of God's law, which for us is the law of Nature, known by reason. They are only trustees of the people, and the people, a group of created men, have what they have from the hands of their Creator, God. This, and this alone, is the Divine Right of Governments.

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF HUMAN LIBERTY

Address delivered on October 10, 1937

Everybody knows what we mean when we speak of the liberty that was won by the American Revolution. It was the right of the people of these States to govern themselves, not to be governed by a Parliament across the Ocean. It is the right possessed by all subject peoples, by Ireland, by Poland, by the Ukrainians, and other Slavic nations, and any other natural group of families that have a common identity and can preserve order. No outside nation has the right to possess sovereignty over such a people, once that people has expressed the will to be free. And a people's will to be free means that it is no longer willing to transmit to another ruler the right to rule itself which it received from God. This kind of freedom we all understand. At one time or another the forefathers of all of us, no matter what our race, have fought for it, and often won it, by force of arms.

Then there is another, a more intimate and dearer form of liberty, the liberty possessed by each family and its individual members within the State itself to which the families of a nation have transmitted the right to rule them.

Last week I demanded for the State this right to rule as something ultimately derived from God. The rulers of the State have the right to govern us as long as they govern justly, and we obey them not because we like them or admire them or voted for them or for any other human reason. We owe allegiance ultimately only to God. It was He who gave

the right to command to the peoples, and they in turn, for their greater security and the common good, transmitted that authority to their governments to exercise.

The right I speak of today at first would seem to be in direct conflict with the first. The right of human liberty is also possessed by man, and it has an especial meaning when we speak of governments. It, too, comes from God, the same God in whose name rulers govern. But unlike authority, it is not transmitted to any governmental power; it is retained by the people to themselves. We give the State authority over us, and yet each one of us retains the right of individual freedom. And what is more, the right of the State to rule and the right of the citizens to be free, both of these rights come from God.

Does God, then, contradict Himself? If we think so, we are deceived. It is true that this conflict of authority with liberty is as old as the human race. Ever since tribes or peoples have been subject to chiefs or kings or parliaments, they have been in revolt against them. It is the eternal dilemma of the human family: to be ruled and to be free just do not seem to go together. We must, then, look into this a little more closely, to see how two such contrary rights could come to us from the same God. For we know that if they do come from God they cannot really be in conflict.

What do we mean by the right of human liberty? We mean the right of each family and of each individual in it to work out his own destiny and to possess in untrammelled peace the means to work it out. We mean the ownership of certain inalienable rights which man did not receive from the State because

man had them before he gave any authority to the State to rule him.

One of these rights was the right of a people to free itself from foreign rulers. Another was to transmit to its own government the authority it means it to exercise and no more, and to retain to itself just so much authority as it intends itself to have. In this country we did that once for all by a written Constitution. In other countries, such as England, the representatives of the people in Parliament determine from year to year what rights to rule they shall possess, and if these representatives do not express the mind of the people as to what rights to rule they should have at this particular time, the people can overthrow them in an election. In this country, we have given our authority to a threefold government: the right to make laws to one, the right to execute them to another, the right to judge according to them to another. In England the right to make laws and the right to execute them are in the same hands, those of the Parliament; and even the right to judge lies ultimately in the Upper House of legislation.

These, then, are the first political rights which each people enjoys. But they have still another liberty, equally received from God for the common good. That is the right, if they choose to exercise it, to rule themselves through these representatives, in one way or another. This right of self-government means that the people freely submit themselves to their rulers; but it also means that as long as the rulers govern justly they must obey them.

“As long as the ruler rules justly.” In these words is contained the greatest liberty of all. It was set forth in the immortal Declaration of Indepen-

dence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." There are rights, our forefathers held, that we do not possess by grant of any human institution, rights which we have from God alone. Clearly they saw that if these rights were the mere grant of an English Parliament, or of any group of men, then that Parliament or that group may take away what they freely gave. Deny that, and you walk straight into dictatorship or into the tyranny of a powerful majority or even of a determined minority. If you do not believe any longer that we have a Creator, that we have rights with which we were endowed by that Creator, that no man or group of men may take these rights away, then you have denied not merely the fundamental principle on which our American Commonwealth is founded, you have placed yourself under the worst form of tyranny, a government of men with the most absolute of powers.

Now why do we have authority in a State? In order to abolish individual liberty? No; in order to preserve it. It may seem strange to you, but if we had no authority, we should have no liberty. The very purpose of authority is to see to it that our liberties are maintained. Suppose there were no authority in our land, what would happen? Is it not obvious that then only the strongest and the most ruthless would possess the fruits of the earth, and the weak and unorganized would be shoved aside to perish of hunger and neglect? We put a hedge around our liberty, to make it grow more freely and keep it from being trampled by the greedy and ambitious. We limit our freedom, in order to have

any freedom at all. We give up part of what we own, in order to possess the rest in peace.

But when we do that, we have not given up ourselves. Very precious have all men cherished their right of free association, the right of free assembly, the right to present their grievances to their superiors, the right of habeas corpus, the right to follow their own conscience and to worship as that conscience dictates to them, the right of free expression, through the press or any other way, the right to possess property as their own. You may limit these rights if you have to, but only to safeguard other rights, more imperious still; you may not abolish them. If the right of free speech threatens the rights of conscience or of free assembly, that right must be kept within bounds. If the right of private property encroaches upon the common good, it may and should be curbed and directed. If the right of free assembly threatens the very existence of the nation, it, too, may and should be limited, for the right of the nation itself to exist is paramount. And if the right of the nation itself to exist is turned by ambitious men into selfish channels, then even it must be brought under subjection. But none of these rights may you wipe out altogether.

Our whole social and political life is thus an interplay of human forces, of rights of individuals or of groups, all combining to the common good. When they all fit into their proper place, we have peace and order in the community. When one of them grows out of bounds, it must be pruned back into the common pattern of national life. Each of these rights was planted by God; from God it has its license to flourish and fruit. And only by this fact can liberty for all be maintained.

I said "liberty for all." There are after all two groups in modern life who regard liberty in wholly different ways. One of them thinks in terms of unlimited liberty for themselves and their group alone; the other demands limited liberty, but wants that limited liberty for all. As Msgr. John A. Ryan has acutely remarked, the first group are the Tories, whether they call themselves conservatives or liberals; the second group are the only true liberals. The true liberal wants a limited liberty, but he wants it for everybody. The Tory would restrict liberty to himself and his friends, whether those friends be the bankers or the proletariat. When liberty becomes privilege, for one man or group of men, it is no longer liberty; it has grown to tyranny. Only when all men enjoy their own, does true liberty exist.

But how shall this be done? Shall we leave this delicate task to any man, or cabinet of men? Some say we can safely leave it to a majority in the State, that the majority is always right, or even if it is not right, that its will is paramount. But surely that cannot be true; a majority may restrict liberty to itself, and tyrannously exclude all others from its enjoyment. Some say we can leave this task to a wise ruler, a benevolent despot, that from that one enlightened mind, uncommitted to any class, will come wisdom and justice. But even if there were such a ruler, which most people doubt, he would still have a superior, to which he himself and all majorities or minorities are subject.

What is that superior? It is Law. Neither legislators nor executives may guide the destinies of peoples according to their own whims or wills or fancies. Governments have the duty to set forth the obligations of citizens in due form, so that even the

executive of the law is subject to it. Now these human laws themselves are in their turn subject to another law, and that is the law of man's nature discovered in him by reason. The laws of men may not transgress this Higher Law; they must in fact be in accord with it.

And just here lies man's ultimate protection against tyranny in the State. He enjoys from his Creator an endowment which no State may touch, his human personality. He has a spiritual nature, an eternal destiny, he is the image and likeness of God, he depends on God alone. Deny that nature, that intangible personality; put man's dependence directly and ultimately upon society alone; place the source of his rights in society and not in an endowment from his Creator; and then you have opened for him a Hell upon earth, you have opened the gates of the world to every form of inhuman despotism. Proclaim his God, make him a creature of the Almighty, created to His image and likeness, search his nature for the Hand of God which fashioned him, seek the basis of his rights not in time but in eternity—and then you have set man free! No despot can shackle him, no dictator may regiment him, no majority can imprison him. To despots and dictators he can proclaim: "I am free. I escape your cunning plans to entrap me. My destiny, my rights, my personality lie outside your grasp. I am a child of God; I am not a creature of the State."

SELF-GOVERNMENT OR TYRANNY

Address delivered on October 17, 1937.

The eternal dilemma of the peoples in their never-ending struggle to fashion for themselves the ideal form of government was the subject of my addresses last Sunday and the Sunday before that. Authority and liberty, two opposite concepts, must dwell together in any well-ordered nation. There must be authority, or the nation will not survive; there must be liberty, or the citizen cannot realize his destiny. If you have no authority, you have no State; if you have no liberty, you crush the individual human person. But on the other hand, if you press the authority of the State too far, you will destroy liberty; and if you have only liberty and no authority, you will end with anarchy and the destruction of liberty itself. There is the dilemma.

Now peace and order are the watchwords of mankind, and the only way to preserve peace and order is to solve that dilemma of authority and liberty. We must have these two at one and the same time, or we will not have any way to safeguard the inalienable rights of man. For authority is the human means to preserve liberty, and liberty is the check on authority to keep it from violating the intimate and inviolable law of man's nature. You cannot, therefore, allow either liberty or authority to grow to too big a stature; they must each dwell in the same house, at peace with each other, each in its own room, each with its well-defined functions and rights. When the human family has achieved that triumph, then it has found the key to the dilemma of its political life.

There have been peoples in the past, as there are some today, who have been willing to barter liberty for another good, the possession of security. To them security is something they can see. They can feel it. It supplies them with food and clothing and proper housing. It holds forth for them the attainment of a material paradise on earth. What is liberty in the face of that? Liberty is only a spiritual treasure. You cannot feel it or see it. It does not feed you. It is a luxury to be enjoyed in good times. Those who can afford it may have it. To the poor peoples, "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed," to those who have despaired of the power of self-government to save them, to these it seems a little thing to lose their liberty, if in return they receive security. They watch liberty go out the window with little regret, and so they have been willing to surrender their liberty to a dictatorship, whether that dictatorship goes by the name of Fascism or the name of Communism.

Among those, however, who already enjoy a security which for the moment seems invulnerable, we have another false god which would also control their destiny if once it were enshrined on their country's altars. This false god does not go by the name of security; it has no other name than that of liberty itself. It matters not that the name is only a mask; that its owner bids for divine honors under a masquerade. Liberty for the adepts of this false deity does not mean liberty in the sense in which I have explained it. It means, not liberty for all, but privilege for a few. And the strangest part of it all is that this god is worshipped not only by those who now enjoy the privileges, but even by those who do not, but who hope some day to climb to the place

whence they may look down on the lowly spot they once occupied and on those who are still left there.

“Opportunity for all” means for these, not the common enjoyment of the goods of the earth, but the special privileged possession of a large part of them by a few. Small wonder is it, therefore, that the collectivized peoples of Europe do not cease to tell us that we must pay the price of liberty if we want security and equality. And that is precisely because among the free peoples there are many who blaspheme the name of liberty by endowing it on something that is not liberty at all.

Seventy years ago next month, a great American, in dedicating a graveyard on a great battlefield, spoke of a new nation brought forth on this continent, “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” He was fighting a war, he said, that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people, might not perish from this earth.” Today, seventy years later, a new struggle has arisen throughout the world, “testing” once again, in Lincoln’s words, “whether any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.” The crisis that today is disturbing the peoples of the earth, East and West, is a crisis of government. The central question of our times is once again how to balance governmental authority and human liberty, so that the result shall be of equal benefit to the human race. It is a stirring and a disturbing question. But we must solve it, or see our civilization go down in blood and dust.

This year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the act by which the American people determined to solve that problem. The American Constitution which they adopted is founded on the propo-

sition, set forth eleven years before in the Declaration of Independence, that man possesses certain "unalienable" rights with which he was endowed by his Creator. On that proposition they built a kind of government which was not new in the history of the world, but was wildly revolutionary in the times in which they lived. It was a government by which both liberty and authority were to be safeguarded by the people governing themselves through elected representatives. It was a democracy they set up, and which has endured the shocks of wars from without and a war within, and has weathered the equal perils of high prosperity and deep depression.

This democracy which they set up safeguarded authority, because it definitely ruled that true sovereignty resided in the threefold government which they adopted, that sovereignty which a people can have only from God. It safeguarded liberty under authority, because it divided that authority between three equal powers, because it did not delegate all the people's power to the central government, and because it did not make the State the source of the people's rights, but their Creator. It kept the conflicting elements in equilibrium, because it wrote them down in a permanent document called the Constitution, which can be added to or subtracted from only by the people's vote.

Now this kind of government finds itself at perhaps the greatest crisis it has ever faced. Both from without and from within there are enemies which menace its existence. By enemies I mean not men, or even measures. I mean ideas.

What are these ideas?

On the one side there is the insistent voice murmuring to us the seductive plea that security is

better than liberty. "We will feed you, we will house you, we will clothe you. Give us all the power you have over yourselves, and we will use it for your greater good. We will make a paradise of the earth for you. 'All these things will we give you, if falling down you will adore us.'" Thus great peoples abroad have hearkened to the temptation, and followed an Absolute State as they would a deity. Whether that State has destroyed private property or whether it has kept it, the political result is the same: there is a government which says that rights are not inalienable; that the State grants and the State can take away; that the citizen exists for society, not society for the citizen; that governments owe no respect for anything with which the individual was endowed by his Creator.

This is the cry with which, from Right and Left, both sides hail us. In this din of the modern world there seems little place for the voice of our forefathers implacably reminding us: "we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that man is endowed by his Creator with certain unalienable rights. . ." Both sides, which happen to be at odds because, holding the identical notion of government, they are competing for world power, both sides are bidding for our support, with the silent threat that if we do not comply, we will be crushed.

And at the same time, within the bounds of democracy, there are fatal voices which would betray us, while pretending to speak our language; and there are dangerous circumstances which would cause us against our will to surrender our traditions. There are voices which while mouthing the name of democracy, speak the language of democracy's oppo-

nents. These, too, will not admit any longer that man has inalienable rights from a Creator; these, too, proclaim that society is the sole source of our prerogatives; these, too, will not admit that liberty and authority come alike from God. So far have many traveled from the ideas of our forefathers that, while condemning the dictators, they speak the dictators' language, because they will not admit the place of God, as did our ancestors, in the government of men.

This danger is an insidious one. But here is the open peril which we must face without delay. The dictatorships, Fascist or Communist, reproach the democracies with the taunt that self-government is powerless in the face of the changed conditions of the modern world; that the machine has enslaved mankind; and that only an Absolute State can tame the machine. It is a challenge to the free peoples of the world. Once again we have to test whether our form of government can long endure.

Will it endure? It will, if it remains based on the principles on which it was built. Just a century and a half ago, a great Irishman, statesman, and orator, a sympathetic friend of the struggling American colonies, speaking in the British Parliament, expressed these principles in undying prose. Here is what was said by Edmund Burke:

“Arbitrary power is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will, much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection, all born equally, high and low, governors and governed, in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent law, prior to all our devices and all our contrivances,

paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our existence, by which we are knit and connected to the eternal frame of the universe, out of which we cannot stir. This great Law does not arise out of our conventions or compacts; on the contrary, it gives to our conventions and compacts all the force and sanction they can have. . . . If then all dominion over man is the effect of the Divine disposition, it is bound by the eternal laws of Him that gave it, with which no human authority can dispense; neither he that exercises it, nor even those who are subject to it." (Impeachment of Warren Hastings, p. 327).

My friends, if we are to find in democracy the solution of our present troubles and puzzles, and I believe we will, it can be only in religion that we will find the key to that solution. Religion "the opium of the people"? Only those say that who are meditating an assault on the people's liberty. Why, it is only in religion that you will find the idea that will make free democracy work. That idea is that man finds what liberty he has in the nature he received from God; and that governments received what authority they have also from God. This, a fundamentally religious idea, is the only idea that will set men free.

THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

Address delivered on October 24, 1937

When the democratic peoples set up a form of government in which they retained to themselves that right to govern which they had received from God, they felt that they had solved the eternal dilemma of liberty and authority. Last week, I showed how we in this country had safeguarded both of these divine rights by our form of democracy. We give to no man the right of arbitrary power over us. We acknowledge only God as the ultimate ruler. We hold that even the people rules only by the grant of power which it receives from its Creator. There is an intimate and inviolable law which governments themselves are bound to respect, and that is the law of man's nature. Their ordinances have no power unless they proceed from that law. Their punishments have no validity unless they are in accord with that law. There lies the charter of man's liberty.

There is, however, a wider stretch of humanity than that which is confined within the bounds of any nation's frontiers. Within the nations, the curbs on individual cupidity and ambition are set by the laws promulgated by the competent authority in those nations. Thus individual rights are protected against the encroachments of other individuals who would abolish or invade those rights. Conflicting rights are conciliated by the rule of reason, backed by the force of the State. And liberty is won and maintained by keeping it within the limits of peace and order.

But the duties of governments do not stop there.

Nations have obligations toward other nations, just as individuals have obligations among themselves. The obligations of individuals are enforced by the public authority in any State. But the obligations of nations have no outward superior to see that they are enforced. Each people has an autonomous existence, as we say. It is self-contained. It is supreme in its own orbit. It has no outward ruler to whom it owes obedience.

“It has no outward ruler.” Is it then lawless? Is there no curb on its activities, its ambitions, its cupidities, its jealousies, its angers, its revenges? Is there no law to which it also owes allegiance, as the citizen of a State owes allegiance to the laws of his country?

Suppose there were no government in this Western hemisphere. Suppose only that each family owned and tilled its land or each group owned and operated its factories, without the presence of any city, state, or national authority to give laws to safeguard liberty, without police or courts or jails to deal with the transgressors of others' rights. Suppose, in other words, that we had anarchy in the real sense, the very absence of government. Would there still be no curb on men, to see that they respected the rights, the property, the freedom, of other men? Yes; there would. There would still be the curb which is behind all human laws, the existence of the Eternal Law, which proceeds from the Will of God, the Supreme Lawgiver. But, in that case, the only policeman would be the internal conscience of each individual citizen.

You may well laugh at the imagination of such a fanciful situation. You may cynically reply to me

that this state of things would last just as long as it took the stronger and the more unscrupulous to seize for themselves all that the weaker or the law-abiding might possess. Well, let me say that this is just the state of things that exists among the nations. At this day there stands between the weaker and the stronger nations no other law than the unwritten law; there is no ruler of the nations; there is no international policeman. There is only the conscience of each individual nation bidding it respect the natural rights of its neighbors. Oh, I know that there is what we call the international law. But what is that but a series of mutual agreements, each one of which depends for its observance upon the individual conscience and honor of each nation, which in turn is subject only to the unwritten law of man's nature? Each nation stands in the world today just exactly as each individual man would stand in his community if there were no government, no law, no police, no court, no jail. The keeping of the peace in the international family has just exactly that same sanction of natural law which binds the individual, the same rights given by God to be respected as coming from Him, the same obligation to preserve the inviolable integrity of God's creatures on this earth.

But long ago the nations—almost since there were nations, at the close of the Middle Ages—long ago the nations rejected this curb upon them of the natural law. Individuals? Yes. They enforced this law upon their subjects. But they refused to accept it as a curb upon themselves. Each family, each individual in it, must observe the laws of God and of men. But not the group of families we call the nation. The nation, as a nation among nations, ack-

nowledged no other obligation, no higher law, than its own aggrandizement and safety.

Then, inevitably, in place of the natural law, the nations suffered another kind of curb upon themselves, efficacious perhaps, but more ignoble—the curb of fear. And thenceforth the peace of the world depended solely upon the fact that one nation contemplating robbery or assault upon another was turned aside from its nefarious plans only because it feared that the other nation might successfully resist its invasion.

And what does that mean? It means that in place of the rule of justice and right there came within the international family the rule of armed might. Bigger armies gave a nation the “right” to oppress the weaker, to cross its frontiers, to annex its territories. Only the weaker were obliged to keep the peace, according to the new immorality of nations. There was war, invariably, when one nation felt itself so strong in man power and the engines of war that it could, without fear of losing, enter a contest of strength against another nation. And the result of this was that the only way by which peace-loving nations could keep peace was by grouping all nations in a balance of power in which the two sides were so equally divided that neither dared attack the other. Then, to make this tragedy complete, the groups on each side began to load down their side with new armaments, in the hope that the time might come when that side would overweight the other. After that, when they did not succeed, they started a game of bluff, each one trying to frighten the other by the threat of armed force. And alas! as in all such games, when the bluff was “called”, as we say, there was no choice

but to fight anyway, without any clear chance of winning the game. This is the picture of the morality of the nations toward each other today, once they had abandoned the obligation that lay upon them of the natural law implanted in them by their Creator. Is there any decency in it? Or common sense?

Yet at this very moment the bewildered peoples are watching their rulers dealing with each other in this very same way. We know, and those rulers know, that if war comes, neither side will profit from it. Millions of young men, and women, and children very probably, will be mangled by new engines of death, on land and from the air. The wealth of the world will be destroyed. No doubt those rulers hope in their hearts that they will not have to drive their legions to the firing line; but they persist nevertheless in using the power of those legions as an argument in their discussions with each other.

In one country, Spain, an intolerable regime of oppression and violence, striving to implant an alien philosophy upon a suffering people, drove a large section of that people to such rightful exasperation that they took up arms to regain their ancient liberties. And who are we, liberty-loving Americans, to condemn them? But immediately, out of this terrible struggle between brothers, the real situation of the world reveals itself in all its frightful ugliness. Two sides to that situation, neither one more a lover of democracy than the other, straightway strive to wring an advantage from it in a wider conflict that threatens to engulf them all. Only by deception can any peace-loving people be led to take part on either side of that wider dispute. Only by closing their eyes can they believe that the interests of democracy are

on one side or on the other. If they add their weight to either side of the balance, it will only encourage those on that side to feel that now at last they have the advantage, and are able to spring at their antagonists.

Let me not be understood as saying that never, under any circumstances, is it right to take up arms against another country. If there were no law within the bounds of our country, or of some part of it, no government, no police, no courts, even the individual would have the right to repel an invader of his lands or his home with force of arms. If in that case there were abroad wild men whose sole restraint was the fear of reprisal, it would be even the duty, not to say the right, for individuals, in the absence of law, to see that that fear was present. There is no other law for nations. Until all peoples come back to the old allegiance to the natural rights of man and the natural law that flows from those rights, until that time, and even then, it will always be the right of a people to use force to defend their rightful own, it will never be their right to use that force to take that rightful own from another.

Is there, then, no hope for peace in our days? Yes; there is. There is one group of men and women I know who have nothing but peace in their hearts. Today, in all their churches in the world, Catholics are celebrating what they know as Mission Sunday, to call to loving memory and prayer the missionaries they have sent to foreign lands. These are the men and women who have left their homes behind, to wander into far places to bring word of the Prince of Peace. These are the worthy descendants of those who once left Palestine and brought

order, peace, and justice into a pagan Europe; and of those who later stood side by side with the intrepid explorers who sailed the uncharted seas, and opened up the wastes of Africa, Asia, and America to civilization, and who planted the Cross before the sword in strange islands and awful mountains and waiting valleys. These are those who bring the message that men are brothers, because they have a common Father and were redeemed by the Son of that Father and made one with Him. There is no war, no force, no injustice in their Gospel. They are the invaders of foreign lands to save, not to kill. They are the living proof that peace among men is possible for men of good will.

It is well that we recall their memory, for they represent in their persons the love that will rescue the world from the dire result of its own insane hatreds. It is sad and true that wars are not made at last until the passions of hate have risen in a people to a point of overflowing.

There is something we can do about it. We can hush the prophets of hate as soon as they open their mouths. We can penetrate through their hypocrisies even as they utter them. We can drown their cries of violence by hymns of love. We, too, can be missionaries of the Prince of Peace. We can simply refuse to do anything but love another people. If we do that, in vain will the makers of war seek to bring us up to the blind fury of hatred which is necessary before we snatch up our arms and go out to slaughter our fellowmen.

THE LORD OF THE WORLD

Address delivered on October 31, 1937

(The Feast of Christ the King)

On a winter's night in Bethlehem of Judea, in Palestine, a Baby was born in a stable, and His crib was the manger used to feed the cattle. His birth went unnoticed even in that little world, except that some shepherds out on the hillside were startled by a flight of angels through the air who stopped to inform them that there was born this day "the Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." The mother on earth of this Baby was Mary, of the royal line of David, King of Israel. His Father in Heaven was God Almighty, Creator and Ruler of the universe. For the Baby Himself was God, Son of that Father in eternity. It was to this Son that the Father had said, through David: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm ii, 7-8).

Thirty-three years later, the Baby, now a grown man, stood bound before the representative of the far-off power of Imperial Caesar, who had enslaved the Jewish nation. The governor said to Him: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" And Jesus answered him: "Thou sayest it" (Luke xxiii, 3). And *King* was the title which the Governor gave Him, to hang over His head when He died a few hours later on the Cross. But He had said: "My kingdom is not of this world." He had His kingdom, not from His royal ancestor David, but as an inheritance from His heavenly Father. All His life He had announced but

one project for His followers, the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Not many years after, before any Gospel had been written about Him, one of His followers, Saul, who changed his name to Paul when he became a Christian, wrote about Him: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. viii, 6). And again, still speaking of Christ, "In him were all things created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . all things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and by him all things consist" (Col. i, 16-17). The nations of the world and the uttermost parts of the earth are His inheritance and His possession. They were made through Him and in Him, and in Him they have their existence today. By right of having made them, He owns them, more truly than you or I own anything we have. He was born King of the world, in a sense that is not true of any ruler that ever lived. His is the primal and original right; His rule is based on actual ownership.

He has another title to His rule: the right of conquest. The world and all that is in it, men and things, were lost by sin and disobedience. Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal Father now made man, offered His life to win the world back again. His offer was accepted. He died as a King, the "prince of the kings of earth" (Apoc. i, 5). When He rose from the dead on the third day after, He was once again in secure possession of the world, having won it by the shedding of His blood. That right of conquest, added to His right by birth, will never be taken away from Him. This very day, all

over the world, in all their churches, Catholics are doing sacred liturgical homage to Him on their altars under the title of Christ the King.

As long as He lived on this earth, Christ never exercised the prerogatives of His kingship. On the contrary, He was subject to all men. He had no palace. He had no throne. "He had not whereon to lay his head." He finally died as a common criminal. Though He was in fact Lord of all the world, and the superior of all the Kings of the earth; and though He often proclaimed His kingship, He was a common man, He also was "ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-fed." His task upon earth was to give an example to mankind of submission to His Father's will, and at the end to lay down the last drop of His blood as a sacrifice for the ills of man.

Now, in Heaven, He "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father," and rules with Him. He is King of our intellects, for He is the Truth. He is King of our wills, for He leads us by His grace to do His Father's will. He is King of our hearts, for no man was ever so loved, or ever will be, as He. He is King of our bodies, for He redeemed them from eternal death.

He never exercised His Kingship or His ownership, as long as He was upon this earth. To others He permitted, and still permits, possession of material things and dominion over them. But men may never forget that what they own according to the laws of this world, they own as subject to His superior and Divine ownership, and may never use them against His will or to violate the rights of any of His creatures. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Only as trustees for Him do men possess the thing they call their own, but which are

at all times His by right of creation. Men are secondary owners; yes. But He is the primal owner. His will is paramount in the disposal of them. Men may not use them entirely for themselves; but only as stewards of an absent landlord. All the ills of our social and economic world happen because men have forgotten this certain and elementary truth.

And if this is true of His ownership, what shall we say of His authority? The present Pope, Pius XI, reminds us: "If princes and legitimate rulers will only be convinced that they rule, not so much in their own right, but by a mandate from and in place of the Divine King, it is easy to understand what holy and wise use they will make of their power; with what zeal for the common good and the welfare of their subjects they will be inspired both in the making and the enforcing of laws." As I said in my first address four weeks ago, all the authority which is invested by God in the people and with which they in turn invest their governments, all this authority of the State is nothing but the authority of God, delegated to His human servants.

Is it not true, then, that the abuse of this power, or the use of it for private or personal aims, or the enforcing of it as something absolute and purely human, that all this is like blasphemy against the Kingship of Christ? To take His power, which is all the power any government has, and to use it against the interests of the subjects of that King—is it not a kind of treason against Divinity? What right has any ruler, be he a king or the people, to think that the authority which he holds for a little brief space is his, for himself alone? Why, we, the subjects or the citizens of the States of the world, we do not pay the rulers any homage or obedience for

themselves, but only because in them we see the supreme authority of Christ the King of all. By obeying Him, we are ennobled; by obeying any mere man, we are degraded.

All the duties of a citizen take on a sublime character, when once he realizes that he is but the humble and loving subject of the Divine King. Take that right away from him, put him as the footstool of any man or group of men, and he has become an abject slave. It is the royal rights of the Lord of all that render human authority sacred. And it is the same rights that make citizenship a high and noble calling. Here is the sole stable foundation for peace and order in a community. Nothing less than subjection to a Divine King will make it really worthwhile to obey the laws of human governments. "For no other reason would it be befitting for men redeemed by Christ to obey other men. 'You are bought with a price; be not the bondslaves of men'." (Pius XI).

So Christ the King is the only king that sets men free. If there is any foundation in the world for human liberty, it is in the fact that rulers govern only as His delegates. Governments are just as subject to His laws as any individual. Their laws may not be used against His subjects. The enactments of lawgivers have their validity only as they mirror the eternal law and the law of man's nature, which is but a participation of the eternal law; if they do not imitate that Law, they are not law. The power of the executive is a sad delusion and a tyranny, if it does not identify itself with the all-embracing love of Christ. The decisions of judges and of courts are null and void, if they are not made purely the mouth-pieces of the justice of Christ, "who will come to

judge the living and the dead." It is when this supreme law of life is forgotten that decadence enters into the affairs of men, that government degenerates into despotism, and that liberty flees from the world.

In the Middle Ages the chief duty of the king, historians now tell us, was to protect his subjects against the exactions and exploitation of their landlords and military chiefs. For many centuries kings fought that battle, until at last their power was shackled by some aristocracy or group of powerful lords. In doing this, the kings of earth were merely taking the place that is forever held by the King of Kings. The liberty of the poorest of His subjects is dearer to Him than anything on this earth. He laid down His life for it. We may well believe that He will punish more severely than any other offense the misuse of His authority to oppress mankind. Our passport to freedom is our being made in the image and likeness of God, His Father, and our having been bought back from the slavery of sin by His own most precious Blood.

Now if authority and liberty receive their last consecration from their sources in Him, how shall we speak of peace between the nations of the world? "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," His mantle lies upon the rulers of all the world without distinction. How should He tolerate that those rulers would instill hatred among their subjects for the people of other nations? For, remember it well, wars are not made, wars cannot be made, unless we, the people of the world, are first whipped into a frenzy of hate for those whom our rulers would have us fight. This King, who is the only Lord we think it worthy to obey, was kind and good enough to call us brothers.

And in a true sense, we are His brothers, for we are the children of His heavenly Father. He is the Elder Brother, God and Man, who had the greatest love that man can have, since He laid down His life for us. Only because the nations have apostatized from their allegiance to the Divine King, only because they have led us along a way that is apart from Him, only for this do we now find ourselves gaping down into the horrible abyss that is war. Only because the peoples have forgotten their true relationship of brotherhood to each other can they now be open to the fierce suggestions of hatred for each other. When they once more return to the mild and loving yoke of obedience to Him, they will be impervious to the mad desire to rush down the steep slope that leads to self-destruction.

On this day, then, the Feast of Christ the King, all believers in God can unite in consecrating themselves once more to the upbuilding of our threatened civilization. In His Name can we find salvation, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts. iv, 12). The "consciousness of brotherhood" which banishes conflicts, civic and international, will have its true meaning only in Him, the King and Elder Brother.

CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from his address at the inaugural program in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930).

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ: pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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