

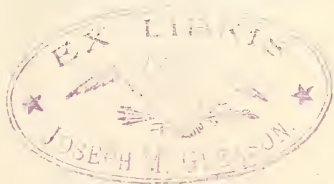
Church of State
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Catholic Loyalty

By

CARDINAL GIBBONS



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WHEN our Saviour said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," (St. Matt. xxii, 21) He established the mutual relations which should subsist between Church and State, and He virtually declared that the State is supreme in the temporal order, just as the Church is supreme in the spiritual domain.

St. Paul, following the steps of his Master, says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no authority but from God, and those that are, are ordained by God. Therefore he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they who resist, purchase to themselves condemnation."

Mark these words of the Apostle: "There is no authority but from God." We are all equal before the law, as the Declaration of Independence declares, and no man has any inborn authority over another. But as soon as a man is

chosen to a public office, whether as President, or Governor, or Mayor, or magistrate, then he is clothed with power by the Almighty. He represents the Supreme Ruler Himself, and is covered with the mantle of His authority, and in obeying the civil ruler you are obeying God Himself. Hence you see at once that there is nothing degrading or slavish in your submission for obedience is not an act of servility we pay to man, but an act of homage we pay to God.

And now, my friends, I invite your attention to the following reflection: If the primitive Christians were commanded by Christ and His Apostles to honor Caesar, though Caesar was a persecuting tyrant; if they were exhorted to observe the laws of the empire, though these laws were usually harsh and despotic and discriminating against Christianity, what reverence should you and your fellow-citizens have for your rulers in whose election you had a part, and with what alacrity you should observe the laws of the Commonwealth which were framed for the welfare of the nation, and for the peace and security of its citizens?

Great and tremendous are the responsibilities

of those that rule, in guiding the ship of state. Yours is the lighter task of standing faithfully at the helm.

The paramount duty of American citizens in the present crisis is a hearty and loyal obedience to the constituted authorities. Be slow to criticize. Remember that you view the situation from one angle, your rulers contemplate it from various angles. They have lights and sources of information that are closed to you.

Your judgment of the Administration and your criticism of their official acts should be always subordinated to a generous and whole-souled submission to their rulings. It is theirs to command; it is yours to obey.

From many of you that loyalty and obedience have demanded the supreme sacrifice of giving your lives to the service of your country. It was not easy for you to say good-bye to father and mother, sisters and brothers, to home and all that home holds dear. It required a sacrifice, the memory of which must linger. Tears were shed when good-byes were said, and hearts throbbed with grief as your mothers sent you away at the call of duty.

And yet you knew that dear as those mothers were to you, there was another mother calling, and her voice rang with appeal, and that appeal had to be hearkened to before all other appeals. Mother Columbia was calling you. She is the mother of all of us. When she calls there is no race, no creed, no class. You answered her and you marched away from home and dear ones to fight for homes and dear ones. Her call will ever ring out in the hours of stress and strife. You will hear her and you will be quickened by her appeal, and you will give your heart and your soul and your mind to the cause, all of you, whether in the army or the navy, no matter where you may be. You will be glad to serve her. You will make every sacrifice cheerfully and willingly, recking not the cost. In manifesting your loyalty to your country whether in civil or military life, you will be pursuing a sacred and honorable course, and you will be following the invariable traditions of your fathers from the foundation of the republic.

I thank God that we live in a country where liberty is granted without license and authority is exercised without despotism, where the Gov-

ernment holds over us the aegis of its protection without interfering with the God-given rights of conscience.

The United States has succeeded in solving the delicate and difficult problem of reconciling legitimate authority with individual freedom. We have no union between Church and State. But this does not imply any antagonism between the two powers. Church and State amicably move in parallel lines, helping one another in their respective field of labor. The State aids and protects the Church in the exercise of her divine mission, and the Church helps the State in enforcing the law by religious and moral sanctions.

For my part, I much prefer the arrangement obtaining among us, where the Church is supported by the voluntary contributions of the faithful, to the system which has existed in many countries of the Old World, where the Church was maintained by the civil government. For, if the Government were to build our churches and subsidize our clergy it would soon dictate to us what doctrines we ought to preach. It would debar us from the privilege of just criticism of those in authority and of rebuking

their shortcomings. And no greater harm could be done to both Church and State alike than the muzzling of the Gospel.

In traveling many years ago with the venerable Archbishop Spaulding, my predecessor, we were the guests of the Bishop of Annecy in Savoy. I admired the splendid palace of the Bishop, and observed a sentinel pacing up and down in front of his residence, placed there as a guard of honor. I congratulated his lordship on his favored situation. But with a faint smile he replied to me: "Monsignor, all that glitters is not gold. I cannot build as much as a sacristy without the previous sanction of the Government."

I fervently hope that the happy conditions now existing among us will always continue, that Bishops and clergy will bestow on the faithful their time and talents and apostolic labors, and pour out their life's blood, if necessary, and that they will receive in return the love and gratitude and the free-will offerings of a filial and devoted people.

The question is often asked: Will the republic endure? I have a firm and abiding faith in the

perpetuity of the nation. She has successfully weathered many a tumultuous tempest in the past, and with God's help she will triumphantly ride over the storms that now assail her.

But if our country with her glorious institutions is to survive, her survival must rest on a stronger basis than on the genius of our statesmen, the wisdom of our laws, and the patriotism of our people. She must be supported by more formidable ramparts than our dreadnaughts and standing armies. "The race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the strong."

If she is to endure, she must stand on the eternal principles of truth and justice and righteousness. She must rest on a devout recognition of an overruling Providence Who has created all things by His power, governs all things by His wisdom, Whose guiding hand directs the affairs of nations and of men, without Whom not even a bird can fall to the ground. Our hope for the future welfare of the country must rest on downright honesty in our dealings with other nations. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin maketh a people miserable."

In the convention which was held in Philadel-

phia in 1787 to form the Constitution of the United States the proceedings were protracted by hopeless discussions. Benjamin Franklin then arose and thus addressed his colleagues in the convention: "We have spent many days and weeks in our deliberations, and have made no progress. We have been groping in the dark because we have not sought light from the Father of lights. I have lived many years, and the older I grow, the more I am convinced that a Supreme Power intervenes in the affairs of mankind. For if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His aid, how can we hope to build an empire without His co-operation? We know also from the same sacred Volume that 'unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord keep the city he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.'"

Is it not true that this devout recognition of the moral Governor of the world, is the spirit that has guided every chief Magistrate of the nation and his official family from the foundation of the Republic? Have not all our Presidents, from Washington to Wilson, recognized and invoked the aid of Heaven in their inaug-

urál proclamations? Is it not also the custom of every one of them to invite the citizens of the United States to assemble in their respective houses of worship on Thanksgiving Day to give thanks to "the Giver of every perfect gift" for the material and spiritual blessings vouchsafed to the country and to invoke a continuance of Divine favors? And is not the general observance of the Christian Sabbath throughout the land a living evidence that this is a Christian country relying on the protection of the Lord of hosts?

Furthermore the President has just issued a proclamation exhorting the people of the United States to assemble in prayer to implore our Heavenly Father to bring this terrible war to a happy termination.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance."

You are in the habit of listening every day to the praises of the great Americans who have distinguished themselves by their martial deeds, or by their civic and Christian virtues. You are all proud of being the countrymen of a Wash-

ington, Jefferson and Lincoln, of a Marshall and Taney, of Clay and Webster, of a Carroll, an England, a Kendrick and Hughes and a host of other men less known to fame.

But do not be satisfied with praising other men who have honored Church or State by their good deeds. Accomplish something yourselves in your day. Each of you has also a mission from God. Do not shine by reflected light. "Let your own light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in Heaven."

You will know it is great and grand to serve your country. Yes, and if the sacrifice is asked, you will realize that it is a glorious thing to die for this country. Remember, that to you belongs an honor than which there is none greater on this earth, the serving of the grandest land in all the world. You will not boast, but you will fight and do. You will not talk of the deeds of the great men of the past and glory alone in their achievements, but you will follow in their footsteps, no matter where the path may lead. Pray and put your trust in God; be obedient, for without obedience to lawful authority, to com-

mander and other officers, victory is impossible; help your fellow-soldiers in times of fighting and in times of respite from the battlefield; lead clean lives as befit men found worthy to serve such a noble cause. Be men of courage, place your faith in God and then go out and fight valiantly against the foe.

Do not be snatching faded laurels from the brow of your fathers. Let your own heads be crowned with fresh garlands won in the field of honorable labor. Say not with the Jews of old: "We have Abraham for our father." Say not, we are the political children of Washington and the religious children of Carroll. It will profit you nothing to possess their creed if you do not practice their civic and religious virtues. Go then and make a name for yourselves, so that generations to come may record your good deeds. And if your actions will not be sounded by the trumpet of earthly fame, what is far better, let them be worthy of having the approval of God and of your conscience and of being inscribed with credit to you in the imperishable Book of Life. Some of you may fight and die a hero's death and never paean be chanted, but your Fa-

ther Who is in Heaven will know of it and your dear ones at home will know of it and for all of you, whether you come back home to us or make the supremest sacrifice of all, there will be written in records that will never perish the story of your golden deeds.

And may the Lord of Hosts so guide the counsels of our rulers in the present crisis that their efforts may be crowned by an honorable, a speedy and a permanent peace.



