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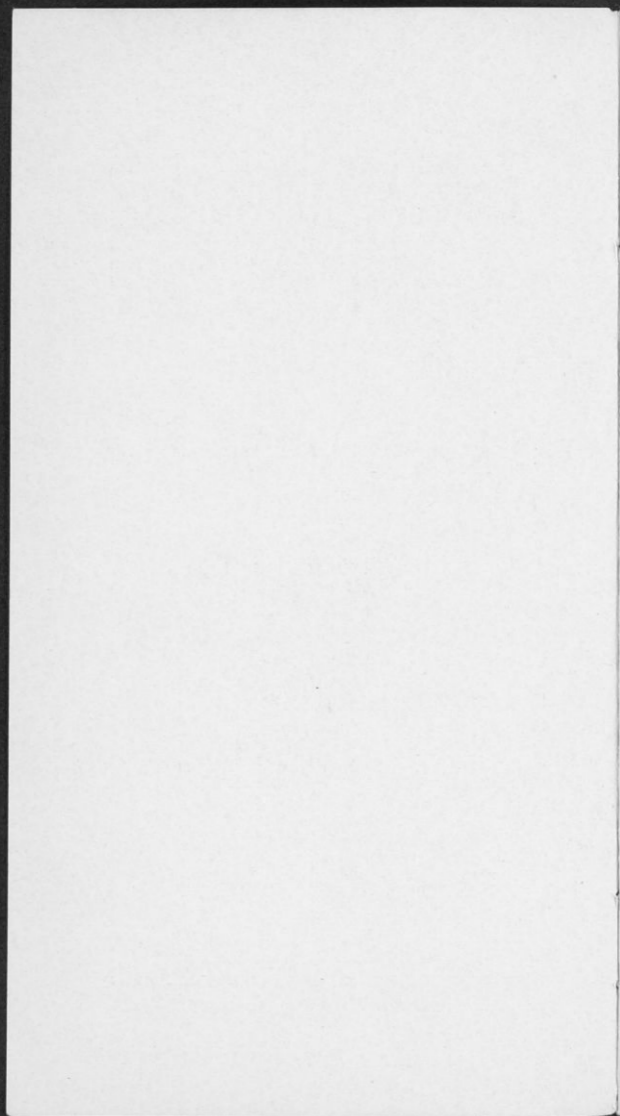
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PUBLIC  
INTERESTS  
OF THE  
CHURCH

BY THE  
REV. JOHN K. CARTWRIGHT

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# PUBLIC INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH



By the Rev. John K. Cartwright

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# THE CHURCH AND THE NATION

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**T**ODAY let us consider the Church and the Nation. More specifically let us consider the Catholic Church and the United States. More specifically still let us consider what service the Church renders to the nation of which we are a part; how we Catholics who are Americans help other Americans to enjoy the benefits of a good society.

The Church is of course not secondary to the Nation. In other words the Church is not to be judged by how she helps the Nation nor by what the Nation may think of her. The Church is not created by the Nation. The Church is not licensed by the Nation. The Church has a right to exist independently of the Nation's laws.

## **Church Has Independent Right To Existence**

For the Church has a divine foundation—charter and serves a purpose in the salvation of souls that is superior and transcendent to all the purposes of social usefulness provided by the Nation or the State.



So when we say: the Church is useful to the Nation, we do not mean that we are asking permission to exist, and showing how good we are in order that we may be given that permission.

If the Church serves . . . spiritual and divine purpose, she has independent right to existence. She is a sovereign thing, whether she serves a politically useful purpose or not.

But as a matter of fact the Church does serve a purpose that is politically useful. More — the Church serves a purpose that is politically indispensable. Hitherto a great many people have not seen the usefulness, let alone the indispensability. But that is because our country has hitherto enjoyed exceptional prosperity and peace. Now that the social and political world is shaken to its depths, now that we have heard the hysterical clamor of the mobs and their leaders in other lands, now that we have felt premonitory earthquake tremors in our own society we are not as tranquil as we were.

#### **Stability Of Nation Rests On Morals Of Its Leaders**

Not to be tranquil is disturbing. But it has the advantage that it makes us more thoughtful afterwards. A man may grow up in a

house and take for granted the strength of its walls and the stability of its foundations. But when an earthquake has let him see just once how masonry can bend, that man has had a liberal education. And so I suppose we all grew up, taking for granted the strength and stability of our institutions. But after we all had seen the disorder and realized the threat of last winter's industrial troubles, after we had seen how these disorders brought demagogues to the surface and made them sufficiently strong to insult the majesty of the state, after we had seen the disaffection grow so as to bring into question the validity of every civil institution, after we had seen people in high office so agitated as to attempt to discredit offices equally high, after all society from its lowest ranks to the highest had bent for a moment under the pressure of those civic passions—after all this had happened it was revealed to us that even our nation consists of human beings and that the stability of our institutions rests after all upon the moral qualities of the men who administer them and upon the moral qualities of the men to whom they minister.

In other words we have seen the difference between men and institutions. The institutions can be drawn up according to the most

perfect and Utopian of plans. But the men must be willing to live up to the perfection of their institutions. They must be willing to be citizens. And citizens are not made by plans. Citizens are not made by laws. Citizens are not made by constitutions. Citizens are not made by governments or statesmen or politicians. Citizens are not made by official propaganda. Citizens are not made by artificial paganism, nor by methods of mass psychology, nor by pedagogical methods, nor by school systems, nor by courses in Civics and Ethics, nor by the fear of outside invaders, nor by Genevan idealism. Citizens are made when men have in their souls the morality that causes them to recognize the duties of the citizen. And that morality has its only lasting sources in the spiritual faith that the Church alone imparts.

### Qualities Which Make Citizens Of Men

A man is a man in the biological sense of the word if he has succeeded in living through boyhood to adult age. But such a one is only a special kind of wild beast, one of the terrestrial primates. A man is a citizen only when he has been trained not to be wanton and predatory and selfish, when he has learned to look on life as a duty



and a responsibility, when he has been brought to the point of skill in his instincts and harmony in his passions, of honesty in his speech and loyalty in his deed, of patience and of courage, of tolerance and charity that tame the beast in him and make him such that others can safely live with him and can safely be as he is.

When you have a man like this you have a citizen. But when you have a man like this you have not yet a nation or a state. For a nation or a state you need to multiply that man in sufficient numbers to fill the boundaries of that state and to man its enterprises.

For a nation you need not special supplies of heroes, but great mass-production of virtuous men who understand their places in society and who are willing to abide in it. Without this you may have great numbers, but you have not a state. You may have without this a multitudinous chaos as in savage society. Or you may have a multitudinous repression and fear as you have in Moscow, Berlin, Valencia and Mexico. But neither chaos nor terror makes a nation. A nation is made by the multitude assenting to the good.

This multitudinous assent to goodness can be provided only by religion and the Church. This multitudinous conspiracy of civic vir-

tue cannot be made by the body politic. You can not persuade people of its reasonableness by demonstrating the division of social and economic benefits, for that problem never works out completely to quite the right answer.

### **Only He Is Good Who Believes God Is Good**

You can not make people love the good by explaining the social contract, nor by making them read Plato's Republic, nor by using Karl Marx's name either as a blessing or a malediction, nor by giving courses in civics and sanitation, nor by providing teachers of civics with or without the Red Rider, nor by letting Whigs and Tories debate before the children, nor by giving them warm spaghetti for lunch, nor by letting them shake hands with the Congressmen, nor by sending the boys and girls downtown to sit in the mayor's office and use his telephone, nor by putting pictures of George Washington over the blackboard, nor by telling the pupils what a nice world it would be if it were controlled by H. C. Wells and Heywood Broun. All these things are of varying degrees of excellence and importance. But they do not touch the heart of the matter.

The heart of the matter is goodness. And only that man is good

who believes in the transcendent nature of goodness. Only that man is good who in some way believes and knows that God is good. Only that man is good who in some way depends upon the Church for his inspiration. Only that society can be sound which consists of those who love God and worship Him.

Of course there is such a thing as the man who does not go to church and who is a good citizen. But do not forget: That man is still drawing upon the traditions of centuries of ancestors whose civic virtue was greatly inspired by Christianity, and who have somehow transmitted to him their faith and their virtue. But take that man's child and his child's children, and theirs and realize that with each generation the claim of religion grows weaker and the strength of the tradition fainter. Think of that and realize that millions of Americans are already in the third or fourth generation of religious neglect.

Show me one banker or industrialist who uses Sunday for golf and you may say he is a good man and a just employer. But do not tell me this about ten Sunday golf-players. And above all do not tell me this about their twenty or thirty sons and daughters. Show me one Labor Leader, who spends his Sunday morning on the sofa or on

the auto-trail, and you may tell me that he is a martyr of unselfish devotion to the cause. But do not tell me this about ten such leaders. And do not tell me this about their twenty or thirty sons and daughters.

### Neglect Of Religion Is Basic Cause Of All Ills

And therefore when Michigan and Ohio are threatened with civil war, when the disorders of industrial conflict menace the very existence of the nation, do not forget that one basic cause of all the ill in employer and employee is the neglect of religion.

Tell me with the Labor Leader that the wages are too low. And I will say: "perhaps." Tell me with the Steel master that the Labor Leaders are ambitious. And I will say: "perchance." But then let me tell you and them that the Steelmaster has never crossed the door of a church for years except at weddings and funerals, and that the Labor Leader has vied with him in that negligence. And let me tell you then that consequently neither of them has ever thought about business or labor in terms of conscience. Right and wrong, good and evil, the eternal verities—these have been thrust aside.

These churchless moneyed men, and these churchless demagogues

have been alike in a practical atheism that denies God—if not the existence of God in heaven, at any rate the right of God to interfere with the affairs of men. The poor man is not like these: he has not the wealth of his employer nor the political prestige of his union leader. But millions of poor men have this in common with employer and leader: they do not go to church. They, the unknown, share the practical atheism of the prominent. Not knowing the God of justice they make idols to themselves. They have not the luxury of wealth or power. There is only one luxury open to them, that of excitement. What wonder if they intoxicate themselves with that luxury, or if society is troubled and overthrown by the churchless millions to many of whom the very name of the Prince of Peace is known only as a form of malediction.

### **Asks God's Blessing For Church And Country**

Let me ask all who read these words, high or low, fortunate or unfortunate, leaders, or led, to join me today in a prayer to Almighty God. And let us pray that He will secure and protect in the world the work of His Church, so that carrying out her mission of eternal good she may serve also the temporal welfare of man, and that, through

her gospel of goodness and holiness our nation and all others may find the way to right their wrongs, to cure their misunderstandings, to appease their hatreds, to recognize their true welfare, and in human fashion to exemplify and imitate the justice of the Eternal God.

## THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC OPINION

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**WE** American people generally put a high value on Public Opinion. Accustomed to rely on it by our political system, and feeling that our elaborate educational system gives unique opportunities to masses of men and women to be informed on matters of great moment, we think that public opinion is a great and valuable thing. We flatter ourselves that it makes a better guage and measure for determining the general welfare than was provided by the privy-councils of monarchs in the past, or by the one-party directorates of modern dictatorship.

### **Valid And Proper Place Of Public Opinion**

On the whole our belief is justified. Last winter, when the sit-down strikes threatened the peace and order of society to such a degree that the judicial and executive magistrates seemed to be intimidated out of the exercise of their functions, we were relieved of the stress and terror of the moment very largely by the healthy operation of public opinion. The strikers, however valid their original causes

of complaint, seemed intoxicated by their first success and rode high on the wave of excitement and disorder.

Encouraged by the weakness of some politicians and by the flattery of others they had gone to the point where their original grievances were lost to sight, and where the dykes and levees of law and order were crumbling at their onslaught. Then suddenly the forces of disorder retreated. The general analysis of this phenomenon was that they could not make head against the disapproval of the citizens of America. They did not fear law, they did not bow to force. They yielded before the indignation of their countrymen. In this we had one of the finest examples that has ever been given of the valid and proper place of public opinion.

### **But Such Opinion Is Not Always Correct**

Other examples could be cited from history past and present. The establishment of the independence of the Irish Free State, or of that of Czecho-Slovakia are both instances of how public opinion may operate for good on the international theatre. And the fact that some of the world's most influential states have resisted the provocations to war of the last three years is another tribute to the power which citizens have when they are



convinced of the primary necessity of peace.

However, public opinion, like all other human forces, has its limitations and its imperfections. In the instances given above it was enlightened, ethically and logically correct, well organized and effective. But just as many instances could be cited in which public opinion has not enjoyed these qualities: instances where it was bigoted instead of enlightened, emotional rather than logical; hectic rather than beneficial. These imperfections are universally realized by those who examine the currents of public thought. Therefore there is no group today that has any interest worth preserving, which does not find it necessary to maintain what is called "publicity" or "propaganda" in order to make sure that public opinion will appreciate that interest and that value.

The more remote the issue from the general interest of men, by so much the more is the judgment of public opinion likely to be superficial or erroneous. The public opinion of a nation, so likely to be right about war that threatens its own frontiers, is much less likely to be right about war far from its borders. The public opinion of a people, so likely to be right about civic disorder which directly and dramatically threatens its safety, is much less likely to be right about the

complicated and subtle forces of thought, literature, art, education and religion.

In the case of religion, particularly, we can never be sure that the millions are thinking very soundly unless we bring home to their minds the real issues.

### **Younger Generation Is Spiritually Ignorant**

The other day in Atlantic City an educator told a Methodist Protestant Conference that "little more than 25% of 49,000,000 U. S. young people have ever been in a church. Recent questionnaires showed that 16,000 of 55,000 school children had never heard of the Ten Commandments, only 2,000 of 18,000 students could name four biblical prophets, only 6,000 the four gospels, only 8,000 any three of Christ's disciples."

Now, whatever we may think of the moral training of the 75% of the 49,000,000 young people who have never been in a church—whatever we may think of the moral outlook, this much is certain: the 35 or 40,000,000 can not have a very profound or right idea about the meaning and value of religion. And when great religious issues are put before them at the bar of their public opinion, religious people can not afford to be overconfident of the verdict.

So much for the millions. What

about the intellectual elite? Some years ago the famous Harnack—probably the most eminent name in Protestant theology in our day—said this of the students at the University of Berlin: “of the Catholic Church, the greatest religious and political creation known to history, they know absolutely nothing, and they indulge in its regard in wholly trivial, vague and often nonsensical notions.” Harnack was no friend of Catholicism. But he was a scholar and knew a great thing when he saw it. And his opinion of the rank and file at one of the world’s great intellectual centres was that they typically entertained concerning the Catholic Church “wholly trivial, vague and often nonsensical notions.”

### **Church Is Necessary For America’s Welfare**

It was probably from such elements that the friends of Spanish Communism and Anarchy recently recruited some 150 clergymen to attack the Hierarchy of the Spanish Church. It is certainly among such elements in America and elsewhere with their “trivial, vague and nonsensical notions” about the Church that much of the ill esteem is fostered which has so misguided public opinion in recent years about the fortunes of Catholicism in Mexico, Spain, Germany and elsewhere.

We Catholics of the United States have been accustomed to the large and democratically generous traditions of our great country. Perhaps we have been spoiled by living so long in a moral climate no near the optimism in these respects. We have received fair play and we have given it. We have been privileged to enjoy great liberal institutions, but we have also done our share—perhaps more than our share—to buttress and protect those institutions for our fellow-citizens as well as ourselves. Our religion, our love of liberty, our Catholic education, our Christian inspiration, all these have thriven in America. But we are also conscious that these qualities of ours have helped to make America the magnificent thing it is. We have contributed these qualities in times of quiet. We continue to contribute them in times of unsettlement. We are conscious that our contribution is not only helpful. It is indispensable if America is to continue to be what she has been. We are resolved to continue that contribution: the contribution that was begun by the three great Carolls, the contribution that was recognized by Washington, the contribution that was tested in the fire of the great war, the contribution that is more necessary today than ever before. In a world diseased by the moral skepticism of the masses, torn by

war and civic dissension, America has need of more than wide frontiers and ocean bulwarks and abundant harvests: America has need of citizens, of courageous, patient, industrious, peaceful, religious citizens. Such citizens we Catholics have been, such we shall ever be.

We do not apologize for our faith nor for our institutions at the bar of public opinion. We are too proudly confident of our faith in the America we love.

Is it too much to expect that the leaders of public opinion shall take the trouble to think deeply about the religion of one sixth of our people? Is it too much to hope that our teachers, our publishers, our editors, our radio commentators, our essayists and columnists, our ministers of the gospel will dispel any superficiality when dealing with the faith we profess, that they will aid in teaching our fellow-citizens, the churched and the churchless, some wise and deep and Christian thoughts about the wise and deep Church that is the heart of Christianity and civilization?

## LIBERALS: REAL AND FALSE

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ONE of the noblest words in the use of citizens today is the word: *Liberal*.

Unfortunately, one of the greatest defects of American culture is carelessness in the use of language.

Hence there is no word perhaps so misused as that same noble word. There is no case perhaps of a word so frequently applied to the wrong kind of man as *Liberal*. Hence if we want to think clearly we must be careful to distinguish the real from the apparent. There is such a thing as a *Liberal* person. There is also such a thing as a *False Liberal*.

### Few Are Liberals In Proper Sense Of Term

We like to think that our American institutions are "liberal"—as indeed they are up to the present. We like to think that we are "liberal" in the spirit of our institutions. So some of us are. But there are many who are not liberal. And today—such has been the change in social and political life—scarcely anyone who calls himself *Liberal* (with a capital letter) is a real liberal in the proper and noble meaning of the term.

“Liberal” historically means one who is favorable to personal, political and religious liberty. “Liberal” in today’s slang means one who is confident of the power of politics to equalize the economic balance. Ninety-nine percent of those who are called “liberal” today are people who work and vote in that direction. And of these ninety-nine percent, probably fifty percent have no esteem other than in lip service for liberalism in the sense of personal, political and religious liberty. These are the False Liberals.

With special reference to religious liberty: There is no False Liberal in the United States who does not say he believes in religious liberty. For instance, he protests against the denial of religious liberty in Germany. But this is not much to his credit for he hates Germany on other grounds than religious ones. But when our Collectivist contemporaries in Russia, Mexico and Spain practise their abominations against religion and all decency, the False Liberal is either silent or finds some reason for applauding. He hates to see the Nazis jail Pastor Niemoller or persecute a Jew. But when he reads that the Valencia Reds have shot priests, he says they must have had a good reason. And, pending word from Valencia, he invents a reason: They killed the priests because the Church is rich.

The False Liberal will never admit that he does not believe in religious liberty. He is very warm and enthusiastic about freedom of conscience. He doesn't believe in religion himself. But he will quote Voltaire and tell you: I disagree with your opinions, but I will die for your freedom to utter them. Like Voltaire, he feels fairly sure of dying in his bed, but the profession of martyrdom brings him good repute. And so after bringing out this plum of a grand saying, like Little Jack Horner, he looks for applause.

Now let us see if we can understand the mind of the False Liberal. In one sense, he does believe in freedom of conscience. He believes in it in the abstract. He thinks he knows what religion is and he is willing for that to be free. He thinks that religion is just individual notions of pious minds, individual urgings in some people to pray. He thinks such weakness beneath him, but nevertheless it is a harmless weakness of ordinary men. And the False Liberal thinks there is no harm in letting little men be pious if they want to be. He will even let them go to church, provided they do not expect him to go. And every time he passes a church on Sunday morning, our little Jack Horner breathes with satisfaction at his liberality and tolerance.



### But Real Freedom Means More Than He Thinks

But in point of fact "freedom of conscience" means so much more than the False Liberal thinks it does. It means indeed the right to believe according to your lights, it means indeed the right to entertain your own form of piety in your own spirit, but it means also the profoundly natural right to communicate that belief and piety to other men, the right to join with them in religious associations known as churches, the right to express religious thought and feeling in any of the social, institutional, educational or artistic ways that your soul and the souls of other men may find. It means the right to pray, but it means also the right to belong to a church. It means specifically the right to belong to the Catholic Church, if God has brought you to that belief. And to belong to the Catholic Church means much more than to express your individual piety.

Every Catholic considers the Church as a divinely established society. It is not just an aggregation of the pious, a huddling together of the frightened and unworldly. It is a society established by divine appointment, sanctioned by that authority with a definite structure, entrusted by that authority with a definite responsibility. For a Catholic, freedom of conscience means to belong to that

society, to accept its creed, to embrace its sacraments, to observe its authority, to follow its traditions, to revere its priesthood, to educate his children in its ideals, to seek consolation through its ministrations of charity and spiritual aid.

For a Catholic "freedom of conscience" means not just the minimum that the False Liberal thinks proper for him to have, not just religion in a Pickwickian sense, not just the sentimental religion that consists in gathering dogwood on a Spring Sunday, not just the reading of inspirational literature—for a Catholic "freedom of conscience" means being a Catholic, and being a Catholic means accepting the great world-wide Church and loving it in all its true manifestations and expressions. It means not only freedom to believe in the Pope's infallibility, but freedom to hear the Pope. It means not only freedom to believe in the Eucharist, but freedom to receive it. It means freedom not only to bow the knee in the home, but to worship in the great liturgy of the Mass. It means freedom not only to kiss his bedside crucifix, but to exalt in the beauty of a great Cathedral.

All this is what a Catholic means by religion, and if he is deprived of this he is deprived of his religion. It is not for the False Liberal to say how much of all this is necessary and how much is not. It is the right of the Catholic con-

science to have these things if it wishes, and if any of the False Liberal governments takes away any of these things that government is denying freedom of conscience. And if it does these things in fact it is denying the fact of freedom, though the word "freedom" be written a thousand times in its false constitution.

How serious these misconceptions can be has been illustrated in a thousand ways in the last year and a half of Spanish History—or rather in the history of public opinion about Spain. Probably the most hurtful and misplaced construction of Liberalism was the manifesto that appeared in the daily press, a manifesto signed by 150 False Liberals, mostly clergymen of various denominations. There is nobody more impetuous among the False Liberals than a clergyman trying to show that he is thoroughly "Liberal." And so there has been no document in the last year so naively confident in the virtues of politicians so serenely contemptuous of real religion as that manifesto.

The Spanish Bishops of whom they complain have given their moral support to the Spanish Revolution. They did not make the Revolution. But when it was made they took choice between sides. One side the False Liberal—the Red—the government of Madrid and Valencia has distinguished itself by

encouraging the destruction of the Spanish Church. Like all False Liberal Governments, its excuse for existence is in the promise to the common man of an earthly paradise. This promise can never be fulfilled. It is certainly not fulfilled to date. So in order to content the common man with his uncashed checks it tells him there is a bogey man who prevents him from cashing. Just as the Nazi government amuses the proletariat by blaming the Jew for all evils, so the Red government appeases the proletariat by blaming the Catholic Church. And so the savagery that lies in mankind is stirred by ignorance and fanaticism to destroy if possible Spain's noblest heritage of faith and civilization.

Such is the so-called government of Spain. Against such a government with its destruction of all values and all decencies that make life bearable, the true Spanish people have arisen. Against the government that denies democracy, the Revolution has aligned itself. Against Madrid is Salamanca. Against Negrin is Franco. The bishops have compared and judged. They have seen that the Madrid government, after destroying the churches and killing the priests, and desecrating the bodies of the dead is not fit to be called a government. And they have very properly chosen the regime which does

not kill Catholics for their faith in preference to that which does. They did not provoke the war nor wish it. They do not love war. No Christian does. But the war with all its horrors is here. And they have put themselves on that side which respects freedom just as American Catholics one hundred and fifty years ago, took that side in another war against tyranny, in another Revolution for liberty.

The manifesto of the False Liberals expresses the query how American Catholics stand on this question, and whether armed rebellion against duly elected authorities is our policy. I do not speak for anyone but myself. But as one American Catholic I understand the Spanish bishops attitude. For it is a stand not against democracy, and not against true authority, but against an unjust government, against a spurious democracy, against the deception of the poor and miserable, against the denial of religious freedom and every other freedom, in a word against False Liberalism and the spirits of wickedness in high places.

## THE CHURCH AND THE CONSTITUTION

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**T**HE Constitution of the United States is one of the great monuments of human history. It was the earliest, but by no means, the only example of a written compact as the foundation of a great state. It showed the way for those who saw the necessity of a definite understanding as the condition of good government. It stated definitely and openly the undertakings and compromises that reconciled the different interests of citizens. It carried in its amendments the itemized rights that man's long and bitter experience had found to be necessary for decent and peaceable existence in society. It put into effect the dreams of philosophers. It held the torch for one of the greatest centuries of progress our race has seen.

### Started World Advance For Personal Freedom

For about two generations after the enactment of the Constitution, the history of mankind is very largely the history of man's efforts to secure for every land the benefits which our Constitution brought to us and to secure like charters for every people. Under

the great enthusiasm of this movement a wonderful advance was made in abolishing the age-old abuses of society.

"In that period chattel slavery and serfdom, the subjection of women, the patriarchal domination of children, caste and legalized class privileges, the exploitation of backward peoples, autocracy in government, the disfranchisement of the masses and their compulsory illiteracy, official intolerance and legalized bigotry, were outlawed in the human conscience, and in a very substantial degree they were abolished in fact."

All these things bespeak a very real advance and improvement in the experience of our race, and in all these things our Constitution had a leading share. Either its letter nobly expressed, or its spirit nobly inspired these ideals; and did so not only for us who were born under its aegis but for mankind everywhere by virtue of its high example.

Among these principles, and among those explicitly written there, one of the primary is that of religious liberty. Previously to our Constitution's promulgation there had flourished for centuries the practice of religious establishment. The governments regarded religion as one of their allotted spheres, chose between religious forms and gave privilege to one and persecution to the others. The

governments of France and Spain chose Catholicism as their established form and insisted upon it as the religion of their subjects. The governments of England, Scotland, Holland, the German and Scandinavian countries and many of the Swiss cities chose each its form of Protestantism and insisted on compliance with that.

It became the unwritten constitution of each country that the citizen must follow its religion. But in asking this the governments were going beyond their powers. The citizens in each state rebelled against this aggression on the most essential of their rights. The history of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries reeks with the blood that was spilt in this controversy. And even through the Eighteenth and into the Nineteenth Centuries echoes of these ancient hates and grudges prolong through the generations the shadow of this great wrong.

### **Founding Fathers Acted On Catholic Principles**

The law continued to demand what free men continued to refuse. And the laws of great states might have been continuing still to demand, and the citizens might have been continuing to refuse these things had not the Fathers of the Constitution been possessed of a new philosophy of govern-



ment. In this respect as in so many others they put aside the maxims of a discredited experience. They started on a new principle, embodied especially in the First Amendment. And in doing this, they gave effect, whether consciously or unconsciously, in political realities to the principle of the gospel: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Let me remind you, Catholics and non-Catholics, that this principle of religious liberty was written in our Constitution. It was not merely concurred in by verbal agreement, not merely understood or inferred, or implied. It was written in the compact. And thus like all written articles it could not be gainsaid, or opposed, or contradicted, or forgotten. It was not left for perpetuation by trusting to the generous feelings of the signers, nor taken for granted as belonging to some such vague thing as "modern enlightenment." The men who drafted the Constitution were lawyers. They knew the importance of the written word. And so when they embodied this element of their statecraft in their agreement, like good lawyers they anchored it in the security of the written and signed word.

Because it was written and fixed in legal terminology this principle went into effect and has been ob-

served. Had it not been written, it could have quickly been forgotten. The principle of religious freedom was acknowledged by the Fathers in Philadelphia. But there were hundreds and thousands of their constituents who did not have the wisdom and experience of their representatives. And in the course of a generation there were thousands of issues each of which might have submerged religious liberty had it not been for the stark, legal permanence of the written word.

Therefore it is that the policy of our presidents and congressmen and courts have been shaped by this maxim of religious liberty. Those who in generation after generation have been trained for political office—at least upon the national theatre—have been trained under our great Constitution. They have been the inheritors of its traditions. They have had before them its spirit. And, when they were tempted to forget, they could read its written word.

Those who have held the magistracy in the courts of our land have been the chief depositories of constitutional wisdom. Placed by their training in a position to understand the nature of the social compact, endowed by their age with a maturity that has its value in human affairs, raised by their eminence above the whims and vagaries and the momentary pas-

sions of election days, they can see as most men can not the historical and legal reasons that underlie constitutions, they can understand the complications that lie behind any movement—even the most humane—and they can estimate the difference between the merits of a piece of current legislation and the great fundamental principles of society such as make the Bill of Rights.

Whatever their defects—and as men they must have some—the Courts of America interpreting our great Constitution have made a marvelous record of judicial wisdom and justice in protecting the most precious of human rights.

### **Our Rights Are Threatened Today**

Every religious man owes gratitude to God for giving him the America we have known and loved. Every one who values the rights of conscience must look to the Constitution and to the great traditions of our American Courts for the maintenance of those rights.

Those rights are threatened today as they have been in the past. Today however the menace comes from a different quarter. Once the danger came from the contest of rival sects and denominations. But these sects, however misguided

and headstrong, had at least the merit that they all sought to express the faith of Christendom and that they all concurred in loyalty to the Christian moral system.

Today it is no longer so. The religious sects do not seek laws to harm each other. But there is arising a new fanaticism completely unlike the old. Like the devastating fanaticism of the Seventh Century it is a religion of one god. But it is not this time the God of the Holy Book who claims allegiance and threatens with the force of propaganda and government education. It is a god set up on many altars. He is set up in Berlin, he is set up in Valencia, he is set up in Mexico. In Moscow his embalmed incarnation lies enshrined in Red Square. Tomorrow his idol may be set up in France and the next day elsewhere.

God protect us against the encroachments in our dear land of that Caesar-God, that Consuming Moloch that dries up the spiritual life of man. God protect us from the delusion that the soul's salvation comes from politicians, that legislation is a divine decree, that state-controlled education is a sacrament, and that emperor, king, president, fuhrer, or commissar is an avatar of the divine. Our constitution, a century and a half ago, drew the boundary between the

things that are God's and those that are Caesar's. While we respect the law of that Constitution and honor its written compact, while we have magistrates who respect their oath to abide by its clear statements, while we have judges whose character and dignity are consonant with an understanding of the Constitution's purpose,—so long will our democracy endure.

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