

Catholic Church. Pope (1878-1903: Leo XIII)

Human liberty

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*Libertas Humana*

# HUMAN LIBERTY

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

POPE LEO XIII

WITH DISCUSSION CLUB OUTLINE

*By* REV. GERALD C. TREACY, S. J.



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ENCYCLICAL LETTER

*of*

Pope Leo XIII

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*Libertas Humana*

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*(With Discussion Club Outline  
by Rev. Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.)*



NEW YORK  
THE PAULIST PRESS  
401 WEST 59TH STREET

For Discussion Club Outline

*Imprimi Potest:*

JAMES P. SWEENEY, S.J.,  
*Provincial, Maryland-New York.*

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THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE IN THE  
STATE OF NEW YORK

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# LIBERTAS HUMANA

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF OUR HOLY FATHER  
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

POPE LEO XIII

ON

## Human Liberty

To Our Venerable Brethren, All Patriarchs, Primates,  
Archbishops and Bishops of the  
Catholic World,

In Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See,

POPE LEO XIII

Venerable Brethren,

Health and Apostolic Benediction

### Liberty Man's Greatest Gift

1. Liberty, the highest of natural endowment, being the portion only of intellectual or rational natures, confers on man this dignity—that he is *in the hand of his counsel* and has power over his actions. But the manner in which such dignity is exercised is of the greatest moment, inasmuch as on the use that is made of liberty the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend. Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive unswervingly after his last end. Yet he is free also to turn aside to all other things; and, in pursuing the empty semblance of good, to disturb rightful order and to fall headlong into the destruction which he has voluntarily chosen. The Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, having restored and exalted the original dignity of nature, vouchsafed special assistance to the will of man; and by the gifts of His grace here, and the promise of heavenly bliss hereafter, He raised it to a nobler state. In like manner this great gift of nature has ever been, and always will be, deservedly cherished by the Catholic Church; for to her alone has been committed the charge of handing down to all ages the benefits purchased for us by Jesus Christ. Yet there are

many who imagine that the Church is hostile to human liberty. Having a false and absurd notion as to what liberty is, either they pervert the very idea of freedom, or they extend it at their pleasure to many things in respect of which man cannot rightly be regarded as free.

### **So-Called Modern Liberties**

2. We have on other occasions, and especially in Our Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*, in treating of the so-called *modern liberties*, distinguished between their good and evil elements; and We have shown that whatsoever is good in those liberties is as ancient as truth itself, and that the Church has always most willingly approved and practiced that good: but whatsoever has been added as new is, to tell the plain truth, of a vitiated kind, the fruit of the disorders of the age, and of an insatiate longing after novelties. Seeing, however, that many cling so obstinately to their own opinion in this matter as to imagine these modern liberties, cankered as they are, to be the greatest glory of our age, and the very basis of civil life, without which no perfect government can be conceived, We feel it a pressing duty, for the sake of the common good, to treat separately of this subject.

### **Natural Liberty**

3. It is with *moral* liberty, whether in individuals or in communities, that We proceed at once to deal. But, first of all, it will be well to speak briefly of *natural* liberty; for, though it is distinct and separate from moral liberty, natural freedom is the fountain-head from which liberty of whatsoever kind flows, *sua vi suaque sponte*. The unanimous consent and judgment of men, which is the trusty voice of nature, recognizes this natural liberty in those only who are endowed with intelligence or reason; and it is by his use of this that man is rightly regarded as responsible for his actions. For, while other animate creatures follow their senses, seeking good and avoiding evil only by instinct, man has reason to guide him in each and every act of his life. Reason sees that whatever things that are held to be good upon earth, may exist or may not, and discerning that none of them are of necessity for us, it leaves the will free to choose what it pleases. But man can judge of this *contingency*, as We say, only because he has a soul that is simple, spiritual, and intellectual—a soul, therefore, which is not produced by matter, and does not depend

on matter for its existence; but which is created immediately by God, and, far surpassing the condition of things material, has a life and action of its own—so that, knowing the unchangeable and necessary reasons of what is true and good, it sees that no particular kind of good is necessary to us. When, therefore, it is established that man's soul is immortal and endowed with reason and not bound up with things material, the foundation of natural liberty is at once most firmly laid.

### **The Church the Defender of Liberty**

4. As the Catholic Church declares in the strongest terms the simplicity, spirituality, and immortality of the soul, so with unequalled constancy and publicity she ever also asserts its freedom. These truths she has always taught, and has sustained them as a dogma of faith; and whensoever heretics or innovators have attacked the liberty of man, the Church has defended it and protected this noble possession from destruction. History bears witness to the energy with which she met the fury of the Manicheans and others like them; and the earnestness with which in later years she defended human liberty in the Council of Trent, and against the followers of Jansenius, is known to all. At no time, and in no place, has she held truce with *fatalism*.

### **Liberty Defined**

5. Liberty, then, as We have said, belongs only to those who have the gift of reason or intelligence. Considered as to its nature, it is the faculty of choosing means fitted for the end proposed; for he is master of his actions who can choose one thing out of many. Now, since everything chosen as a means is viewed as good or useful, and since good, as such, is the proper object of our desire, it follows that freedom of choice is a property of the will, or rather is identical with the will in so far as it has in its action the faculty of choice. But the will cannot proceed to act until it is enlightened by the knowledge possessed by the intellect. In other words, the good wished by the will is necessarily good in so far as it is known by the intellect; and this the more, because in all voluntary acts choice is subsequent to a judgment upon the truth of the good presented, declaring to which good preference should be given. No sensible man can doubt that judgment is an act of reason, not of the will. The end, or ob-

ject, both of the rational will and of its liberty is that good only which is in conformity with reason.

### Defects in Reason and Will

6. Since, however, both these faculties are imperfect, it is possible, as is often seen, that the reason should propose something which is not really good, but which has the appearance of good, and that the will should choose accordingly. For, as the possibility of error, and actual error, are defects of the mind and attest its imperfection, so the pursuit of what has a false appearance of good, though a proof of our freedom, just as a disease is a proof of our vitality, implies defect in human liberty. The will also, simply because of its dependence on the reason, no sooner desires anything contrary thereto, than it abuses its freedom of choice and corrupts its very essence. Thus it is that the infinitely perfect God, although supremely free, because of the supremacy of His intellect and of His essential goodness, nevertheless cannot choose evil; neither can the angels and saints, who enjoy the beatific vision. St. Augustine and others urged most admirably against the Pelagians, that, if the possibility of deflection from good belonged to the essence or perfection of liberty, then God, Jesus Christ, and the angels and saints, who have not this power, would have no liberty at all, or would have less liberty than man has in his state of pilgrimage and imperfection. This subject is often discussed by the Angelic Doctor in his demonstration that the possibility of sinning is not freedom, but slavery. It will suffice to quote his subtle commentary on the words of our Lord: *Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin.*<sup>1</sup> "Everything," he says, "is that which belongs to it naturally. When, therefore, it acts through a power outside itself, it does not act of itself, but through another, that is, as a slave. But man is by nature rational. When, therefore, he acts according to reason, he acts of himself and according to his free will; and this is liberty. Whereas, when he sins, he acts in opposition to reason, is moved by another, and is the victim of foreign misapprehensions. Therefore, *Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin.*" Even the heathen philosophers clearly recognized this truth, especially they who held that the wise man alone is free; and by the term "wise man" was meant, as is well known, the

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 34.



man trained to live in accordance with his nature, that is, in justice and virtue.

### **Liberty Needs Law**

7. Such then being the condition of human liberty, it necessarily stands in need of light and strength to direct its actions to good and to restrain them from evil. Without this the freedom of our will would be our ruin. First of all there must be *law*; that is, a fixed rule of teaching what is to be done and what is to be left undone. This rule cannot affect the lower animals in any true sense, since they act of necessity, following their natural instinct, and cannot of themselves act in any other way. On the other hand, as was said above, he who is free can either act or not act, can do this or do that, as he pleases, because his judgment precedes his choice. And his judgment not only decides that is right or wrong of its own nature, but also what is practically good and therefore to be chosen, and what is practically evil and therefore to be avoided. In other words the reason prescribes to the will what it should seek after or shun, in order to the eventual attainment of man's last end, for the sake of which all his actions ought to be performed. This ordination of *reason* is called law. In man's free will, therefore, or in the moral necessity of our voluntary acts being in accordance with reason, lies the very root of the necessity of law. Nothing more foolish can be uttered or conceived than the notion that because man is free by nature, he is therefore exempt from law. Were this the case, it would follow that to become free we must be deprived of reason; whereas the truth is that we are bound to submit to law precisely because we are free by our very nature. For law is the guide of man's actions; it turns him towards good by its rewards, and deters him from evil by its punishments.

### **The Natural Law**

8. Foremost in this office comes the *natural law*, which is written and engraved in the mind of every man; and this is nothing but our reason, commanding us to do right and forbidding sin. Nevertheless all prescriptions of human reason can have force of law only inasmuch as they are the voice and the interpreters of some higher power on which our reason and liberty necessarily depend. For, since the force of law consists in the imposing of obligations and the granting of rights, authority is

the one and only foundation of all law—the power, that is, of fixing duties and defining rights, as also of assigning the necessary sanctions of reward and chastisement to each and all of its commands. But all this, clearly, cannot be found in man, if, as his own supreme legislator, he is to be the rule of his own actions. It follows therefore that the law of nature is the same thing as the *eternal law*, implanted in rational creatures, and inclining them *to their right action and end*; and can be nothing else but the eternal reason of God, the Creator and Ruler of all the world. To this rule of action and restraint of evil God has vouchsafed to give special and most suitable aids for strengthening and ordering the human will. The first and most excellent of these is the power of His divine *grace*, whereby the mind can be enlightened and the will wholesomely invigorated and moved to the constant pursuit of moral good, so that the use of our in-born liberty becomes at once less difficult and less dangerous. Not that the divine assistance hinders in any way the free movement of our will; just the contrary, for grace works inwardly in man and in harmony with his natural inclinations, since it flows from the very Creator of his mind and will, by whom all things are moved in conformity with their nature. As the Angelic Doctor points out, it is because divine grace comes from the Author of nature, that it is so admirably adapted to be the safeguard of all natures, and to maintain the character, efficiency and operations of each.

### Human Law

9. What has been said of the liberty of individuals is no less applicable to them when considered as bound together in civil society. For, what reason and the natural law do for individuals, that *human law*, promulgated for their good, does for the citizens of States. Of the laws enacted by men, some are concerned with what is good or bad by its very nature; and they command men to follow after what is right and to shun what is wrong, adding at the same time a suitable sanction. But such laws by no means derive their origin from civil society; because just as civil society did not create human nature, so neither can it be said to be the author of the good which befits human nature, or of the evil which is contrary to it. Laws come before men live together in society, and have their origin in the natural, and consequently in the eternal, law. The precepts, therefore,

of the natural law, contained bodily in the laws of men, have not merely the force of human law, but they possess that higher and more august sanction which belongs to the law of nature and the eternal law. And within the sphere of this kind of laws, the duty of the civil legislator is, mainly, to keep the community in obedience by the adoption of a common discipline and by putting restraint upon refractory and viciously inclined men, so that, deterred from evil, they may turn to what is good, or at any rate may avoid causing trouble and disturbance to the State. Now there are other enactments of the civil authority, which do not follow directly, but somewhat remotely, from the natural law, and decide many points which the law of nature treats only in a general and indefinite way. For instance, though nature commands all to contribute to the public peace and prosperity, still whatever belongs to the manner and circumstances, and conditions under which such service is to be rendered must be determined by the wisdom of men and not by Nature herself. It is in the constitution of these particular rules of life, suggested by reason and prudence, and put forth by competent authority, that human law, properly so called, consists, binding all citizens to work together for the attainment of the common end proposed to the community, and forbidding them to depart from this end; and in so far as human law is in conformity with the dictates of nature, leading to what is good, and deterring from evil.

### **The Eternal Law and Liberty**

10. From this it is manifest that the eternal law of God is the sole standard and rule of human liberty, not only in each individual man, but also in the community and civil society which men constitute when united. Therefore, the true liberty of human society does not consist in every man doing what he pleases, for this would simply end in turmoil and confusion, and bring on the overthrow of the State; but rather in this, that through the injunctions of the civil law all may more easily conform to the prescriptions of the eternal law. Likewise, the liberty of those who are in authority does not consist in the power to lay unreasonable and capricious commands upon their subjects, which would equally be criminal and would lead to the ruin of the commonwealth; but the binding force of human laws is in this, that they are to be regarded as applications of the eter-

nal law, and incapable of sanctioning anything which is not contained in the eternal law, as in the principle of all law. Thus St. Augustine most wisely says: "I think that you can see, at the same time, that there is nothing just and lawful in that temporal law, unless what men have gathered from this eternal law."<sup>2</sup> If, then, by any one in authority, something be sanctioned out of conformity with the principles of right reason, and consequently hurtful to the commonwealth, such an enactment can have no binding force of law, as being no rule of justice, but certain to lead men away from that good which is the very end of civil society.

### **God's Law Perfects Liberty**

11. Therefore, the nature of human liberty, however it be considered, whether in individuals or in society, whether in those who command or in those who obey, supposes the necessity of obedience to some supreme and eternal law, which is no other than the authority of God, commanding good and forbidding evil. And so far from this most just authority of God over men diminishing, or even destroying their liberty, it protects and perfects it, for the real perfection of all creatures is found in the prosecution and attainment of their respective ends; but the supreme end to which human liberty must aspire is God.

### **Effect of Church's Teaching on Liberty**

12. These precepts of the truest and highest teaching, made known to us by the light of reason itself, the Church, instructed by the example and doctrine of her divine Author, has ever propagated and asserted; for she has ever made them the measure of her office and of her teaching to the Christian nations. As to morals, the laws of the Gospel not only immeasurably surpass the wisdom of the heathen, but are an invitation and an introduction to a state of holiness unknown to the ancients; and, bringing man nearer to God, they make him at once the possessor of a more perfect liberty. Thus the powerful influence of the Church has ever been manifested in the custody and protection of the civil and political liberty of the people. The enumeration of its merits in this respect does not belong to our present purpose. It is sufficient to recall the fact that slavery, that old reproach of the heathen nations, was mainly abolished by the

<sup>2</sup> De Libero Arbitrio, lib. i. cap. 6, n. 15.

beneficent efforts of the Church. The impartiality of law and the true brotherhood of man were first asserted by Jesus Christ; and His apostles re-echoed His voice when they declared that in future there was to be neither Jew, nor Gentile, nor Barbarian, nor Scythian, but all were brothers in Christ. So powerful, so conspicuous in this respect, is the influence of the Church, that experience abundantly testifies how savage customs are no longer possible in any land where she has once set her foot; but that gentleness speedily takes the place of cruelty, and the light of truth quickly dispels the darkness of barbarism. Nor has the Church been less lavish in the benefits she has conferred on civilized nations in every age, either by resisting the tyranny of the wicked, or by protecting the innocent and helpless from injury; or finally by using her influence in the support of any form of government which commended itself to the citizens at home, because of its justice, or was feared by their enemies without, because of its power.

### **Lawful and Unlawful Obedience**

13. Moreover, the highest duty is to respect authority, and obediently to submit to just law; and by this the members of a Community are effectually protected from the wrongdoing of evil men. Lawful power is from God, *and whosoever resisteth authority resisteth the ordinance of God*; wherefore obedience is greatly ennobled when subjected to an authority which is the most just and supreme of all. But where the power to command is wanting, or where a law is enacted contrary to reason, or to the eternal law, or to some ordinance of God, obedience is unlawful, lest, while obeying man, we become disobedient to God. Thus, an effectual barrier being opposed to tyranny, the authority in the State will not have all its own way, but the interests and rights of all will be safeguarded—the rights of individuals, of domestic society, and of all the members of the commonwealth; all being free to live according to law and right reason; and in this, as We have shown, true liberty really consists.

### **Liberty of Liberals Is License**

14. If when men discuss the question of liberty they were careful to grasp its true and legitimate meaning, such as reason and reasoning have just explained, they would never venture to

affix such a calumny on the Church as to assert that she is the foe to individual and public liberty. But many there are who follow in the footsteps of Lucifer, and adopt as their own his rebellious cry, "I will not serve"; and consequently substitute for true liberty what is sheer and most foolish license. Such, for instance, are the men belonging to that widely spread and powerful organization, who, usurping the name of liberty, style themselves *Liberals*.

### **Independent Morality**

15. What *Naturalists* or *Rationalists* aim at in philosophy, that the supporters of *Liberalism*, carrying out the principles laid down by Naturalism, are attempting in the domain of morality and politics. The fundamental doctrine of *Rationalism* is the supremacy of the human reason, which, refusing due submission to the divine and eternal reason, proclaims its own independence, and constitutes itself the supreme principle and source and judge of truth. Hence these followers of Liberalism deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due, and proclaim that every man is the law to himself; from which arises that ethical system which they style *independent* morality, and which, under the guise of liberty, exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God, and substitutes a boundless license. The end of all this it is not difficult to foresee, especially when society is in question. For, when once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority. But, from what has been said, it is clear that all this is in contradiction to reason. To refuse any bond of union between man and civil society, on the one hand, and God the Creator and consequently the supreme Law-giver, on the other, is plainly repugnant to the nature, not only of man, but of all created things; for, of necessity, all effects must in some proper way be connected with their cause; and it belongs to the perfection of every

nature to contain itself within that sphere and grade which the order of nature has assigned to it, namely, that the lower should be subject and obedient to the higher.

### **Subversive Doctrines**

16. Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honor and dishonor differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and, given a code of morality which can have little or no power to restrain or quiet the unruly propensities of man, a way is naturally opened to universal corruption. With reference also to public affairs: authority is severed from the true and natural principle whence it derives all its efficacy for the common good; and the law determining what it is right to do and avoid doing is at the mercy of a majority. Now this is simply a road leading straight to tyranny. The empire of God over man and civil society once repudiated, it follows that religion, as a public institution, can have no claim to exist, and that everything that belongs to religion will be treated with complete indifference. Furthermore, with ambitious designs on sovereignty, tumult and sedition will be common amongst the people; and when duty and conscience cease to appeal to them, there will be nothing to hold them back but force, which of itself alone is powerless to keep their covetousness in check. Of this we have almost daily evidence in the conflict with *Socialists* and members of other seditious societies, who labor unceasingly to bring about revolution. It is for those, then, who are capable of forming a just estimate of things to decide whether such doctrines promote that true liberty which alone is worthy of man, or rather pervert and destroy it.

### **Fallacy of Moderate Liberalism**

17. There are, indeed, some adherents of Liberalism who do not subscribe to these opinions, which we have seen to be fearful in their enormity, openly opposed to the truth, and the cause of most terrible evils. Indeed, very many amongst them, compelled by the force of truth, do not hesitate to admit that such liberty is vicious, nay, is simple license, whenever intemperate in

its claims, to the neglect of truth and justice; and therefore they would have liberty ruled and directed by right reason, and consequently subject to the natural law and to the divine eternal law. But here they think they may stop, holding that man as a free being is bound by no law of God, except such as He makes known to us through our natural reason. In this they are plainly inconsistent. For if—as they must admit, and no one can rightly deny—the will of the divine Law-giver is to be obeyed, because every man is under the power of God, and tends toward Him as his end, it follows that no one can assign limits to His legislative authority without failing in the obedience which is due. Indeed, if the human mind be so presumptuous as to define the nature and extent of God's rights and its own duties, reverence for the divine law will be apparent rather than real, and arbitrary judgment will prevail over the authority and providence of God. Man must, therefore, take his standard of a loyal and religious life from the eternal law; and from all and every one of those laws which God, in His infinite wisdom and power, has been pleased to enact, and to make known to us by such clear and unmistakable signs as to leave no room for doubt. And the more so because laws of this kind have the same origin, the same author, as the eternal law, are absolutely in accordance with right reason, and perfect the natural law. These laws it is that embody the government of God, Who graciously guides and directs both the intellect and the will of man lest these fall into error. Let, then, that continue to remain in a holy and inviolable union, which neither can nor should be separated; and in all things—for this is the dictate of right reason itself—let God be dutifully and obediently served.

### **The State Is Bound By God's Law**

18. There are others, somewhat more moderate though not more consistent, who affirm that the morality of individuals is to be guided by the divine law, but not the morality of the State, so that in public affairs the commands of God may be passed over, and may be entirely disregarded in the framing of laws. Hence follows the fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State. But the absurdity of such a position is manifest. Nature herself proclaims the necessity of the State providing means and opportunities whereby the community may be enabled



to live properly, that is to say, according to the laws of God. For since God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is absolutely ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to these laws or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who in their government of the State take no account of these laws, abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end and from what nature itself prescribes. And, what is still more important, and what We have more than once pointed out, although the civil authority has not the same proximate end as the spiritual, nor proceeds on the same lines, nevertheless in the exercise of their separate powers they must occasionally meet. For their subjects are the same, and not infrequently they deal with the same objects, though in different ways. Whenever this occurs, since a state of conflict is absurd and manifestly repugnant to the most wise ordinance of God, there must necessarily exist some order or mode of procedure to remove the occasions of difference and contention, and to secure harmony in all things. This harmony has been not inaptly compared to that which exists between the body and the soul for the well-being of both one and the other, the separation of which brings irremediable harm to the body, since it extinguishes its very life.

### **False Liberty of Worship**

19. To make this more evident, the growth of liberty ascribed to our age must be considered apart in its various details. And, first, let us examine that liberty in individuals which is so opposed to the virtue of religion, namely the *liberty of worship*, as it is called. This is based on the principle that every man is free to profess as he may choose any religion or none.

### **One True Religion**

20. But, assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfill, that, without doubt, is the chiefest and holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This fol-

laws of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and, having come forth from Him, must return to Him. Add to which no true virtue can exist without religion, for moral virtue is concerned with those things which lead to God as man's supreme and ultimate good; and therefore religion, which (as St. Thomas says) "performs those actions which are directly and immediately ordained for the divine honor,"<sup>3</sup> rules and tempers all virtues. And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practice that one which God enjoins, and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes, whereby divine Providence has willed that it should be distinguished, because, in a matter of such moment, the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error. Wherefore, when a liberty such as We have described is offered to man, the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil; which, as We have said, is no liberty, but its degradation, and the abject submission of the soul to sin.

### **The State Owes Honor to God**

21. This kind of liberty, if considered in relation to the State, clearly implies that there is no reason why the State should offer any homage to God, or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith. But, to justify this, it must needs be taken as true that the State has no duties towards God, or that such duties, if they exist, can be abandoned with impunity, both of which assertions are manifestly false. For it cannot be doubted but that, by the will of God, men are united in civil society; whether its component parts be considered; or its form, which implies authority; or the object of its existence; or the abundance of the vast services which it renders to man. God it is Who has made man for society, and has placed him in the company of others like himself, so that what was wanting to his nature, and beyond his attainment if left to his own resources, he might obtain by asso-

<sup>3</sup> *Summa*, 2a, 2æ, q. lxxxii. a. 6.

ciation with others. Wherefore civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. Justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges. Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty, especially in Catholic States, because the marks of truth are, as it were, engraven upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect, if they would provide—as they should do—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community. For public authority exists for the welfare of those whom it governs; and although its proximate end is to lead men to the prosperity found in this life, yet, in so doing, it ought not to diminish, but rather to increase, man's capability of attaining to the supreme good in which his everlasting happiness consists: which never can be attained if religion be disregarded.

### **The State Is Benefited By Religion**

22. All this, however, We have explained more fully elsewhere. We now only wish to add the remark that liberty of so false a nature is greatly hurtful to the true liberty of both rulers and their subjects. Religion, of its essence, is wonderfully helpful to the State. For, since it derives the prime origin of all power directly from God Himself, with grave authority it charges rulers to be mindful of their duty, to govern without injustice or severity, to rule their people kindly and with almost paternal charity; it admonishes subjects to be obedient to lawful authority, as to the ministers of God; and it binds them to their rulers, not merely by obedience, but by reverence and affection, forbidding all seditions and venturesome enterprises calculated to disturb public order and tranquillity, and cause greater restrictions to be put upon the liberty of the people. We need not mention how greatly religion conduces to pure morals, and pure morals to liberty. Reason shows, and history confirms the fact, that the higher the morality of States, the greater are the liberty and wealth and power which they enjoy.

## Liberty of Speech and Press

23. We must now consider briefly *liberty of speech*, and liberty of the press. It is hardly necessary to say that there can be no such right as this, if it be not used in moderation, and if it pass beyond the bounds and end of all true liberty. For right is a moral power which—as We have before said and must again and again repeat—it is absurd to suppose that nature has accorded indifferently to truth and falsehood, to justice and injustice. Men have a right freely and prudently to propagate throughout the State what things soever are true and honorable, so that as many as possible may possess them; but lying opinions, than which no mental plague is greater, and vices which corrupt the heart and moral life, should be diligently repressed by public authority, lest they insidiously work the ruin of the State. The excesses of an unbridled intellect, which unfailingly end in the oppression of the untutored multitude, are no less rightly controlled by the authority of the law than are the injuries inflicted by violence upon the weak. And this all the more surely, because by far the greater part of the community is either absolutely unable, or able only with great difficulty, to escape from illusions and deceitful subtleties, especially such as flatter the passions. If unbridled license of speech and of writing be granted to all, nothing will remain sacred and inviolate; even the highest and truest mandates of natures, justly held to be the common and noblest heritage of the human race, will not be spared. Thus, truth being gradually obscured by darkness, pernicious and manifold error, as too often happens, will easily prevail. Thus, too, license will gain what liberty loses; for liberty will ever be more free and secure, in proportion as license is kept in fuller restraint. In regard, however, to all matters of opinion which God leaves to man's free discussion, full liberty of thought and of speech is naturally within the right of every one; for such liberty never leads men to suppress the truth, but often to discover it and make it known.

## Liberty of Teaching

24. A like judgment must be passed upon what is called *liberty of teaching*. There can be no doubt that truth alone should imbue the minds of men; for in it are found the well-being, the end, and the perfection of every intelligent nature; and

therefore nothing but truth should be taught both to the ignorant and to the educated, so as to bring knowledge to those who have it not, and to preserve it in those who possess it. For this reason it is plainly the duty of all who teach to banish error from the mind, and by sure safeguards to close the entry to all false convictions. From this it follows, as is evident, that the liberty of which We have been speaking, is greatly opposed to reason, and tends absolutely to pervert men's minds, in as much as it claims for itself the right of teaching whatever it pleases—a liberty which the State cannot grant without failing in its duty. And the more so, because the authority of teachers has great weight with their hearers, who can rarely decide for themselves as to the truth or falsehood of the instruction given to them.

### **Natural Truth the Subject of Teaching**

25. Wherefore, this liberty also, in order that it may deserve the name, must be kept within certain limits, lest the office of teaching be turned with impunity into an instrument of corruption. Now truth, which should be the only subject-matter of those who teach, is of two kinds, natural and supernatural. Of natural truths, such as the principles of nature and whatever is derived from them immediately by our reason, there is a kind of common patrimony in the human race. On this, as on a firm basis, morality, justice, religion, and the very bonds of human society rest: and to allow people to go unharmed who violate or destroy it, would be most impious, most foolish, and most inhuman.

### **Divine Truth the Subject of Teaching**

26. But with no less religious care must we preserve that great and sacred treasure of the truths which God Himself has taught us. By many and convincing arguments, often used by defenders of Christianity, certain leading truths have been laid down: namely, that some things have been revealed by God; that the only-begotten Son of God was made flesh, to bear witness to the truth; that a perfect society was founded by Him—the Church namely, of which He is the head, and with which He has promised to abide till the end of the world. To this society He entrusted all the truths which He had taught, in order that it might keep and guard them and with lawful authority explain them; and at the same time He commanded all

nations to hear the voice of the Church, as if it were His own, threatening those who would not hear it with everlasting perdition. Thus it is manifest that man's best and surest teacher is God, the source and principle of all truth; and the only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the true Light which enlightens every man, and to Whose teaching all must submit: *And they shall all be taught of God.*<sup>4</sup>

### **The Church the Reliable Teacher**

27. In faith and in the teaching of morality, God Himself made the Church a partaker of His divine authority, and through His heavenly gift she cannot be deceived. She is therefore the greatest and most reliable teacher of mankind, and in her dwells an inviolable right to teach them. Sustained by the truth received from her divine Founder, the Church has ever sought to fulfill holily the mission entrusted to her by God; unconquered by the difficulties on all sides surrounding her, she has never ceased to assert her liberty of teaching, and in this way the wretched superstition of paganism being dispelled, the wide world was renewed unto Christian wisdom. Now, reason itself clearly teaches that the truths of divine revelation and those of nature cannot really be opposed to one another, and that whatever is at variance with them must necessarily be false. Therefore the divine teaching of the Church, so far from being an obstacle to the pursuit of learning and the progress of science, or in any way retarding the advance of civilization, in reality brings to them the sure guidance of shining light. And for the same reason it is of no small advantage for the perfecting of human liberty, since our Saviour Jesus Christ has said that by truth is man made free: *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*<sup>5</sup> Therefore there is no reason why genuine liberty should grow indignant, or true science feel aggrieved, at having to bear the just and necessary restraint of laws by which, in the judgment of the Church and of Reason itself, human teaching has to be controlled.

### **The Church Fosters Learning**

28. The Church, indeed—as facts have everywhere proved—looks chiefly and above all to the defense of the Christian

<sup>4</sup> John vi. 45.

<sup>5</sup> John viii. 32.

faith, while careful at the same time to foster and promote every kind of human learning. For learning is in itself good, and praiseworthy, and desirable; and further, all erudition which is the outgrowth of sound reason, and in conformity with the truth of things, serves not a little to confirm what We believe on the authority of God. The Church, truly, to our great benefit, has carefully preserved the monuments of ancient wisdom; has opened everywhere homes of science, and has urged on intellectual progress by fostering most diligently the arts by which the culture of our age is so much advanced. Lastly, We must not forget that a vast field lies freely open to man's industry and genius, containing all those things which have no necessary connection with Christian faith and morals, or as to which the Church, exercising no authority, leaves the judgment of the learned free and unconstrained.

### **Inconsistency of Liberalism**

29. From all this may be understood the nature and character of that liberty which the followers of *Liberalism* so eagerly advocate and proclaim. On the one hand, they demand for themselves and for the State a license which opens the way to every perversity of opinion; and on the other, they hamper the Church in divers ways, restricting her liberty within narrowest limits, although from her teaching not only is there nothing to be feared, but in every respect very much to be gained.

### **Liberty of Conscience**

30. Another liberty is widely advocated, namely, *liberty of conscience*. If by this is meant that every one may, as he chooses, worship God or not, it is sufficiently refuted by the arguments already adduced. But it may also be taken to mean that every man in the State may follow the will of God and, from a consciousness of duty and free from every obstacle, obey His commands. This, indeed, is true liberty, a liberty worthy of the sons of God, which nobly maintains the dignity of man, and is stronger than all violence or wrong—a liberty which the Church has always desired and held most dear. This is the kind of liberty the apostles claimed for themselves with intrepid constancy, which the apologists of Christianity confirmed by their writings, and which the martyrs in vast numbers consecrated by

their blood. And deservedly so; for this Christian liberty bears witness to the absolute and most just dominion of God over man, and to the chief and supreme duty of man towards God. It has nothing in common with a seditious and rebellious mind; and in no tittle derogates from obedience to public authority; for the right to command and to require obedience exists only so far as it is in accordance with the authority of God, and is within the measure that He has laid down. But when anything is commanded which is plainly at variance with the will of God, there is a wide departure from this divinely constituted order, and at the same time a direct conflict with Divine authority; therefore it is right not to obey.

### **Liberalism Enslaves Liberty**

31. By the patrons of *Liberalism*, however, who make the State absolute and omnipotent, and proclaim that man should live altogether independently of God, the liberty of which We speak, which goes hand in hand with virtue and religion, is not admitted; and whatever is done for its preservation is accounted an injury and an offense against the State. Indeed, if what they say were really true, there would be no tyranny, no matter how monstrous, which we should not be bound to endure and submit to.

### **Bitter Fruits of Liberalism**

32. The Church most earnestly desires that the Christian teaching, of which We have given an outline, should penetrate every rank of society in reality and in practice; for it would be of the greatest efficacy in healing the evils of our day, which are neither few nor slight, and are the offspring in great part of the false liberty which is so much extolled, and in which the germs of safety and glory were supposed to be contained. The hope has been disappointed by the result. The fruit, instead of being sweet and wholesome, has proved cankered and bitter. If then a remedy is desired, let it be sought for in a restoration of sound doctrine, from which alone the preservation of order and, as a consequence, the defense of true liberty can be confidently expected.

### **The Tolerance of Evil**

33. Yet, with the discernment of a true mother, the Church weighs the great burden of human weakness, and well knows the



course down which the minds and actions of men are in this our age being borne. For this reason, while not conceding any right to anything save what is true and honest, she does not forbid public authority to tolerate what is at variance with truth and justice, for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, or of obtaining or preserving some greater good. God Himself, in His providence though infinitely good and powerful permits evil to exist in the world, partly that greater good may not be impeded, and partly that greater evil may not ensue. In the government of States it is not forbidden to imitate the Ruler of the world; and, as the authority of man is powerless to prevent every evil, it has (as St. Augustine says) *to overlook and leave unpunished many things which are punished, and rightly, by divine Providence.*<sup>6</sup> But if, in such circumstances, for the sake of the common good (and this is the only legitimate reason), human law may or even should tolerate evil, it may not and should not approve or desire evil for its own sake; for evil of itself, being a privation of good, is opposed to the common welfare which every legislator is bound to desire and defend to the best of his ability. In this, human law must endeavor to imitate God, Who, as St. Thomas teaches, in allowing evil to exist in the world, *“neither wills evil to be done, nor wills it not to be done, but wills only to permit it to be done; and this is good.”*<sup>7</sup> This saying of the Angelic Doctor contains briefly the whole doctrine of the permission of evil.

### **Common Welfare the Basis of Tolerance**

34. But, to judge aright, we must acknowledge that the more a State is driven to tolerate evil the further is it from perfection; and that the tolerance of evil which is dictated by political prudence should be strictly confined to the limits which its justifying cause, the public welfare, requires. Wherefore, if such tolerance would be injurious to the public welfare, and entail greater evils on the State, it would not be lawful; for in such case the motive of good is wanting. And although in the extraordinary condition of these times the Church usually acquiesces in certain modern liberties, not because she prefers them in themselves, but because she judges it expedient to permit them, she would in happier times

<sup>6</sup> St. August., de lib. arb., lib. 1. cap. 6. num. 14.

<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas, 1 q. xix. a 9 ad. 3.

exercise her own liberty; and, by persuasion, exhortation, and entreaty, would endeavor, as she is bound, to fulfill the duty assigned to her by God of providing for the eternal salvation of mankind. One thing, however, remains always true—that the liberty which is claimed for all to do all things is not, as We have often said, of itself desirable, inasmuch as it is contrary to reason that error and truth should have equal rights.

### **Liberalism Spells Immorality**

35. And as to *tolerance*, it is surprising how far removed from the equity and prudence of the Church are those who profess what is called *Liberalism*. For, in allowing that boundless license of which We have spoken, they exceed all limits, and end at last by making no apparent distinction between truth and error, honesty and dishonesty. And because the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, and the unerring teacher of morals, is forced utterly to reprobate and condemn *tolerance* of such an abandoned and criminal character, they calumniate her as being wanting in patience and gentleness, and thus fail to see that, in so doing, they impute to her as a fault what is in reality a matter for commendation. But, in spite of all this show of *tolerance*, it very often happens that, while they profess themselves ready to lavish liberty on all in the greatest profusion, they are utterly intolerant towards the Catholic Church, by refusing to allow her the liberty of being herself free.

### **Summary**

36. And now to reduce for clearness' sake to its principal heads all that has been set forth with its immediate conclusions, the summing up is this briefly: that man, by a necessity of his nature, is wholly subject to the most faithful and ever-enduring power of God; and that as a consequence any liberty, except that which consists in submission to God and in subjection to His will, is unintelligible. To deny the existence of this authority in God, or to refuse to submit to it, means to act, not as a free man, but as one who treasonably abuses his liberty; and in such a disposition of mind the chief and deadly vice of *Liberalism* essentially consists. The form, however, of the sin is manifold; for in more ways and degrees than one can the will depart from the obedience which is due to God or to those who share the divine power.

## **Liberalism Perverts Liberty**

37. For, to reject the supreme authority of God, and to cast off all obedience to Him in public matters, or even in private and domestic affairs, is the greatest perversion of liberty and the worst kind of *Liberalism*: and what We have said must be understood to apply to this alone in its fullest sense.

## **Liberalism Rejects Laws of Faith**

38. Next comes the system of those who admit indeed the duty of submitting to God, the Creator and Ruler of the world, inasmuch as all nature is dependent on His will, but who boldly reject all laws of faith and morals which are above natural reason, but are revealed by the authority of God; or who at least impudently assert that there is no reason why regard should be paid to these laws, at any rate publicly, by the State. How mistaken these men also are, and how inconsistent, we have seen above. From this teaching, as from its source and principle, flows that fatal principle of the separation of Church and State; whereas it is, on the contrary, clear that the two powers, though dissimilar in functions and unequal in degree, ought nevertheless to live in concord, by harmony in their action and the faithful discharge of their respective duties.

## **Separation Means Segregation of Church**

39. But this teaching is understood in two ways. Many wish the State to be separated from the Church wholly and entirely, so that regard to every right of human society, in institutions, customs, and laws, the offices of State, and the education of youth, they would pay no more regard to the Church than if she did not exist; and, at most, would allow the citizens individually to attend to their religion in private if so minded. Against such as these, all the arguments by which We disprove the principle of separation of Church and State are conclusive; with this super-added, that it is absurd the citizen should respect the Church, while the State may hold her in contempt.

## **Separation Means Subjugation of Church**

40. Others oppose not the existence of the Church, nor indeed could they; yet they despoil her of the nature and rights of a perfect society, and maintain that it does not belong to her

to legislate, to judge, or to punish, but only to exhort, to advise, and to rule her subjects in accordance with their own consent and will. By such opinion they pervert the nature of this divine society, and attenuate and narrow its authority, its office of teacher, and its whole efficiency; and at the same time they aggrandize the power of the civil government to such extent as to subject the Church of God to the empire and sway of the State, like any voluntary association of citizens. To refute completely such teaching, the arguments often used by the defenders of Christianity, and set forth by Us, especially in the Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*, are of great avail; for by those arguments it is proved that, by a Divine provision, all the rights which essentially belong to a society that is legitimate, supreme, and perfect in all its parts exist in the Church.

### **The Church Cannot Compromise on Doctrine**

41. Lastly, there remain those who, while they do not approve the separation of Church and State, think nevertheless that the Church ought to adapt herself to the times and conform to what is required by the modern system of government. Such an opinion is sound, if it is to be understood of some equitable adjustment consistent with truth and justice; in so far, namely, that the Church, in the hope of some great good, may show herself indulgent, and may conform to the times in so far as her sacred office permits. But it is not so in regard to practices and doctrines which a perversion of morals and a warped judgment have unlawfully introduced. Religion, truth, and justice, must ever be maintained; and, as God has intrusted these great and sacred matters to the care of the Church, she can never be so unfaithful to her office as to dissemble in regard to what is false or unjust, or to connive at what is hurtful to religion.

### **No Unconditional Liberty**

42. From what has been said, it follows that it is quite unlawful to demand, to defend, or to grant unconditional freedom of thought, of speech, of writing, or of worship, as if these were so many rights given by nature to man. For if nature had really granted them, it would be lawful to refuse obedience to God, and there would be no restraint on human liberty. It likewise follows that freedom in these things may be tolerated wher-

ever there is just cause; but only with such moderation as will prevent its degenerating into license and excess. And where such liberties are in use, men should employ them in doing good, and should estimate them as the Church does; for liberty is to be regarded as legitimate in so far only as it affords greater facility for doing good, but no farther.

### **Liberty to Change Government**

43. Whenever there exists, or there is reason to fear, an unjust oppression of the people on the one hand, or a deprivation of the liberty of the Church on the other, it is lawful to seek for such a change of government as will bring about due liberty of action. In such case an excessive and vicious liberty is not sought for, but only some relief, for the common welfare, in order that, while license for evil is allowed by the State, the power of doing good may not be hindered.

### **Forms of Government**

44. Again, it is not of itself wrong to prefer a democratic form of government, if only the Catholic doctrine be maintained as to the origin and exercise of power. Of the various forms of government, the Church does not reject any that are fitted to procure the welfare of the subject; she wishes only—and this nature itself requires—that they should be constituted without involving wrong to any one, and especially without violating the rights of the Church.

### **Civic Duty of Catholics**

45. Unless it be otherwise determined, by reason of some exceptional condition of things, it is expedient to take part in the administration of public affairs. And the Church approves of every one devoting his services to the common good, and doing all that he can for the defense, preservation, and prosperity of his country.

### **Liberty and Prosperity Desired By the Church**

46. Neither does the Church condemn those who, if it can be done without violation of justice, wish to make their country independent of any foreign or despotic power. Nor does she blame those who wish to assign to the State the power of self-government, and to its citizens the greatest possible measure

of prosperity. The Church has always most faithfully fostered civil liberty, and thos was seen especially in Italy, in the municipal prosperity, and wealth, and glory, which were obtained at a time when the salutary power of the Church had spread, without opposition, to all parts of the State:

### **Prayer for God's Truth**

47. These things, Venerable Brothers, which, under the guidance of faith and reason, in the discharge of Our Apostolic office, We have now delivered to you, We hope, especially by your co-operation with Us, will be useful unto very many. In lowliness of heart We raise Our eyes in supplication to God, and earnestly beseech Him to shed mercifully the light of His wisdom and of His counsel upon men, so that, strengthened by these heavenly gifts, they may in matters of such moment discern what is true, and may afterwards, in public and in private, at all times and with unshaken constancy, live in accordance with the truth. As a pledge of these heavenly gifts, and in witness of Our good will to you, Venerable Brothers, and to the clergy and people committed to each of you, We most lovingly grant in the Lord the Apostolic Benediction.

48. Given at St. Peter's in Rome, the twentieth day of June, 1888, the tenth year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII, *Pope.*

# DISCUSSION CLUB OUTLINE

By REV. GERALD C. TREACY, S.J.

**Numerals Indicate Paragraphs**

## LESSON I

Paragraphs 1 to 4

Human liberty is nature's highest gift, giving man power over his own actions. On its use the greatest good and the greatest evil depend. This great gift of nature has ever been and always will be cherished by the Church. Not knowing what true liberty is there are many who think the Church is opposed to human liberty. With a wrong notion of liberty the very idea of freedom is perverted. We have on a former occasion in treating of so-called liberties called attention to their good and bad elements. Whatever is good in them is as old as truth itself and has always the approval of the Church. Whatever is new in them is due to the disorders of the age and a craving after novelties. We think it well then to explain what liberty is.

Liberty belongs only to those who have the gift of reason or intelligence. It is the power of choosing means to reach an end. It is the power of choice. For he is master of his actions who can choose one thing out of many. As man can do this he is responsible for his actions. This is a consequence of his liberty. As he has reason to guide him, unlike the brute who is guided by instinct, his liberty depends on his reason. His reasoning power comes from his soul, which is created by God, is simple—that is without parts, spiritual—that is not material like his body, and intellectual—that is able to *reason* and follow out his reason *in willing*. As the Church teaches the simplicity, spirituality and immortality of the soul so does she ever assert its freedom. From the beginning of her history she has ever defended human liberty. At no time has she ever compromised with fatalism.

## QUESTIONS

How does Pope Leo define liberty?

What follows from the use of liberty?

How did God dignify human nature?

State the attitude of the Church on liberty.

What did Pope Leo say of human liberties in the encyclical *Immortale Dei*?

Why does he deem it necessary to write the present encyclical?

How does natural liberty make man different from other creatures?

What is the foundation of natural liberty?

What power does man possess that makes him responsible for his actions?

What guides man in each action of his life?

If man's soul were material like his body what consequence would follow?

What has been the attitude of the Church toward human freedom?  
Toward fatalism?

## LESSON II

### Paragraphs 5 to 8

When a man chooses something he does so because it appeals to him as good or useful. But before he chooses he must know. So the will cannot act until man knows what he is about. His knowing power is that power of his soul called his intellect or reason. As both intellect and will are imperfect powers, it can happen that the intellect will propose something that is really not good, but only appears to be good. Then the will chooses accordingly. For as error and the possibility of error are defects of the mind and attest its imperfection, so the will following the appearance of what is good shows its imperfection. But at the same time it is a proof of our freedom just as disease is a proof of our vitality. Because the will depends on the intellect, it abuses its freedom, if it acts contrary to the intellect.

So it is that God being infinitely perfect, supremely free and supremely intelligent cannot choose evil. Neither can the saints and angels enjoying the Beatific Vision choose evil. St. Thomas often discusses this point. He says in conclusion: "MAN is by nature rational. When therefore he acts according to reason, he acts of himself and according to his free will; and this is LIBERTY. Whereas when he sins he acts in opposition to reason, is moved by another and is the victim of outside misapprehensions. Therefore whoever commits sin is the slave of sin." The heathen philosophers maintained this truth, in stating that "the wise man alone is free." For by the *wise man* they understood the man trained to live according to his nature, that is in justice and virtue.

As such is the condition of liberty, it needs light and strength to direct its actions to good and restrain them from evil. Without this our freedom would spell catastrophe. First of all there must be LAW. That means a fixed rule of teaching what is to be done, and what is not to be done. Law is the ordination of reason. The necessity of law lies in man's free will or in the moral necessity that our voluntary acts must be in accordance with REASON. To say that because man is free he is exempt from law is foolish. For this means that to be free we must be deprived of REASON. The truth is we are bound to submit to law from the fact that we are free by our very nature. For law is the guide of man's actions, it turns him toward good by its rewards and deters him from evil by its punishments.

First comes the LAW OF NATURE or THE NATURAL LAW, which is written in the mind of every man. This is nothing but our REASON bidding us to do right and avoid wrong. However, all commands of reason can only have the force of law in as much as they are the voice and interpreters of some higher power on which our reason and liberty NECESSARILY depend. Authority is the only foundation of law, for authority means the power of fixing duties and defining rights, as also of assigning sanctions of reward and punishment. All this, as is evident cannot be found in man, unless as his own supreme legislator he is to be the rule of his own actions. It follows that the law of nature is the same thing as the ETERNAL LAW, implanted in rational creatures and inclining them to



their right action and end. It can be nothing else then, but the eternal reason of God the Creator and Ruler of the whole world.

To help man observe this law God has given a special help that strengthens the human will. We call this help divine Grace. It is a God-given power bringing light to the mind and strength to the will, so that the use of our liberty becomes less difficult and less dangerous. This gift of God does not hinder the freedom of the will. On the contrary it works in harmony with the nature of the will, since it comes from the Creator of that nature.

### QUESTIONS

Considered in its nature, how may liberty be defined?

What is the object of the will and its liberty?

Does the will act without knowledge furnished by the intellect?

Explain in detail and by example how the intellect and will act.

What follows from the fact that intellect and will are both imperfect?

The pursuit of what has a false appearance of good is a proof of our freedom. Explain.

God, although supremely free, cannot choose evil. How does St. Augustine explain this?

Prove the need of LAW and give its definition.

Why cannot LAW affect the lower animals?

What does man's judgment decide before his will acts?

Why are we bound to submit to law?

Because man is free by nature, he is exempt from law. Disprove.

Define the NATURAL LAW.

Why is authority the one and only foundation of law?

Can there be law if man is considered as his own supreme legislator?

Define the ETERNAL LAW and show its relation to the NATURAL LAW.

What aid does God in His mercy give to the human intellect and will?

What effect has this aid?

Is our liberty affected by this help?

How does St. Thomas express this?

### LESSON III

Paragraphs 9 to 13

What is true of the liberty of individuals, is true of these same individuals as members of civil society. For what reason and natural law do for the individual, *human* law does for the citizen. It commands the citizen to follow what is good and avoid what is evil, adding at the same time a proper sanction.

Human law which deals with what is good or bad by its very nature, does not originate with regard to its obliging force in civil society. It is not derived from civil society. It has its origin in the natural and conse-

quently the eternal law. Because law exists before men live together in civil society. For law is nothing but the rule of conduct befitting human nature. This rule comes from the Creator of human nature. Some human laws are concerned with that which is good or bad by its very nature. For example every civilized state passes laws concerning the right of life, the right of property. To take life unjustly, or property unjustly, is wrong by its very nature.

There are other human laws which do not follow directly from the natural law. They decide points which the natural law deals with only in a general way. For example the natural law commands all men to contribute to the common good of civil society. *How* this is to be done is determined by human laws, not by the natural law. Human law then really consists in *particular* rules of conduct, enacted by competent authority, directing men toward good and deterring them from evil.

From these truths it follows that, ultimately, the eternal law is the sole standard and rule of human liberty, not only for man as an individual but for man in society. So true liberty does not consist in each one doing what he pleases, which would end in anarchy, chaos and the complete overthrow of the state. True liberty means conformity to civil law that all may more easily conform to the eternal law. And so the liberty of those in authority does not mean the power to impose unreasonable commands which would work only the ruin of the state. The binding force of human law lies in this—it is the application of the eternal law to the details of life. The eternal law is the principle of all law. Hence all human laws derive their binding force from it. If those in authority pass laws that are not in keeping with right reason and are in consequence harmful to the commonwealth, such laws lack any binding power as they violate justice and lead men away from that common good which is the very end of civil society.

Therefore however we may view the nature of liberty, it supposes the necessity of obedience to a supreme and eternal law, which is nothing else but the authority of God commanding good and forbidding evil. And this authority instead of diminishing or destroying liberty, protects and perfects it. For the perfection of creatures is found in the prosecution and attainment of their respective ends. But the supreme end to which liberty must aspire is God.

These truths, made known to us by reason itself, have ever been taught by the Church. The result is that the Church has always been the custodian and protector of the civil and political liberty of the people. Through her teaching slavery, a pagan institution, was gradually abolished. Through her teaching savage and barbarous peoples have learned the vital lesson of the brotherhood of all men in Jesus Christ. Nor have pagan or savage nations alone benefited from her influence, for to the civilized nations as well she has brought the important lessons of Christian culture, defending the innocent, resisting the tyranny of wicked rulers, and sustaining every form of government provided it is just, and secures the common good.

The highest duty of every man is to respect lawful authority and obey just laws. For lawful power is from God and “he who resists authority resists the ordinance of God.” By this truth obedience is ennobled. So

is resistance to unjust law a virtuous act, for it means obeying God rather than man, when man commands unjustly. Tyranny is blocked in this manner, and the rights of all citizens are safeguarded. All are then free to live according to law and right reason, and in this true liberty consists.

### QUESTIONS

Explain the connection between natural law and human law.

Does human law derive from civil society?

Where do laws have their origin?

What is the duty of the civil legislator in regard to laws that come directly from natural law?

Show how some laws decide many points which the natural law treats only in a general way.

In what does human law properly so called, consist?

State the sole standard of human liberty for society as well as for the individual.

True liberty does not mean that every man does what he pleases. Prove.

How is liberty shown by those in authority?

What does St. Augustine say of the human and the eternal law?

What gives human law its binding force?

The nature of liberty, however it may be considered, supposes obedience to whose authority?

### LESSON IV

#### Paragraphs 14 to 17

It is wrong to assert that the Church is opposed to liberty. The Church is opposed to license, and the false teachings of those who misinterpret liberty, usurp its name and style themselves *Liberals*. For the Liberal is attempting to do in morality and politics what the Naturalist and Rationalist attempt to do in the domain of philosophy. The basic doctrine of Rationalism is the supremacy of human reason. That means human reason independent of divine reason, constituting itself the supreme principle, source, and judge of truth. Hence the Liberals deny the existence of any divine authority to whom obedience is due, and make man a law unto himself. Their ethical system which they call *independent morality* excuses man from obedience to God and consequently sanctions a life of license. The effect of this on society is plain. As individual reason is the only law of life, so is the collective reason of the community the supreme law, authority in the state is derived from the people alone, and the majority possesses all rights and duties. It is clear from reason that these contentions are false. For to deny any bond of union between man and civil society on the one hand and God the Creator and Supreme Lawgiver on the other is to act against the nature of man, and in fact of all created things. All effects must in some way be linked to their cause, and in the order of nature the lower should be subject to the higher.

Moreover, such doctrines are patently harmful to individuals and to society. Once admit that human reason alone has the authority to decide what is true and what is good, and there will be an end to the real distinction between good and evil. If honor and dishonor mean whatever each individual chooses them to mean there will be no honor left. Pleasure will become the measuring rod of what is lawful. Given such a code of morality with no power to restrain the passions of man and you open the way to decadence, and universal corruption.

In regard to public affairs, authority is severed from the true principle whence it derives all its power for the common good, and the law of right and wrong is at the mercy of a majority. This means opening wide the road to tyranny. Once repudiate the rule of God over man and civil society, and religion will have no meaning. Duty and conscience being ruled out of life, nothing can prevent rebellion and class warfare but force. And force alone is powerless to stamp out covetousness. We have the example before our eyes of the Socialists and members of other subversive societies who are constantly stirring up unrest and fomenting revolution. Common sense tells us whether such doctrines promote true liberty or destroy it.

There are some advocates of Liberalism who do not subscribe to these opinions, but would have liberty ruled by reason and subject to the natural and eternal law. They claim that man as a free being is bound only by the law of God that He makes known to us through our *natural reason*. In this they are inconsistent. For admitting God as the Supreme Lawgiver they seek to limit His legislative authority. All the laws that God has made known have the same binding force as the eternal law, for they have the same origin, the same author as the eternal law, are in accordance with right reason and perfect the natural law.

## QUESTIONS

Does this authority diminish or destroy liberty? Explain.

How has the law of the Gospels affected human liberty?

How has the teaching of the Church influenced civil and political liberty?

Cite the effect of the teaching of the Church on barbarous and civilized nations.

Explain the difference between a just and unjust law.

What is it that ennobles obedience to law?

Explain what the Liberals mean by liberty.

What is the connection between rationalism, naturalism and liberalism?

State the basic doctrine of rationalism.

What does the ethical system called "independent morality" hold?

State the effects of the tenets of liberalism on human society.

Prove that these principles are against reason.

Human reason is the sole authority to decide what is true and what is good. Refute.

## LESSON V

### Paragraphs 18 to 22

Other more moderate Liberals, though no more consistent, claim that the individual is bound by the divine law but not the State, so that the State may ignore God's commands in making use of its legislative authority. Hence they advocate the complete separation of Church and State. They forget that nature calls upon the State to provide the means whereby the community may live properly. That entails living according to the laws of God. As God is the source of all goodness and justice it is ridiculous for the State to ignore His laws. Besides, civil rulers owe it to their people not merely to provide for their material well-being, but still more to consult the good of their souls in the wisdom of their legislation. Civil rulers who take no account of God's laws, abuse political power by diverting it from its proper object and from what nature itself prescribes.

While the civil authority has not the same object as the spiritual, still in the exercise of their separate powers, these authorities must occasionally meet, for they govern the same subjects and sometimes have to deal with the same question. Education is a case in point. Both Church and State have their rights and duties respecting the education of their subjects. It is foolish to say that there must be conflict between them. The truth is there must be harmony, just as there must be harmony between the soul and the body for the well-being of both.

One of the false notions regarding liberty is expressed in the statement that "every man is free to profess any religion he may choose or none." It is false because reason and the natural law bid us follow that *one* religion which God enjoins and which man can recognize by unmistakable proofs given by God Himself. If this were not true then we would have to admit that God had left man helpless in a matter of supreme importance. For surely man's destiny is of supreme importance, and how can he fulfill it if he does not know the right way of worshiping God?

Another false notion of liberty has to do with the State and religion. It is maintained that the State should not offer homage to God, that all religions in the State should be on the same footing, and that no account should be taken of the religion of the people, even though they profess the Catholic Faith. These statements are false. For just as man as an individual is bound to acknowledge God in practicing the religion which God has revealed, so is man united with his fellows in civil society, namely the State, under the same obligation. For the State is obliged to acknowledge God as its founder by professing that one religion which alone is true and can be recognized by the marks of truth which are engraven upon it.<sup>8</sup>

Religion is of immense benefit to the State. For since it teaches that all power comes from God, it reminds rulers of their sacred obligations to rule justly, kindly, and with charity. It likewise enjoins upon subjects to

<sup>8</sup> This subject is explained more fully in the encyclical on *The Christian Constitution of States*. In most countries today where there are many forms of religion, separation of Church and State is the practical way of securing liberty for the Church and protecting the Church from oppression.

obey their rulers as God's representatives, with loyalty and affection. Religion conduces to good morals and good morals to liberty. The lesson of history shows that the higher the morality of States, the greater the liberty, prosperity and power which they enjoy.

## QUESTIONS

What position will religion hold in a State governed by Liberals?

The doctrine of liberalism will do away with duty and conscience. What will be the effect?

Man, as a free being is bound only by the law of God made known to him by reason. Refute.

Why has God enacted other laws besides the eternal law?

State laws need not be concerned with God's laws. Refute.

Is government concerned merely with the material well-being of the citizen?

Prove the need of Church and State, civil and spiritual authorities, working in harmony.

Every man is free to profess any religion he wishes, or none. Refute.

Prove that true virtue cannot exist without religion.

Prove that God enjoins the practice of one true religion. How may it be known?

Why did God destine man to live in civil society?

Why should the State officially honor God and His law?

Explain how religion is helpful to the State.

What lessons does it teach rulers and subjects?

Show the relationship between religion, morals, liberty, and human welfare.

## LESSON VI

Paragraphs 23 to 29

The right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press does not mean liberty to say or print truth or falsehood, to defend justice or injustice as I please. It cannot be repeated too often that right is a moral power, and it is false to say that nature has accorded this right indifferently to the spread of truth or falsehood, justice or injustice. Men possess the right to freely propagate whatever is true and honorable so that as many as possible may benefit thereby. But the State for its own safety has both the right and duty to suppress lying propaganda and vicious doctrines that corrupt morals and lead to the ruin of the commonwealth. If unbridled license of speech and of the press is allowed, nothing will remain sacred or inviolate, not even the highest and truest mandates of nature, justly considered the noblest heritage of the human race. If true liberty is to prevail, license can be given no quarter. However in all matters of opinion which God leaves to man's free discussion, full liberty of thought and of speech is everyone's right. For such liberty leads not to the sup-

pression of truth but to further discovery of truth and wider knowledge of truth.

The same is true of liberty of teaching. (NOTE: The school teachers of France betrayed France. Cf. *France on Berlin Time*, by Thomas Kernan.) This means the right to teach truth, not the license to propagate error. The teacher has no right to teach whatever he pleases. The teacher has the right to teach that which is suitable to the mind of the student, which is for the well-being and perfection of every intelligent nature, namely, truth and nothing but truth. His is the duty to bring knowledge to those who lack it, and to preserve and increase it in those who have it. The hearers for the most part can rarely decide on the truth or falsehood of the matter presented to them. Hence the teacher's authority is paramount. And for the State to permit the teacher liberty to teach anything, true or false, is for the State to betray its trust and fail in its duty, which is the safeguarding of the common good.

Truth which alone is the subject matter of teaching is of two kinds, natural and supernatural. We mean by natural truth that which we arrive at by our reason. By supernatural truth we mean that which has been revealed to us by God. By reason man can know that God exists. By revelation God tells man that He exists, and tells him many other truths. For example that the Son of God became Man, to bear witness to truth, that He founded a Church to continue the teaching of truth to the end of the world, that all men are bound to hear that Church's teaching if they would fulfill their destiny. So it is clear that man's best and surest teacher is God the source and principle of all truth.

To His Church Christ said: "Go and teach all that I have taught, and I will be with you." Relying on this command and promise the Church has ever been the greatest and best teacher of men. From the beginning she has claimed the liberty of teaching no matter what obstacles may have been put in her path. It stands to reason that the truths of nature and the truths of revelation cannot be opposed to one another. So Divine teaching far from being a hindrance to the pursuit of learning and the progress of science is a helpful and guiding light. For the same reason the Church is the power that protects and fosters human liberty, since our Lord has said: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). True liberty and true science welcome the guidance of Church laws which direct human teaching and save it from error. While looking mainly to the teaching of faith and morals, the Church is ever fostering and promoting every kind of human learning. For learning is a good thing, worthy and desirable, and as surely as it is the outgrowth of sound reason, it helps to confirm what we believe from revelation. And we must remember there is a vast field of human knowledge not at all connected with faith and morals. Over this field the Church exercises no authority, leaving man free to range over it with the utmost liberty.

The Liberals advocate a strange kind of liberty. For they demand for themselves and the State license that opens the way to every kind of falsehood, and at the same time try to fetter the Church in every possible way, although from her teaching nothing is to be feared but much to be gained.

## QUESTIONS

Is the right of liberty of the press and of speech unlimited?

This right is a moral power given for what purpose?

How should the State deal with this right?

In what matters should there be full liberty of thought and speech?

May the State allow unlimited freedom in teaching?

What must be taught both to the ignorant and to the educated?

Why has the authority of the teacher such weight with his hearers?

Truth is of two kinds. Explain.

Morality, justice, religion and the bonds of human society rest on what basis?

Enumerate the truths revealed to man by God.

To what society have these truths been entrusted?

Why should man listen to the voice of this society?

State the relationship between God and the Church.

Prove that the truths of revelation cannot be opposed to scientific truth.

What is the attitude of the Church toward the truths of nature?

How does the Church aid those who seek genuine liberty and true science?

## LESSON VII

Paragraphs 30 to 35

Liberty of conscience is another type of liberty widely proclaimed by the Liberals. By this they mean that everyone is free to worship God or not as he chooses. This false liberty has already been dealt with. True liberty of conscience means that everyone may follow the will of God and obey His commandments. This is true liberty and worthy of the dignity of man. In the long history of the Church from the days of the Apostles to our own, this is the liberty she has ever vindicated. For this liberty bears witness to the absolute dominion of God over man. It has nothing in common with sedition; it in no way derogates from obedience to public authority. For the right to command derives from the authority of God. And if anything is commanded that is at variance with God's will, it is the citizen's duty to disobey. Liberals, however, who make the State absolute and omnipotent, and want man to live independently of God, repudiate this true liberty of conscience which goes hand in hand with virtue and religion, and claim that whatever is done for its preservation is an offense against the State. If this false claim were true, then we should be obliged to submit to every form of tyranny however monstrous it might be.

There is one remedy for the evils of our day which are the fruits for the most part of this false liberty. That remedy is the teaching of the Gospel. It is the hope of the Church that this teaching may permeate every rank of society. Liberalism, it was said, would bring safety and glory to society. The result before our very eyes is just the opposite. Only in the restoration of Christian life to the social order will the defense of true liberty be found.



The Church, benign mother as she is, allows for human weakness, and while conceding no right to anything not true or just, allows public authority to tolerate certain evils that greater evils may be avoided or greater good obtained. In this she is like God her Founder, Who though infinitely good and powerful, permits evil. "God neither wills evil to be done, nor wills it not to be done, but wills only to permit it to be done; and this is good," says St. Thomas (1 Q 19, a. 9 ad. 3). Human law for the common good may tolerate evil, for it may be unable to prevent it, or preventing it may cause greater evil, but it may not and should not approve evil for its own sake. The authority of man is powerless to prevent every evil, so it has to "overlook and leave unpunished many things which are rightly punished by divine Providence," says St. Augustine.

The State, in tolerating evil, may only do so for the common good. If this toleration acts against the public welfare, it is wrong. The Church in these times tolerates certain things that she is not in sympathy with. One thing she will not concede, the Liberals' claim that all have the liberty to do all things. For this is of itself undesirable as it is against reason. Liberalism prates much of tolerance and wishes liberty unlimited. Its teaching leads to utter confusion, making no distinction between truth and error, honesty and dishonesty. And as the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, opposes these false doctrines, the Liberals calumniate her as lacking in patience and gentleness. And while boasting of their tolerance, they often are utterly intolerant toward the Church, by refusing her the liberty of being herself free.

### QUESTIONS

Define true liberty of conscience.

What does this true liberty of conscience bear witness to?

Is the right of civil authority to command obedience an absolute right?

What do the Liberals substitute for true liberty of conscience?

Does liberalism advocate resistance to tyranny?

How has the teaching of liberalism affected human society?

What remedy is to be used in curing the ills of society?

May public authority ever tolerate what is at variance with truth and justice?

—What does St. Augustine teach about public authority and the tolerance of evil?

What does St. Thomas say of God permitting evil to exist in the world?

What is the norm of the State's tolerance of evil?

State the position of the Church on this question.

### LESSON VIII

Paragraphs 36 to 48

To conclude then, we declare that the chief and deadly vice of Liberalism is this that it makes liberty mean acting independently of God's authority. As man by his very nature is wholly subject to the power of God, to

act independently of Him means not liberty but the treasonable abuse of liberty. There are some Liberals who admit the need of submitting to God the Creator, but who reject divinely revealed religion or at least deny that the State should take any cognizance of it. From this teaching comes the fallacy of the separation of Church and State, by which is really meant the subjection of the Church to the State. The truth is that both Church and State should co-operate in fulfilling their respective and distinct functions for the common good of the citizens of the State. The advocates of this separatism really mean that the State should ignore the Church and make religion a completely private affair. They would have the Church entirely subject to the whim of every ruler. They deny the God-given truth that the Church is a real society established by God to teach, rule and sanctify man by its own right without fear or favor from any State or government. The Church will always adapt herself to the needs of the times within the limits that her sacred office permits. The Church will never sanction error or injustice or any policy that is hurtful to religion.

Unlimited freedom of thought, speech, writing, or worship are not rights given by nature to man. Man's right to liberty means liberty under God's law. Unlimited freedom means license. Governments are bound to secure the true liberty of their peoples. If they fail to do this, the citizens have the right to seek a change in government. Catholics as citizens should be in the forefront of every movement that fosters genuine liberty. Under whatever form of government they live, they should strive to see that the government fulfills its function of procuring the common welfare. Every form of government is to be commended that is founded on justice and secures the well-being of its citizens. The Church has always fostered civil liberty, and vindicated the right of every nation to self-rule, independence, and all that will bring the greatest measure of prosperity to its people.

## QUESTIONS

What does the tolerance taught by liberalism lead to?

What type of tolerance do the Liberals show the Church?

State the chief and deadly vice of liberalism.

Explain the extreme and moderate views of liberalism.

Many Liberals wish the State to be separated from the Church wholly and entirely. Refute.

Some Liberals teach that the Church should rule in accordance with the consent of her subjects. Refute.

How far should the Church go in adapting herself to modern times?

What would follow if unlimited liberty were given by nature to man?

State the attitude of the Church on the various forms of government.

Sum up the teaching of the Church on civic duty and civil liberty.



