

## LOVE AND LAW

EVERY one is present to God. They have been brought from non-existence to existence at the appointed time by His eternal, unchanging knowledge. They are kept in existence through every change and adventure of their lives by that same knowledge. Their very freedom is given by it; every deed and venture of our journey to God is caused by it.

God is present to every one; but not to all in the same way. He has planned creation with each as a part, but not all know it, and of those who know, some will not accept. And of those who accept, some do so grudgingly, while others intently gather themselves to God, loving Him with all their heart and with all their mind and with all their soul and with all their strength. Nor do these last forget the second commandment of the law: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

In the first commandment of the law of love God asserts my immediate relation to Him. I made each of you for Me as if you were the only one. I in my divine onliness would be present to your knowledge and your love with none between us. He tells us that we can accept this relation permanently so as to live with Him always. In the second commandment of the law of love He asserts our common relation to Him. I made all of you for Me as if you were all one. I in my divine onliness would be present to each one of you with all the rest of you. In the beginning when I created you I saw that it was not good for you to be alone. We were made to come to the perfect possession of God in company, that we might come more surely. We have to go to Him in twos and threes, in families and tribes and nations and kingdoms and as the human race, because He made us for each other that each might come the faster and the safer to the Maker for whom each

was made. Each of us has been made a door to eternity for all the rest; doors to be open, not doors to be shut. But we can be either. We can close our hands upon our hearts and reject the completeness of the law of love. Or we can draw the bolts so as to go and be gone through while we help God to show how high, how wide and how deep is His care for us. We are called to work together with one heart and one mind for our common end, bound each to each by this law of love, and if we accept it bound ever closer by the love of this law.

All men are one in that companionship, without distinction of race or nation or class. All are called to it; all, whether they like it or not, must arrive in the end before the Maker and the Judge of all. But those who accept the way to Him which He has shown, journey in a closer companionship, united by the divine charity which has been poured into their hearts. This is the society of the Church. To its joyful progress towards the goal of its affections no act of any of its members is irrelevant. But not all their acts make the same kind of contribution. The baking, the butchering and the candlestick-making will help them to Heaven if they love God, but cutting up mutton and kneading dough can be carried on without that. Divine grace cannot be received in the sacraments without that. So there are two kinds of action in the one life, the master actions which are of themselves open on Heaven, and those which directly concern life on earth, and which open on Heaven only by way of the others. If we had not been offered the vision of God, none of our actions would lead to Heaven. A single organisation of human society would have been enough to direct our common going to the common end of a natural human perfection. But we have been given a greater perfection than our nature asked for, to be developed to a divine term beyond its unaided capability. For the attainment of that we have been divinely organised in the Church, the prime concern of which is with those master actions whose whole meaning is super-

natural. It is independent of political society which sets in order and directs the remainder of our doings, but to some extent has control over it, without absorbing or superseding it. We cannot do without either organisation. Our own individual actions need the direction of reason; the actions of all within the social whole need the direction of the reason of all. This is embodied in authority and expresses itself in law.

To live, therefore, in an organised society under the direction of authority is man's fitting lot from his birth. It is indeed his birthright. That being so, this directive authority, exercised by the few, belongs to all. It is their privilege that some among them should be privileged. It is their responsibility that some of their number should be responsible. Each is responsible to himself and to God for himself. The ruler is responsible to all and to God for all. The common nature of all asks for this grading of responsibility and, asking, expects an answer. If this answer is given deliberately and with right understanding by both ruler and subject, authority will take a good form and its direction will be both powerful and prudent. The need for authority will still exist even though some group of subjects alienate themselves from its control and by refusing to acknowledge it as a manifestation of the requirements of their nature, externalise it with regard to themselves. Such an attitude will not make authority cease to be what it is, an answer to their need, only they will now be subject to its direction against their will instead of according to it. They will suffer violence, ultimately from their own nature. That they cannot escape.

So authority will be present in society. If it be undermined it will reassert itself. And that may happen rationally or irrationally. If what is happening be not understood it will happen without the guidance of human reason. If it be rejected it will reimpose itself violently. But the manifestations of man's being ought to show their essential rationality. He is one being, not a plurality, and

even the darkest movements of himself are the movements of a rational being, and demand acceptance and ordering by reason. But the guidance of a multitude, which is always much more than a multitude, always a unity of some kind, is no dark movement, but the work of reason itself, and demands in a pre-eminent degree acceptance and organisation by reason. Its nature and function must therefore be understood by those in command and those who obey, by all those, that is, whose birthright it is. Then, right and rational, it can be accepted and imposed rightly and rationally. Lead us. Remind us where we are going. Tell us how to get there, and we will follow. Even in the most casual gatherings you can catch that movement of the lips. Understood or not, the cry is there and will be answered. It is only if it is badly answered that men heckle the speaker and shout for liberty. A good answer satisfies their need for freedom too, because that is another natural need of the one being. Authority, then, is not called for only by inefficiency or lack of enterprise or the mistakes which fallen man is liable to make; the whole-hearted and common love of the goal to be reached itself makes it necessary. Due and whole-hearted love of the end to be attained and of all those through whom and in whose company it is to be realised, so far from making authority useless, requires it and makes it more effective. The subjects are then better disposed to act in harmony, and authority will not have to spend its energies on the overcoming of so many obstacles of ill-will and hatred.

There are two ways of disappointing this cry of the human heart for leadership. One is to refuse to obey authority, the other is to refuse to exercise it. The man who shirks the exercise of authority denies the naturalness of society and the necessity of rule. You and I he mutters—dare he do more than mutter?—have not grown from the one root. You ask for me and my ruling, but I will not answer. I will not be responsible. I will not accept

our common nature, nor pay what I owe you. And so saying he defrauds himself. In like manner he who will not obey the direction of authority contradicts himself. I need you, he says, and must do so, but I will escape from necessity. In obeying you I shall most perfectly be free, most surely obeying myself. But I will say instead, you are none of mine and I am none of yours. I will deny our common nature and try to defraud myself of what I owe myself.

But let us remember, too, that the man who in authority will not take account of the pleas of those he governs denies his own nature, and says, we are other, but I will dominate. That is a tyrant. For human nature is from God. Its cries are God's cries. Its unthought, unspoken cries are God's movement of His creation towards Himself. Its need for rational expression of its social solidarity is a need for God-showing in itself. In the expression of this one-ness men commit its direction to a ruler, so that to have the ordering of society is a great trust, and to accept orders is a great trusting. But this ordering, if the trust is to be fulfilled, the responsibility accepted and the answer given, must not be irrational. The existence of authority is not arbitrary, as we have seen. Nor must its operation be so. There is a certain manner of ordering which the nature of the subject calls for, just as much as it calls for ordering itself. Human nature is rational, a word much used but little contemplated. It means more than intelligent, for the human soul is joined to a body, and uses senses, hence understands by dividing and conjoining ideas discursively—running about. It has, therefore, other powers than the intellectual, and man must not be treated as other or less than the whole of what he is, a single and complex totality. An authority which treats him as anything less than this totality, as being exclusively constituted by any one part of it, will betray the trust placed in it by God and man. If it treats men exclusively or predominantly as economic

men, or members of a blood group, it will be trying to order and dispose something which isn't there. Such a state of affairs may be only the redressing of a previous deficiency and so for a time acceptable. But it cannot go on indefinitely.

One of the great demands of a man is to be trusted; it is consequent on his capacity for freedom. If authority trusts him it is a sign that it is trying to order him in the manner in which he should be ordered. Take away trust and it is impossible for the subject to make the commands of authority his own—for the ruler is in effect saying, do this freely and responsibly, and at the same time is taking away responsibility. But if the subject is to be trusted, the ruler too has a trust to fulfil. Not only at some distant judgment seat, at which his accounts will be audited, must he answer the demands made on him; but at every moment while he holds his office. His ears must be open to the cry of the subjects, even to their individual pleas for this and that, in order that through the particularity of the asking of the multitude he may discern the causes which the askers themselves perhaps do not fully understand. It is certain that they will not ask for anything without wanting something, and though they misinterpret their needs, a lack of understanding and response to the genuine need which is there will cause great suffering, upheaval and disorder. Not to understand is to betray the trust. Not to satisfy is to betray the trust.

Obviously an abstract knowledge will not be enough. Man must be loved to be understood. The ruler who regards his subjects as an aggregate of numbers or a gaping of mouths will be incapable of fulfilling his trust. To have his needs understood man must be known and loved in his wholeness; a multitude must be loved in their wholeness, not as a hundred thousand dots, dashes or blobs, but as a hundred thousand men with all which that implies. In the primary society of the family that love is taken for granted, but we are not advocating a system of paternal

government as the ideal. The men we know are not political children any longer, but grown up, independently-minded, and conscious of the advanced formation of their character and powers. Political society has come of age amongst us, and the bond between rulers and subjects is now to be sought for on the analogy of friendship rather than of family ties. Such a change of conception does not mean any lessening of authority, which gains in effectiveness in proportion to the devotedness of its love. That the ruler should ever seek rather to be loved than feared, in St. Augustine's words, is not applicable only to religious communities, but to all societies. For authority is a manifestation of union in society, and love is the prime means of attaining union. Fear itself only unifies by reason of a pre-existing love. Systems of government against which we are fighting to-day have shown their understanding of that. Germany was resurrected above all through the inspiration of love for the race and for the man. If the anti-Comintern powers succeed in any great and permanent achievement, it will not be because of their hatred of a common foe, but just so far as there lurks more or less hidden in their different ideologies the love of a common good. In England, in England, what is the good we have chosen for ourselves? Have we been so intent on our private pursuits that the common good has been accidental to them, so that the forces of one going this way, another that, have resulted accidentally in some little understood common direction? True, a great cry for Liberty has gone up. But was that a cry for a liberty well understood and freely chosen by each? Or was it a mere reaction against the false interpretation of another human and social need, authority? Was it raised through fear of something which would put a spoke in the wheel of the exclusively private, falsely selfish, impossible independence of each from each? Each cannot be independent of each, is not, is not able to be. From the beginning we are born from and into society. Solid together we must plan our

life together, live it together. Taking that necessity to our hearts, we shall be free. Following the common leadership we shall be free. Under the tyranny of loving trust we shall be free. But always and only if the plan settled on and entrusted to the direction of the ruler be like the plan written in man before he finds it, settled on by the Maker of man before man accepts it. That is not a plan for a money unit or a blood corpuscle, but for a man who needs wealth and blood, but is more, far more, than either.

Indeed, we must go further and while repeating that he needs society, say that he is far more than a need of human society. For he is a being which needs the society of its Maker, which will not shut out but will complete and bring to perfection human companionship. That need, too, though the earthly ruler cannot satisfy it, must be kept within his view and his love. Again and again it is real men who entrust their destiny to him, not abstractions. Wherever he can contribute to the well-being of these responsibilities of his he must do so, but he cannot do that by seeing their needs in isolation from each other; in the real man each need demands satisfaction only in the web of the whole. 'Be true to your animal instinct,' said Annable, the keeper, in *The White Peacock*. But he was like a ruler who thinks that because his business is with bread, man can live by bread alone; or a subject who thinks that because his prime responsibility is for his own welfare, that of his fellows may have to give way to it. Yet how can anyone be true to his animal or any other instinct if he is not true to the wholeness of his graced self? Or how can anyone be true to his own destiny without giving a true answer of help and encouragement to those others who as companions in the same journey are no other than he is himself. But if it is bread-for-man or peace-for-man that we want on earth, then we must work together for it and have direction in this work. Otherwise the private lines of force will spoil each other's



direction. The people must give, the ruler accept and use authority. The ruler must love the whole man, and each man must love the whole body of men; every man, that is, with whom he is one in society with all his needs; his need for authority as much as his need for liberty. Those needs were implanted by God; their fulfilment will mean a new imitation of God by his creatures; their working when fulfilled will not only bring about a more perfect resemblance to God in creation, but will contribute to men's reaching the vision of God face to face over and above the reflection of him they can get from creatures. They will have found their completion through the law of love.

It is one example of the working of this law that we have had before us, an example of the working of love in the kingdom of law, and of law in the kingdom of love. Law and love are not opposed; place them in opposition, and faction and war result. Law is a measure of activity, but first it must be a measure of man. Let it cease to measure man and it ceases to be law. Let activity cease to measure up to the standard of a law that measures man, let it cease to measure up to man himself in his wholeness, and it will incur the penalties of disobedience. Let love cease to be measured by the standard of man and of God, and it is not worthy of the name; it too will incur the penalties of disobedience. Let a man cease to measure up to the standard of the law of love, which is the law of laws, and he too, be he high or low, will fall short of the goal which is the measure of all things.

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