

# Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon's Articles in *La Liberté Pour Tous* (1848)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In his "Historical Introduction" to the English translation of Gaétan Bernoville's biography of Emmanuel d'Alzon, George Tavard identified five aspects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French historical context as crucial to an understanding of Fr d'Alzon's opinions and commitments. All of them are pertinent to a contextualizing of this first English translation of a series of articles Fr. d'Alzon wrote for the (short-lived) newspaper *La Liberté Pour Tous* (*Liberty for All*), published in Nîmes, in the course of the French Revolution of 1848.<sup>1</sup>

Most obviously applicable is "the impact of the French Revolution and the successive political regimes."<sup>2</sup> The Revolution of 1789 led to the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy and the establishment of the First Republic in 1792. That Republic was taken over in 1799 by Napoléon Bonaparte, who then established the First Empire, in 1804. Emmanuel d'Alzon was born, in 1810, under this Napoleonic regime.

Both the Revolution and Napoléon had an impact on the place of the Church in the life of the State. "Having changed the political order of the nation," Fr. Tavard explains, "the Revolution also decided to control the Church through a 'The Civil Constitution of the Clergy'[1790]."<sup>3</sup> In this is discernible another aspect of the historical context, namely "the heavy traces of Gallicanism that remained in French society and thought, whatever the political system of the day."<sup>4</sup> By the time Napoléon took over, the Revolution had decided to try out two other religious systems, devoted to the Goddess Reason and to the Supreme Being. Consequently, "the situation created by the Concordat, concluded between Napoléon and Pius VII in 1801,"<sup>5</sup> certainly warrants the prominence Fr. Tavard gives it in his framework for the life and times of Fr. d'Alzon. For our purposes it may also be possible to discern in this situation some trace of the Ultramontanism that will animate his involvement in Church/State relations.

Napoléon was deposed in 1815, and the Bourbon monarchy was restored. "The d'Alzon family," Fr. Tavard tells us, "welcomed the Restoration."<sup>6</sup> The restored Bourbons ruled, or at least reigned, until the Revolution of 1830, which sent Charles X into exile in England and established the "Bourgeois Monarchy" of Louis-Philippe, the Duc d'Orléans. The Bourbons had been absolutist Kings of France; Louis-Philippe was a more constitutional King of the French. Emmanuel d'Alzon's father had sat in the Chamber of Deputies during the Bourbon Restoration, but refused to serve the Orléanist regime. Nor did Fr d'Alzon, ordained in 1834, approve of Louis-Philippe.

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<sup>1</sup> Gaétan Bernoville, *Emmanuel D'Alzon* (Worcester: Bayard, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Thus when the Revolution of 1848 sent Louis-Philippe in his turn to exile in England, Fr. d'Alzon was not sorry to see him go. Fr. Tavard notes that "d'Alzon would have liked to see the Bourbon line restored,"<sup>7</sup> but there was no realistic prospect of this, and Fr. d'Alzon recognized that. Readers who come to these articles generally familiar with Fr. d'Alzon's political views might easily imagine how he must have responded to the declaration of the Second Republic; they will likely be very surprised to read his declaration that he himself is a Republican. Here a more personal and problematical aspect of the historical context comes to the surface – the influence of Félicité de Lamennais. That influence had been established when d'Alzon was a very young man; but by the time he came to be ordained Lamennais' writings had been condemned, and Pope Gregory XVI required d'Alzon's acceptance of that condemnation as a condition of his ordination.

Fr. Tavard explains that Fr. d'Alzon was "like the popes of the nineteenth century" in being "eager to combat the Revolution and to heal the wounds it had opened. But he also looked forward to a new type of relationship between the Church and the people," and in this it is evident that the influence of Lamennais persisted.<sup>8</sup> This also explains Fr. d'Alzon's republicanism.

And this brings us, finally, to the last two aspects of the historical context that Fr. Tavard argues is necessary for an understanding of Fr. d'Alzon: relations between the French state and Catholic education, and between Catholics and Protestants. Fr. d'Alzon had been in Paris at the outbreak of the revolution. A week before the revolution, he had seen François Guizot, Louis-Philippe's Prime Minister, about the independence of his school from state control. Guizot had promised him this, but then the revolution prevented the fulfilment of the promise.<sup>9</sup> Fr. d'Alzon returned to Nîmes on March 17, and began to write his articles. Guizot was from Nîmes, and was a Protestant. Protestants constituted a substantial minority of the citizens of Nîmes; and as the revolution and its consequences played out, we might be as surprised by Fr. d'Alzon's ecumenism as we had been by his republicanism.

I would like to thank Fr. Richard Lamoureux, A. A., for bringing these articles to my attention; Prof. Christian Gobel for the grant that got my translation underway, and Prof. Marc LePain for his advice at several points along the way. That I have retained "Cheers, Brothers" as a translation of *Salut et Fraternité* is no doubt only the most obvious of the infelicities that remain my own responsibility.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 111.

## 2 ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF D'ALZON'S ARTICLES IN *LA LIBERTE POUR TOUS* (1848)

### La Liberté pour tous, n° 3, 25 mars 1848, p. 1

Citizens of Paris,

You are often a heroic people, and you are sometimes the most ridiculous people in the world. You beat yourselves up admirably in order to overthrow the monarchy, but you give me the impression that you would like to be kings of France.<sup>10</sup> That would not work for us at all, we who live in the departments; we warn you.

So that your omnipotence might not be at all troubled, you do not want any troops in Paris. But permit me one question: are you in favor of regular troops, yes or no?<sup>11</sup>

If you do want regular troops, they have to be posted somewhere. And if Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Montpellier, or Nîmes do away with their garrisons, where will our poor conscripts go, to say nothing of their officers? Will you post them on the moon?

If, on the other hand, you want the regular troops disbanded, you will have the great goodness, when Tsar Nicholas sends an Army Corps against us, to mobilize *en masse* and march to the border and repel the invasion.<sup>12</sup> For the Departments, which obviously take a primitive view of the question, will spell out to you that they find the army a very fine thing; that soldiers prepared by intense training and hardened by glorious campaigning would do better against the enemy than inexperienced recruits, though recruited only from the boys of Paris. The rest of the country will wait to adopt your system until experience proves its superiority. Perhaps you may say, "Let each do what pleases him; we don't want to adopt that policy, and so we won't!" Oh, you illustrious Parisians! Haven't the privileges been abolished? After having written *Equality* on all the walls of the city, will you leave it hanging there until it dies? Will the right to have no garrison, when other cities will have them, not be a rather huge privilege?

I will go further: if there is one city in France that should have a garrison, it is Paris.

Have you not taken on yourself the honor of being the center of the French government? And, by the way, I must say that you have acted rudely toward the whole country by establishing the Provisional Government at your City Hall, as if the whole country were part of the municipality of Paris.<sup>13</sup> That is a point to which I will return; for the moment, it is not the main point.

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<sup>10</sup> "And Maistre adds that of all monarchies 'the hardest, most despotic and most intolerable is King People'" (Bernard Reardon, *Liberalism and Tradition*, 26).

<sup>11</sup> The regular troops would be of the French Army, as distinct from the National Guard. As the revolution unfolded in late February, some Parisian National Guard units declined to defend the government, and others joined the revolutionaries. The regular troops deployed to Paris attempted to defend the government, in the process killing and wounding about 150 of the Parisians who had taken to the streets.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholas I of Russia (r. 1825-1855). "On hearing word of the February revolution in Paris, Tsar Nicholas I is alleged to have burst into a palace ballroom, proclaiming, 'Saddle your horses gentlemen! A Republic has been declared in France'" (Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution*, 100).

<sup>13</sup> And yet, "municipal councillors rejected an attempt to transform the Paris municipal council into a revolutionary government" (William Fortescue, *France and 1848*, 65).

A national assembly is going to be held;<sup>14</sup> in it Paris will have 34 deputies, and France will have 866. Do you know that already some are claiming that if all the deputies don't vote with you, you will roast them like quails in their nests, or at the very least throw them out of the windows? Under those circumstances, would the votes be free? And if the votes aren't free, what becomes of the Republic and its equality?

On this point I have an idea to suggest. I would like for each deputy to choose from among his electors one hundred men, and for these men to form a guard for the people's representatives. You will furnish a contingent of 3,400 men for your 34 deputies. And for the whole time the Assembly sits, firearms will be forbidden to all except this guard, and the army, which would be deployed on the borders. Think about it – France has thirty-five million people; you have hardly anyone in Paris.

You have driven off one king: that's fine, and we thank you for it; but the country doesn't want you to impose on them a million kings.

Cheers, Brothers.<sup>15</sup>

### **La Liberté pour tous, n° 5, 30 mars 1848, p. 1**

When a new journal of opinion first appears, the first question one addresses to it is this: "What then are you?"

Our answer is easy: "We are Catholic republicans."<sup>16</sup>

WE ARE CATHOLICS, and that one may know it well, in the most absolute sense of the word. We are the humble children of the Catholic Church, apostolic and Roman. We approve what she approves, we condemn what she condemns, and, by the grace of God, we are ready and happy to shed the last drop of our blood for the defense of its commandments and doctrine.

WE ARE CATHOLICS: but, it must be said, in a larger sense than some seem to understand. Catholicism is for us a giant of eighteen centuries, who is always on the march, who is always growing; who seems sometimes to stop moving, but who, at the moment when one thinks it has faltered, stands up with a new majesty, a new energy, carrying humanity in its sturdy arms toward the immense horizons of the future.

WE ARE CATHOLICS and we consider this title as a reality and not as a mask. The triumph of the cause of religion is for us an end and not a means. Our most profound sorrow would be that one could ever confuse us with those vile and contemptible men who can be found holding every shade of opinion and professing every kind of belief, profaners of everything in the world that is most holy, who make of the conscience of the people and the innocence of their faith the instrument of their ambition and pride themselves on their sacrilege.

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<sup>14</sup> The election of the Constituent Assembly would be held on April 23.

<sup>15</sup> "Salut et Fraternité" was a standard republican greeting going back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic (Fortescue, 83).

<sup>16</sup> "In his newspaper, Father d'Alzon proclaimed himself to be a 'Catholic Republican,' i.e., a Catholic in favor of the Republic" (Bernoville, *Emmanuel D'Alzon*, 112).

WE ARE REPUBLICANS. It is also necessary to say why. We need to make clear the reasons for and the extent of our republicanism.<sup>17</sup>

WE ARE REPUBLICANS, because we recognize the fact that there is no going back to the past, and acknowledge the events and ideas that are establishing and consolidating democracy throughout Europe. We recognize this fact just as we recognize that between the spring equinox and the summer solstice the days are longer than the nights. One might wish it were otherwise, but the sun, as far as we know, has not yet taken our advice in regulating its movements.

WE ARE REPUBLICANS, because, for a century, the world has been moving toward democracy, and because there never has been such a universal movement without the will of God, the principle of all movement. Nor do we yet know who has the right to oppose the will of God.<sup>18</sup>

WE ARE REPUBLICANS, because after having waited for a long time, the Church, which is never hasty (since she is eternal), has just spoken in the voice of the Pope.<sup>19</sup> Do we believe that the European movement would have been so sure of itself, so fast moving, and, except for a few deplorable exceptions, so pure, without the intervention of this man whom God took by the hand in solitude, whom he suddenly invested with an incredible prestige of love and glory, and whom he placed at the helm of his boat, no longer only to save it from the reefs, but to guide it toward other seas, toward other horizons? It is evident to all thoughtful men that Pius IX is called to do even greater things than those accomplished by Gregory VII.<sup>20</sup>

WE ARE REPUBLICANS, because, understood in its true sense, democracy is the most rigorous application of the principles of Christianity, which recognizes no other inequality among the children of God than the inequality established by God himself, and which gives to them all the same liberty, the same bread, and opens to them the house of the same Father.

WE ARE REPUBLICANS, because Christianity, called to triumph over all, should show itself in all its forms, and confront all its challenges. It has already proven itself by the folly of the Cross of Christ, by the weakness of the witness of the Martyrs, and by the authority of the medieval church. The present time is destined to see the church extend its conquests with the arms liberty will forge for it. Perhaps you will now ask us: "Are you former-day or latter-day republicans?" We will answer: "Both." And this is how.

WE ARE REPUBLICANS of the former days,<sup>21</sup> in the sense that for a long time now we have understood the democratic movement. We were struck by this internal and subterranean labor, which everywhere and bit by bit was undermining all respect for authority. This scornful contagion, which had chilled so many hearts, did so much damage that the democratic enthusiasm necessary for this revolution was able to revive itself. And when democracy -- young, strong, and proud -- mounted the barricades as if they were its

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<sup>17</sup> Social republicans during the July Monarchy "tended to oppose revolutionary violence, support Christian morality and be restrained in their anti-clericalism, and to believe in patriarchy and the institution of the family" (Fortescue, 69).

<sup>18</sup> Tocqueville observes that after 24 February 1848 "priests again found the dogma of equality in the Gospel and assured us that they had always seen it there" (*Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848*, 78).

<sup>19</sup> Revolution had come to Italy before it came to France; on March 14 Pius IX had granted a constitution to the Papal States.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory VII was Pope from 1073-1085; he fought for Papal Primacy and against lay investiture.

<sup>21</sup> According to Maurice Agulhon, "republicans 'of long standing,' committed and convinced men who desired [a republic] for its own sake" (*The Republican Experiment: 1848-1852*, 1).

throne, with what feelings was it received by all the other parties? By all except men of faith, it was received with fear.

WE ARE REPUBLICANS of the latter days<sup>22</sup> because, if we were awaiting a republic, we were not expecting it so soon. Who was not surprised by it? The republicans themselves had yet only the most remote hopes. But when we saw the revolution accomplish its destructive work so naturally, so peaceably, and so simply, we remembered that one sometimes sees trees in forests that fall of their own accord; not uprooted by the wind or cut down by the ax, but only because the time has come for it to fall.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, we are Catholic republicans because if today in France and in Europe two things are made to be united, these two things are “religion and liberty, God and the people.”<sup>24</sup>

### **La Liberté pour tous, N° 5, 30 mars 1848, p. 2**

My pen trembles in my hand as I attempt to express the profound indignation that this letter stirs up in my soul.

Have Catholics who believed in liberty on February 25<sup>25</sup> been engaged in wishful thinking? I must speak frankly. They believed that the moderate monarchy of Louis-Philippe had brought with it those traditions of religious authority borrowed from the worst days of the Napoleonic Empire; and that each of them, relying on the strength of their rights and of liberty, would be able to live according to all that follows from their faith. It seems they were deceived. M. Carnot<sup>26</sup> has opened their eyes and made them see that not all the Pashas are in Turkey.<sup>27</sup>

This is a strange effect of power! These men, whom one would have thought level-headed, no sooner grab a scrap of power than they are made dizzy by I don't know what sort of persecuting fury, and are not content until they have found victims whom they can bring down as their prey.

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<sup>22</sup> According to Agulhon, these 'latter-day republicans' were prepared to accept a republic, but only in anticipation of an eventual restoration of the monarchy (1). They became republicans only once the revolution happened. According to Fr. Jean-Paul Périet-Muzet, A.A., “the events of 1848 made of [Fr. D'Alzon] a sort of *latter-day* republican, as he stated it” (Bernoville, 9).

<sup>23</sup> Tocqueville, comparing the revolution of 1848 to that of 1830, observed that “this time it was not a matter of overthrowing the government, but simply of letting it fall” (*Recollections*, 39).

<sup>24</sup> “Whereas the Roman Catholic Church had suffered from severe persecution during the revolution of 1789, in contrast the provisional Government invited representatives of the Roman catholic Church to participate officially in public ceremonies such as the planting of liberty trees” (Fortescue, 84).

<sup>25</sup> The Revolution began in the morning of Feb 24. Just after noon, King Louis-Philippe abdicated and fled. By evening, a provisional government had been formed.

<sup>26</sup> Hippolyte Carnot (1801-1888) was Minister of Public Instruction in the Provisional Government; he was “a pure republican, the son of a member of the Convention and a free thinker” (Agulhon, 62). But he had been a follower of Saint-Simon, who believed that “society should be governed by Christian principles” (Fortescue, 68), and “he declared himself against purely secular schools, holding that ‘the minister and the schoolmaster are the two columns on which rests the edifice of the republic’” (Britannica 1911). On the other hand, he “was very aware of the need to ‘make’ republicans and of the republican tradition that ideally education should be free, obligatory and secular” (Fortescue, 83).

<sup>27</sup> “In a circular to the French bishops of 11 March, Carnot announced a new system of state inspection of church schools” (Fortescue, 83).

Have courage, *Messieurs les commissaires!*<sup>28</sup> Carry on; don't let up! Are you not all-powerful? And do you not know that you will always have the backing of an irresponsible minister to affirm, whatever your despotism, that you have done well; and, alongside this minister, an office clerk charged with finding justifications for your undistinguished actions?

As for us, we had understood the Republic in a different sense. When you announced "liberty" to us, we believed that it would be for everyone, within the limits fixed by the laws of France. When you spoke to us of "equality," we hoped that whatever one person was free to do, another would be equally free to do. And when you proclaimed the Christian notion of "fraternity," we thought that, if our ministers and their subordinates were narrow-minded, they would have hearts large enough to let go of their petty grudges embittered by their petty passions, or that at least they would not encourage them. But we are not there yet; and as for those three sacred words, inscribed at the head of all acts of government, they will surely for a long time be only words.

We do not feel courageous enough to discuss the strange letter which inspires these reflections. And yet it will probably be necessary to return to it and to ask M. Carnot if, in his opinion, the Republic prohibits all "vows." For what then would become of the clergy? Have not all who are in orders taken a vow of chastity? Perhaps the Minister of Worship doesn't know this; it is good to teach it him. Or else the Republic only pushes back against some vows. It will be necessary for the Minister of Public Instruction to make known which ones he prohibits. Perhaps the vow to furnish a free education to the poor? Finally, we ask for clarification, for every Catholic who had believed until now that he had the right to make vows, even private ones, without being a traitor to the nation. All this would be completely ridiculous, if it were not profoundly odious.

Be that as it may, faithful to our title [*La Liberté pour tous*], we want "liberty for all," and we want it for ourselves. The endeavors of some underlings, supported by ministers who ought to have repudiated them, will not stop us. We know, and they know as well as we do, that we have the right on our side. Only we, in this instance, are the true defenders of republican principles. We have truly accepted them and will not permit them to be falsified by arbitrary power. We no more intend to suffer the brutal despotism of a few demagogues than the conservative tyranny that France has gotten rid of. Once more, we want liberty for all; and should we put our minds to it, we will have it.<sup>29</sup>

### **La Liberté pour tous, N° 10, 11 avril 1848, p. 1-2**

All rights are interdependent; all should be equally defended. Let one of them die, and we risk seeing all of them die. Those who, thinking only of themselves, believe that they can abandon the rights of others in order to hold on the tighter to their own, soon come to see that their cowardly betrayal recoils fatally upon themselves.

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<sup>28</sup> "Between 26 February and 9 March the Orleanist prefects and the self-appointed committees which had taken over the local administration in thirty departments were replaced, not by prefects, but by *commissaires*, the new title deliberately evoking the official terminology of the First Republic" (Fortescue, 81).

<sup>29</sup> In August of 1844 Fr. D'Alzon had written to Mother Marie Eugenie, in explanation of the "moral basis" of the religious order that he was founding, that "I know nothing stronger with which to fight against the present enemies of the Church than freedom" (Bernoville, 103).

This principle, at this moment, so strikingly applies that it seems necessary to illustrate it at length. During the last 18 years,<sup>30</sup> what abuses of power has one part of the nation inflicted on the rest? Had the middle classes not intended to bend everything to its own middling level; that is to say, to make everything mediocre?<sup>31</sup> What have they done with their “liberty”? Freedom of association has been reduced to the right to do business, for the benefit of speculators; freedom of the press was strangled by the September laws;<sup>32</sup> the freedom to teach has been muzzled by academic obstacles. Thought has been a threat to those preoccupied with material interests. They have monopolized their property rights, and so created two nations.

And so,<sup>33</sup> when the time came for the monarchy to fall, what was the amazement of those men who, with so many voters and elected officials on their side, so many civil servants and so many aspiring to government positions, and having been grateful that all their political ambitions were available for sale, they saw not “the people” they had imagined, but the true *people*, with their disappointed patience, their well-prepared organization, their legitimate demands, a courage more formidable than bayonets and cannon, and a sense that though their rights had long been denied them, they would now triumph over the despotic pretensions of the bourgeois monarchy, the Bastille in which it took refuge, and the grapeshot of which there was not even a whiff!

But when these things had been brought about, a new era began in France. She resumed the course of her glorious destiny; she felt new blood surging through her veins; she understood that she needed to further the providential prospects with a more pure devotion, more numerous sacrifices; because it is only by sacrifice and devotion that nations, like individuals, achieve their moral greatness and become worthy to march at the head of humanity.

But, for France to maintain her leading place, which today Europe accords her without question, she must not forget what makes for her strength as a nation and whence comes her influence over Europe. Is it not because we are recognized as missionaries of liberty that we are acknowledged as having seniority among civilizations? Well, this liberty, which we proclaim from on high and broadcast among the seething masses, agitates them, unsettles them, rouses them to every mischief. It must imbue our institutions; it must above all pervade our mores. There is the true problem we must resolve.

Unfortunately, serious obstacles can arise between the people and the splendid future that is offered to them. For too long they were given disastrous examples; I am afraid that they might emulate them. In this way the men who reckon everything according to monetary

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<sup>30</sup> 1830-1848: the time of the July Monarchy. “I did live in the parliamentary world of the last years of the July Monarchy, but I would find it difficult to give a clear account of that time, which is so close, but which has left so confused an impression on my memory. I lose the thread of my recollections amid the labyrinth of petty incidents, petty ideas, petty passions, personal viewpoints and contradictory projects in which the life of public men in that period was frittered away” (Tocqueville, 4).

<sup>31</sup> The spirit of the middle class “was active and industrious, often dishonest, generally orderly, but sometimes rash because of vanity and selfishness, timid by temperament, moderate in all things except a taste for well-being, and mediocre...” (Tocqueville, 5).

<sup>32</sup> The September laws (1835) followed an attempt on 28 July to assassinate King Louis-Philippe. He was wounded, as were over 20 others. Eighteen were killed. Three men were convicted and executed. “The most important bill concerned the press” (Collingham, 166).

<sup>33</sup> “Private interests ruled: the opposition wanted ministries; ministerialists demanded rewarding functions; electors chose deputies who most suited their interests” (Collingham, 386).

profit or political influence have trampled on rational thought and speculated in contempt for all that is most sacred in religious faith. What a terrifying responsibility for this is borne by certain newspapers and those who encourage them; and even by the many who read them! They have become accustomed to considering nothing of worth but material things, and all that is involved in schemes to acquire and enjoy material things.

And here come the people to say to these men of wealth and pleasure, "You have wanted everything for yourselves. It seemed to you that in order for you to be able to not worry and be happy this century, you should not permit us to possess even our conscience. And you have destroyed in us, by every means, the faith that made it live at the bottom of our hearts. In your fear that we might feel too strongly that we were men, you have not wished to leave us even what would be able to console us for being deprived of what you enjoy; you have wanted to reduce us to the fate of those unfortunates who 'have lost the good of intellect.' It is our turn now! Give us an account of those material goods that you possess and seem uniquely keen on."

Thus speaks the people. Are they wrong? Yes, I think so; for if the law of reprisal is sometimes permitted, it never is, however just some provocations would seem to make it, when it would have the effect of undermining the foundations of society. Where the powerful have disregarded and so violated the rights of men, shall we now disregard the ones they respected, because they enjoyed them? Where does that sort of logic lead? What's to be done, then? The people must avenge themselves for the contempt of their rights by maintaining the rights of all, and for their selfish exclusion from them by their generous extension of them. This is the only worthy vengeance. And so the people, if they want to be worthy of the mission they are taking on today, must remember that to destroy property rights is to destroy the right to work, and that to destroy the right to work is to destroy, in principle, freedom itself, since it is to deny the right whereby each man can accord some value to his labor.

Therefore – respect for property and everything involved in property! Respect for the transfer of property! Respect for the family, for whom the transfer of property is made! Is it not the most sublime proclamation of human liberty that something of it survives to provide for the future by the distribution of property even from beyond the grave? But the society that is taking shape will not concern itself only with respect for property; it will concern itself as well with the successive development of all the rights men are able to claim; and this development seems achievable only in freedom and with the agreement of all to defend the rights of each.

Yes, all rights should receive their legitimate satisfaction: rights of association, which apply alike to industrial and intellectual labors; rights of thought, which wants to be able to express itself freely in all its forms; the rights of the family, which wants, with the inheritance of its material goods, to be able to transmit a no less valuable heritage of principles and sentiments; the rights of the citizen, who wants only to obey laws that apply equally to all; the rights of the individual, who wants to develop himself according to the capacities imparted to him by Providence.

All of this wants studying, to be sure, in greater detail; and we will return to it: but from today we hold to everything comprising this line of thought. Nothing the future will bring will endure but where everyone feels the need to unite in defense of everyone's rights, and where respect for the just demands of each person is established in principle. In a word, all this will come about in liberty and in unity. Or, if these are two words rather than one, let me put them into a single old saying from Nîmes: *Ex Unitate Libertas*.

**La Liberté pour tous, N° 10, 11 avril 1848, p. 2**

Citizen Editor,

Are you some sort of wimp? You sometimes come out with notions that are presentable enough, but then you quickly put them away. You presented yourself to the public with a large ensemble of new ideas, to scare your readers; and when they in their fright cried that you and your followers were “perfidious,” “pedants,” “lightweights,” “basilisks,” “dynastics,” “neophytes,” “late-comers,” etc., etc., you doffed your cap to them, you felt your hearts full of disreputable tenderness toward them, you assured them that they understood you well, and that you understood them (ah! Traitor!); that basically you all had the same principles; that they were the *national* party (but would that be the *National* party?).<sup>34</sup> These days, I would love to hit you over the head with a stout stick -- I’m sure you’ll thank and embrace me.

Citizen, believe me, we don’t get here by beating around the bush. Guizot, Guizot-like as he was, sometimes had ideas like anyone else. He had taken for a motto these words: “The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.” If he had always followed his own advice, he would not be trying to follow his mistress across the Channel.<sup>35</sup>

So believe me, you must walk a straight line from now on, and continue the work you have begun. From among the three brilliant new ideas you come up with every week, allow me to take note of one, which I’m sure you would otherwise leave by the wayside. You have proposed the formation of a “Club,” and then this proposal, like so many others, was carried off by the wind. I have caught wind of it and brought it back – I second your proposal of a “Club.”

I can see you now, putting your heads in your hands and letting out a low moan, terrified that I might be wanting to reignite the civil war. Alas, my dear citizen, I am no doubt a great villain, a *sans-culotte*, a Jacobin; but when I have an idea in my head, I don’t step on it. I believe therefore that we must form a Club as soon as possible, and I will tell you why. In the first place, such a Club will be formed whether you like it or not – remember that. So the only question is whether it would not be better to take charge of what you would not be able to prevent. Fénelon says somewhere that a prince should sometimes risk doing the wrong thing rather than do nothing. Since we are all princes these days, I apply this maxim to you, to myself, and to all my neighbors.

Yes, citizen, something must be done, and if you ask me what, I say, form a Club. You will do that, then? And if my help would be of use to you, I offer it to you with the loyalty you know well. But, you will say, why a Club rather than something else – a petition, or a procession, as our Parisian friends have done? Dear citizen, these things will come later; for the moment, I am determined to begin at the beginning. Now, a “Club,” in a republican moment, is the beginning of everything.

In the Clubs, we plan our marches;

In the Clubs, we prepare for elections;

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<sup>34</sup> *Le National* was a newspaper founded in 1830 by Thiers among others, to support the Orléanist regime. In 1834, it became republican.

<sup>35</sup> Dorothee van Benckendorff, Princess of Lieven (1785-1857).

In the Clubs, we sign petitions;  
In the Clubs, we consult the people;  
In the Clubs, we demand explanations from the government;  
In the Clubs, we organize our civil disobedience;  
In the Clubs, we disseminate the ideas that reflect the sentiments of the people, but that they want us to develop for them.

Now the people of Nîmes understand, with an admirable instinct, that their political education is incomplete on many points. They complain that hardly any devoted and intelligent men will have anything to do with them. I have sometimes listened to them, and have heard them murmur that indeed we leave them too much to themselves, and take too little account of their concerns. If I heard right, when the departmental committee in Montpellier removed some names from the list of candidates, the people responded: "you make your lists, and we will make ours!" This is serious, citizen; for if they do as they say, how would you undertake to send to the Assembly those candidates whom you have so forcefully and eloquently supported?

But you will ask me, "Are not these Clubs very dangerous? Was it not such Clubs that produced all the horrors of '93?" Yes, citizen, the Clubs produced lots of horrors; so have swords and pistols in the hands of assassins and robbers. And rifles, if you will! – this is no doubt why the Municipal Commission, in its maternal solicitude, does not permit National Guardsmen to take home the ones they are issued; and, I hear, has stripped the flints from their muskets. But if all these weapons are suppressed, fire also involves a lot of inconveniences. If there weren't fire, houses would never burn down; nothing would catch fire anymore; we wouldn't even have to worry about burning our fingers with a candle. But if we suppress fire, what about water? What evils does water not cause? Remember the Rhône floods! Consider that, if there were no more water, we would not need umbrellas. See – the more water we have, the more floods; the more umbrellas we have, the more rain. I vote for the suppression of the sea, for the rivers and streams, brooks and springs, even the clouds. Too bad for drinkers of water! They will be reduced to drinking wine, and then the price of it will go up!

These reasonings, my dear citizen, seem to me every bit as effective as those you sometimes apply to the inconveniences of other things. Do you believe that your purpose in the world is to make us understand that everything has its drawbacks? A Club has its own, just as fire, water, swords, pistols, and rifles do. You will have to anticipate and attenuate them; to make them go away, if you can; but the Club will inevitably arise. Only if respectable men become involved will they be able to do some good; if these men remain on the outside, it will carry on with abuses and excesses the consequences of which cannot be foreseen but which could only be attributed to heedlessness and fear.

Nîmes, 9 April 1848

Cheers, Brother.

### **La Liberté pour tous, N° 18, 27 avril 1848, p. 1-2**

The legislative elections. The elections are finally over; their results will soon be known all over France, and if the movement which has brought about this this grand act of popular

sovereignty does not settle down on the street, at least the apprehensions of those who were dreading disunity among the friends of order will be dispelled henceforth. Perhaps we want to prove that we have made some sacrifices for that universally felt need for unity and agreement, to send to the Assembly men who would offer the most assured guarantees of their love of the great laws of justice and brotherhood, without which no society can found itself. We have left off making the case for an opinion that already had many supporters; we have not protested against certain choices which seemed deplorable to us. But today the situation is changing, and it is certainly permitted to those who do not approve of the course it has taken to prepare in advance for happier results, if not for this solemn assembly then at least for those which will regularly assemble, when France will have definitively placed the first stones for the new building.

Let us begin by protesting a principle which has served as a rule for electoral operations in a great number of departments, and which appears to us fundamentally narrow. In many preparatory meetings, people were preoccupied only with the question of locality; they looked for the men who had the most influence in this part of Paris, or that provincial town, and then cried, "Here is our candidate; we don't want any other!"

We state emphatically that to proceed in such a manner is disastrous. In the first place, if it is true that a man exercises a real influence in one part of the country, wouldn't we often want him to stay there to keep the peace and prevent unrest, should it unfortunately arise? In the second place, should this big fish in the small pond of his village or neighborhood be put at risk of finding himself one of the smallest fish in the big pond, one of the honorable mediocrities that proliferate wherever they become ambitious but have limitations and inabilities that compromise rather than serve their cause?

It is not entirely clear to me that this National Assembly of 1848 will be, any more than any other such assemblies that figure in our history, a supreme tribunal whose members, representing a diversity of views, make the case for them before the entire nation; that these representatives were chosen in the first place to defend the national interest not because they are personally likeable but because they are best suited and most able to successfully defend the interests thus entrusted to them; and that we thus don't need to consider how much zealous affection might be brought to bear upon a question, but what sober ability will bring about a solution. For in either case, the efforts being honest, we must above all be concerned with final results.

We should still be critical, from another point of view, of the system adopted by the departments; and here we need the courage to say just what we think, since we already know that a great many people will disapprove of it.

We have been too exclusive. We already know what you will say. The measures of exclusion did not come from the Catholic side; they were, for their part, only reprisals. We have followed the example given after generous advances. We will respond, for our part, that when an example is a bad one, it is always wrong to follow it, and that when we are strongest, we feel good about having been generous, even toward those who refuse to be grateful.

We repeat what we have said before: after the elections, whose results will soon be definitively known, unity will be even more necessary for our city than for any other. If Nîmes wants to play, in the future of the nation, the important part to which it has been called, it must be united; all of its citizens, Catholic and Protestant, must regard it as a sacred duty, as an obligation of conscience, to erase from their hearts and minds all the outdated remains of their distrust and resentment; they must understand that the toleration of an opinion or

belief that is different or even hostile, alongside the toleration of their own, is a necessary exercise of liberty, and the price of securing it. Whoever are the winners of the electoral struggle; whatever names emerge, tomorrow or perhaps this evening, from the ballots cast by the entire department, everyone should be ready to accept, with all that follows from it, the political principle of majority rule. But I could not recommend too highly to those who are going to obtain the benefits of this principle, amply applicable to the present elections, the practice of the two virtues that are essential for every true republican, moderation and fraternity. They must never forget that accepting an electoral loss can be the duty of the minority only to the extent that the attitude of the triumphant majority and the use it makes of its victory renders that acceptance peaceful and honorable.

There has been a great deal of complaining about the persistent ability of a certain minority. We for our part find that they are perfectly within their rights to be so able and persistent. When one is weakest, one must try to be as able as possible. Now, who does not know that today, in the department of Gard, this minority no longer makes up even a third of the population? All of the religious dissenters taken together comprise scarcely one-twelfth of the total population of France. In the face of these incontestable statistics, one would like them to throw up their hands, but they won't; Protestant resentments are implacable; they are eternally distrustful. Why are you Catholics surprised by this? True charity can be found only where there is truth. But that is precisely why Catholics should respond to Protestant hostility and distrust with that charity that only Catholics can have, because it is one of the glories of the Catholic Church. Catholicism should be above all partisanship; let us not debase it by answering insult with insult, passion with passion; let us not in this way reduce our church to the pettiness of a sect.

After three centuries of war, division, and struggle, reconciliation can come only through persuasion and progress, which most people, and the most powerful, must always respect. We bitterly regret that this conviction failed to carry the day when the Catholics chose their candidates.

Will we have only a few critical words for this? God forbid; for once we have said what we think, however severe that may be, we will observe the mysterious workings of that tendency for parties to be brought, often without knowing it, to a new situation which even then most of them won't understand. Apart from the anarchists who hope to seize the republic for the benefit of their ambitions, and whose deceptions have exceeded their ambitions, there are those who have noticed that everyone wants to take up his liberty and to take back his rights. Is it not admirable to see the open and honest cooperation which, on all sides, is contributing to our new society? Are not the most intelligent leaders of the previously opposed parties (we are not speaking of those who make declarations like the one that appeared the other day in the *Gazette de France*) offering their cooperation without any ulterior motives? Does not their nobility of character rule out all suspicion of insincerity? The masses follow them in this, trembling to be sure, but carried away despite themselves onto unknown seas, and, like the king of the Vandals, sail toward whatever shores it pleases God to point them. Where are they actually going? God only knows; but all men of courage know that if hope is a Christian virtue, it is also, in times of great crisis for nations, a political virtue. And this sentiment, despite some timid protests, is too universal not to rest on something true.

**La Liberté pour tous, N° 21, 2 mai 1848, p. 1**

Catholics – about the painful events that have just taken place:<sup>36</sup> the blood of your brothers has flowed, and one trembles at the thought of what the rage of a few madmen might have led to if the moderation of those from whom you take advice and guidance had not made you restrain the feelings of anger which the insolent attack stirred up in your hearts. Don't delude yourselves about these attacks: however furious they may seem, they conceal a skillfully organized plan. It is important that you uncover it, to avoid falling into the trap set for you.

The men who can't get used to the idea that they will no longer be in command of Paris as they were for eighteen years, would like to commandeer the Republic for their own purposes. They can't bear to think that, under a regime of equality, they will be only your equals. They would like, in order to recapture the power lost along with the July Monarchy, to coerce you to murmur against the new institutions and to set themselves against you as their defenders. Your admirably good judgment has understood that these institutions would protect you against them, and you have faithfully embraced them. You knew that, under the Republic, the liberty long denied you would finally be granted and that they would no longer be able to keep you from enjoying the rights common to all Frenchmen.

But if you entered openly onto this path, there would no longer be any reason to denounce you; the lies of your accusers would then become too obvious. How then could they refuse you the exercise of your rights? And from the moment that the emergency law no longer applied to you, would your adversaries, reduced to their own devices, be able to oppress you with the tyranny of their minority?

What they wish more than anything else is that you should thus furnish them evidence for their indictment; they would then be able to consider you incapable of choosing magistrates to administer your cities and officers to serve in the National Guard. They would then quickly set up for you a new absolute monarchy; and while the rest of France carries on its glorious march toward a greater "liberty," a more complete "equality," and an ever more fortified "fraternity," you will be cast as a "fanatical and backward population," unworthy of the benefits of the revolution; and so that you may learn to merit them one day, they will bend your necks beneath the pleasant yoke of these innocent citizens who shoot at unarmed women and children and who respond to your songs of joy with a whiff of grapeshot. It does not take a great mental effort to discover that this is where your adversaries want to lead you; and you will inevitably get there, if, pushed to the limit by their provocations, you resort to the same kinds of reprisals, which you must realize are just what they want.

What? Are you saying that we should let them cut our throats without defending ourselves? When they are limbering up to kill our brothers, should we keep our arms folded?

Catholics! When men of courage want to attain a difficult goal, they should expect many sacrifices, and should be ready to make them. If you only want to hear about your grievances, which are no doubt justified, but untimely, then you will prepare cartridges, procure firearms, and kill those people who kill yours. But then don't count on serving in the National Guard; don't hope to be permitted to elect your Municipal Council; you will be

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<sup>36</sup> "In Nîmes clashes occurred between Protestant republicans and royalist Catholics, after it became clear that Protestant voters had refused to vote for Catholic Legitimist candidates. Catholics retaliated by largely taking over the local National Guard, which led to further trouble" (Fortescue, 98).

treated like a seditionist, as an enemy of the Republic; you can expect only a redoubling of your servitude and humiliation.

Besides, in urging you to renounce violence, we do not forbid you to pursue other means, that are powerful in other ways. All of France, which you will have called to witness to your long patience, convened in a few days in the National Assembly, will render you justice in the end, when your deputies will tell them of the wrong done to you that you have not returned in kind. Already those who love you and who know that in Paris, as in the rest of France, the elections have just delivered the final blow to the hopes of the terrorists, have appealed to the members of the Provisional Government who seem to be on the side of the victors. And their complaints, you can be sure, will not be without effect, if they are able to show that, when insulted, you held your tongue; when afflicted, you maintained your patience; and that when incited to civil war, you preferred to endure it rather than expose yourself to the reproach of disturbing and distressing your country, just when it most needed calm and peace to finish the work of its transformation.

So it is up to you to choose either to remain oppressed longer, or to become free by repressing your anger and knowing how to control yourselves.

If we speak to you in this way, it is because we believe you are able to hear it. Why would you not continue to show the restraint you have shown up to now, and so refute the calumnies that have been spread against you? Don't you know that for a long time they have represented you as tigers thirsting for the blood of your brothers? Show that if any blood has been shed, it has been yours alone. They always triumph in the end who can cast defiance at the earth and sky...

The time is coming when the truth no longer wants to be defended except by arms worthy of her. Look about you – see the example furnished by Catholic Ireland. To what state was it not reduced, scarcely a half-century ago? With what atrocious cruelties did England not torture her? Many times, this noble nation had tried to break its chains; but always crushed by her rival, she fell back under the weight of a tyranny the details of which our soul refuses to believe. Finally, God had pity on this poor people who were suffering so much. He raised up O'Connell; and when this man, whose genius was increased tenfold by his love for his brothers, began his work of liberation, how did he proceed? Did he arm himself? Did he call for war against the tyrants? Did he ask Ireland to break its fetters over the heads of its oppressors? No – he preached order and restraint. In the name of laws, he demanded respect for all. For a long time what he said was not understood; but as a result of patient struggle and peaceful effort, he obtained the liberation of his country and the confirmation of its freedom.

Catholics of Nîmes, do you want to reclaim your lost rights? Leave to your adversaries the ways that are unworthy of you; leave to them the unexpected attacks, the shots fired, the violence. Take the courageous resolution not to defend yourselves except by the very force of your rights. That is a weapon that you do not really know how to carry; but it is the only one that you will want to carry from now on, and the only one that will do you any good. Maintain your moderation, and the prejudices which your adversaries seek to stir up in the troops sent to keep the peace will give way before the evident facts. Treat those soldiers as brothers, and they will never think of turning on you. Let them carry out freely the orders of their officers; and they, in a position to judge for themselves, will do you the justice you deserve. Once again, be moderate, and among your adversaries those who are decent men will be ashamed of the way the madmen are carrying on. While these men throw themselves into their odious

excesses, the others will understand that you are the only friends of order and will come to ask you for protection even as they offer you their cooperation. This movement will not be accomplished today or tomorrow; but tomorrow, or even today, you will be able to begin to prepare for it. And what more noble mission could there be than to make peace reign where war has raged for so long! Finally, remember who you are. To be Catholic is to be Christian; and no one is a Christian who cannot forget an insult. For twenty years, you have been forgiving many times; for you would not have gone so often to your churches, to kneel before your altars, if forgiveness had not been at the bottom of your hearts. Why do you not restore it? When Christ, on the cross, prayed for his executioners, he gave to the world saved by his death the secret of the power contained in the sentiment of forgiveness. The basic knowledge of this superhuman strength seems to fade away every day. It is for you, who have the most to forgive, to affirm anew your rights in this matter and make God your ally in the cause, imitating him in the most magnificent use he has made of his power.

### **La Liberté pour tous, N° 24, 9 mai 1848, p. 1-2**

A humble grave received on Friday evening the mortal remains of Etienne Igonny, a victim of the attack of April 27. A very large and sad crowd formed the funeral procession for this child of the people, among whom were Messrs Emile Teulon and Oct. Troupel and several protestant officers of the National Guard. We thank them for that; we appreciate their thoughtfulness. Moreover, if they noticed everywhere a profound affliction, they nowhere caught a glimpse of irritation. The dying breath of a Christian who forgives his death always spreads abroad a virtue that mollifies the most embittered hearts.

Protestants of Nîmes, will we have to endure these painful days again and again? Can we be permitted to hope that both sides will feel the need to put an end to these cruel struggles, and leave the horrible responsibility for them to the men whom all respectable opinion finds repellent? As for us, we believe the time has come for all honest and courageous men to engage in the work of reconciliation, requiring the greatest of sacrifices. This is what we had in mind when we took for our motto *Liberty for All*. Were we wrong to think that the idea contained in the title of our newspaper would provide a neutral ground on which we could one day meet and finally unite?

For a moment France, shaken by deep-seated and fast-moving tremors, thought it saw all the parties which were tearing it apart brought closer together by the same need for unity. It was a brief moment, certainly, for many; but the desire for reconciliation remained whole and undivided in our souls. We want to try, for as long as we can, to bring this about, to the extent that we can; this is one of the purposes of *Liberty for All*.

To achieve this reconciliation, we had to make for ourselves a position apart from others; this we did, at the risk of offending respectable sensibilities. When, in a duel, the duelers have already crossed swords and a mutual friend, hoping to stop the conflict, throws himself between them, he is liable to be wounded by both of them. That is the situation we are in; we have been misunderstood, but we do not complain.

It took some time for people to appreciate the inflexible line we are resolved to walk. We also had to expect to anger those who are confounded by our purposes. This anger is evident in their abuse of us, for which we do not reproach you; surely you disavow the

rhetoric of those officious partisans who entirely lack your capacity, just as we would be unhappily embarrassed if ever our cause had such defenders.

Neither do we reproach you because there are among you those irreconcilable types who don't know who they are but know whom they detest, whose hatred generates all their energy; nor on account of those clever fellows who speculate about everything and so figure out how much influence can be had from the exploitation of what opinions. These men are a nuisance and a disgrace to all parties. If we thought that we would find only such men among you, it would be quite foolish to reach out to you.

Rather we are convinced that there are among you as there are among us a great many men who yearn for the peace that only order can bring and who wonder whether, after three centuries of discord, God might permit the people of France to remember that they are brothers, that they are all sons of one fatherland.

It is to such men that we address ourselves. It is to them that we offer peace. Do you want this peace? Here are the principles on which we propose it to you.

That modern societies, in developing more broad-minded principles, prepare for new relations among fellow citizens, no one dreams of disputing these days. A greater respect for the opinions of others and a more formal recognition of the rights of all are, we believe, the obvious and immediate outcome of the struggles of the past. This we consider the first benefaction of the future. And so, before all else, we insist on 'liberty for all.' We will remain Catholic, and you will remain Protestant; for we respect you enough to take you at your word in professing that faith, and expect that you would not so insult us as to question our profession or disparage what it means to us. Rather, with each of us retaining his faith, together we will efface from the past what would remind us of our too-longstanding hatreds. What would be the point of recriminations? You could indulge in them, and we could just as much; but where would that bring us? Haven't we already set out on another path, and is it not true that by pursuing this path men who until now have been sundered will finally be able to encounter each other? The notion of reconciliation is evident everywhere and occupies the minds of the most high-minded. Consider the truly prophetic warning offered to Louis-Philippe by an adviser to Pius IX; there you see that at the very center of the Catholic faith is the liberty of conscience.

And yet, you will say to us, have you always spoken in this way about this issue? Not always, it is true; no more than you have. The liberty of conscience is less an immutable dogma than it is both the consequence and the principle of social change. It is a consequence of it, because after much upheaval, after a thousand diverse opinions have contended with each other, no one has the right to say, I am now going to impose my own. The liberty of conscience is the principle of social change, because it alone illuminates those peaceful discussions after which the well intentioned, compelled by the need to be unified, are able to find within themselves the same Christian charity, even as they anticipate being able to meet each other within the same faith.

We want this liberty for you, in order to have it more securely for ourselves. Do you want it on the same terms? But could this liberty be sustained, the same for all, if not all have equal rights?

Under the previous regime, you were in power because you considered yourselves the friends of those in power over us. Would you strike the same deal with the new regime? Do Catholics, who sincerely accept the Republic, not have the same rights you have, from the

moment that, understanding the dispositions of Providence, they demand in the management of the nation's affairs only what is due them and what they duly accord to you? This is the only way, it seems to us, to put an end to our misunderstandings. They will all disappear, we are convinced, as soon as on both sides honorable men work earnestly toward a common goal, in respectful devotion to the rights and interests of all. We have often heard it asked: why these permanent religious distinctions? Why this eternal antagonism between Catholics and Protestants? Isn't it time to bring this religious dissension to an end? Shouldn't the Republic recognize only republicans? No one thinks this more than we do; and in accord with the confidence shown by the Provisional Government, which the National Assembly will soon evince herself, we ask that all prejudice be put aside and that everyone be treated with an impartial equality. For you can be sure that if we are determined, as our past conduct promises, not to deny such treatment to others, so are we determined to maintain the rights the Republic gives us and to fight unceasingly against whoever intends to take them from us. One thing will surprise you, perhaps; that past conduct of ours. There are two reasons for it, which we would like to explain to you. In the first place, we are more numerous, and where the majority rules those who are most numerous end up the strongest. It follows that the strongest come before the weakest, though weakness has its dignity, which we must always take into account. In the second place, we are Catholic – we believe that we have the truth, and that you are in error. The truth alone is eternal, whereas error, which must sooner or later come to an end, runs its course in two stages: the one is of development, when it is contagious, and one could not flee from it or avoid it enough; the other is of decadence, when it begins to exhaust itself, is no longer dangerous, and one can approach it, to show those who soon will find no more shelter under its ruins the road to the homeland, long lost to them.

Will you be angry with us for saying that you are no longer dangerous? But what good would it do to disguise the fact? Let us leave aside those – and there are too many of them – who are Catholic or Protestant only in name; let us address ourselves only to those who are still Christian. How many are there, among these, who are counting on the future of their faith? And what is this faith? In the midst of so much instability and division, what do they think will become of it by the end of the century?

We think that after you have debated for a little longer about all the difficult complexities, you will break up into two main factions. One of them, pursuing its principles to their inevitable and necessary conclusion, will part ways with Christianity; the other one, terrified of the abyss toward which their merciless logic pushes them, will turn back and, there being no place of rest along the way they had come, will return to us in the end, as some enlightened Englishmen have done. Wanting to make it easy for them to return, we open our arms to them already.

Protestants of Nîmes, such are our inmost thoughts, and the reflections which your situation suggests to us. Do you see in them, on our part, the least sense of ill will or bitterness? Do you believe that you will be able one day to get along with men who so want to get along with you? And do the ideas we express seem clear- and broad-minded enough that you won't feel you have to take issue with them? If our language toward you seems sincere, why not listen to it? Do the deplorable conflicts which have recently taken place seem to you to delay again the desired reconciliation? Ah! From the depths of this tomb we have just closed, around which many of you just joined in our mourning, we have not heard any call for vengeance. The last words of the victim we have laid to rest there were words of

forgiveness. We cannot offer you that forgiveness; we can offer you only peace, peace supported by the most straightforward freedom and the most uncompromised equality. Let us have faith that these will one day bring about in our hearts a true fraternity. We are ready for this, because we feel it, even though there are some men among you who, carried away by their passions, still attack our brothers. They may plunge us into the deepest grief, but they will never make us hate you.

### **La Liberté pour tous, N° 31, 20 mai 1848, p. 1**

The newspapers today are full of the details of the riot that has just failed to upend the Assembly.<sup>37</sup> We will surely need some time to arrive at a reasonable assessment of these criminal endeavors; but already it is possible to discern the warnings that follow from the known facts. In a time of revolution, when events happen fast, one must think on the run.

The riot was put down, fortunately.<sup>38</sup> We thank God that we did not fall into the hands of Barbès, Blanqui, and Raspail!<sup>39</sup> This time, we are free to breathe, and terror will not set up its bloody scaffold in the public square. For now, the danger will not come from there. But if the danger couldn't come from anywhere else, we would be less afraid of the rioters than of the reaction that would be brought about by the very fear of the riot. The profound peace which we have enjoyed for thirty years has made us soft; we have taken refuge in a love of comfort, and whatever troubles our placid enjoyment of it worries, agitates, and terrifies us. Some of the most comfortable liken this riot to the Terror of '93, and use it like a Medusa's head nailed to what they call the shield of Public Safety, which they hope will petrify those who are most courageous, who think that liberty and the duty to defend it by all means worthy of it is more important than untroubled repose.

Already under the preceding regimes the ministers knew the power of fear, and one could say that the cabinet of every president of the Council was the sanctuary of this goddess, to which the Romans themselves sacrificed, as everyone knows.

As for us, unfortunately the old ministers have left but the fear remains. The new government will bow before that altar, devote themselves to that cult, and, if nothing impedes their devotion they will push for a most oppressive reaction.

What, indeed, makes for the majority in the Assembly? Is it not the dynastic left? And who makes up the National Guard of Paris? Are they not those good bourgeois who every day shed tears for Louis-Philippe – not, to be sure, on account of his own virtues or prestige, but because of the money he made them make, the funds he caused to rise, the properties he let them rent, the businesses he made to pay, the material well-being he made to reign. They no longer have Louis-Philippe, so they dream, they and the dynastic left, of his grandson the Count of Paris – well, they don't dream of the reign of a nine-year-old child, but of the regency

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<sup>37</sup> A demonstration on May 15 that disrupted the Constituent Assembly. That assembly, elected on April 23, was more moderate than the mob of February 24. The Assembly was not very well defended.

<sup>38</sup> "The troops, National Guardsmen drawn from the more respectable *quartiers*, surrounded the Chamber, expelled the invaders and arrested those leaders who were most prominent either by reason of their behavior or of their personality" (Agulhon, 52).

<sup>39</sup> "The more competent of the political leaders of 15 May do not appear to have planned to turn their show of strength into a takeover of power. Blanqui merely followed the rest and when he did speak it was only of the poverty of the workers and the need to find means to remedy it" (Agulhon, 52).

of his mother, the Duchess of Orleans. But a regency would be the most treacherous and atrocious despotism imaginable. Is that what we want?

On the other hand, the suppressed rioters will not consider themselves beaten; but these same men who conspired against the restored Bourbons and the bourgeois Orléanists will conspire against the Republic. No longer able to prepare anarchy in broad daylight, they will again prepare it in the cellars. Darkness seems to be their primary need. As soon as they appear in the light, their power quickly evaporates. Like those underground volcanoes that are looking to blow their tops and whose lava, having undermined the mountainsides, glazes over once it has done its work, these men are incapable of setting up anything at all. But who can deny that they'll never give up until they have thrown down and destroyed our society?

Ah well! These men and their incendiary passions are always among us. Turn the cannons on them, and they will hide themselves in their lairs and let off their anonymous roars. Call them by name in the light of day, and they will don a mask and call you a hypocrite. Reorganize the National Guard all you want; these men will organize new secret societies. Someday, they will stab France in the back. Is that what we want? To be sure, between the extremes of revolution and reaction the dangers are great. Who does not know this? Is there then no hope of safety? Only God knows; but all men who have hearts in them should know that, as long as those hearts pump even one drop of blood through their veins, their sense of duty should find them ready. This feeling grows as conditions intensify; and now that we are talking about the very survival of the nation, what sacrifices does it not have the right to command? The first of all is to reject every personal consideration. What is one person, when we have to consider the life or death of an entire people? The second is to abandon every incidental perspective. All shades of opinion should be obliterated by the terrible light shone in our eyes by the most recent unrest in Paris. This is not about knowing whether this or that party will prevail; it is about knowing whether, when Europe orders Austria, Prussia, and Russia to march against us they will find us bound together in unity, prepared to repel them, or lined up ready to fall in with their plan to turn our arms against ourselves? It is about knowing whether we still want the liberty which the Orléanist party threatens to smother in its bourgeois embrace; whether we want the moral and constitutional order which the brutal henchmen of Communism and terror would destroy forever.

For us, whichever way France takes, we will follow her with the love of a child who loves nothing in this world more dearly than its mother, but also with the thoughtful courage that is well aware of the excesses of tenderness. We will suffer from her suffering; her wounds will make our heart bleed; but we will love her enough to tell her the cause of these evils. For she must know, if she seems to be leaning toward her own ruin, if her enemies plot in sacrilegious hope her utter destruction, that this is because she has been too inclined to forget that ordered liberty is the most magnificent gift that heaven gives to the earth, and that order and liberty perish when earth breaks off relations with God.

**La Liberté pour tous, N° 67, 28 juillet 1848, p. 4**

*La Liberté pour tous* has published, in issue no. 64 (21 July), under “Miscellaneous,” an article on “The Political Benefits of the Church,” on which subject it raises many serious objections. As these concern Catholic dogma, we hasten to communicate them to our readers.<sup>40</sup>

The article says that “the form of the Church is democratic.” This is in error. Further along it speaks of the necessity of holding elections to choose bishops; this too is in error. Such elections have never been necessary, because the episcopal authority is not delegated from the people to the bishops. Bishops receive their power from Jesus Christ; their jurisdiction from the Pope; they become bishops when consecrated by other bishops. Church Councils cannot be compared to constitutional governments; never have priests held the power allocated to the Chamber of Deputies. To recognize such an authority would be a heresy. The liberty given to heretics to defend themselves is not the source of the liberty of discussion. It would rather be the origin of the right of defense, because, once the Church has spoken, Catholics may not debate it.

I will pass over several less serious errors, convinced that the author of the article could recast them into a more acceptable form. I am also confident that most of my readers will not have been very struck by the errors I have indicated. I am nonetheless obliged to guard against anything that could compromise the Catholic truth, to which I am attached a thousand times more than to life.

**La Liberté pour tous, N° 79, 20 août 1848, p. 1**

The municipal elections ended two days ago. I must say that their results are profoundly regrettable. The majority of Catholics are triumphant; we believe that it is for the Protestants to triumph in reality.

We have given enough proofs of our attachment to the Catholic cause to have a right to bring this stern judgment. We who are accused of flattering popular passions will have the courage to say to the people, “You have done wrong.”

Probably the eleven councilors elected on the second ballot are, in themselves, an excellent choice. Many of them know, in particular, what esteem we bear them, and we beg them not to take our words personally and so find it disagreeable to hear them. Our concern is something else; surely they will understand that.

No doubt the people have given in to an urgent need: they have wanted to make another break from their faith. No doubt there are irritating provocations that explain their persistence in the system of exclusions. And no doubt if, for some time, the people had been more seriously imbued with republicanism, they would not have put their leaders in such a false position with respect to the government of the Republic. We are disposed to welcome

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<sup>40</sup> D’Alzon had written on July 9 that “I must be very careful not to become overly involved in politics. Something tells me I should stay aloof especially this past week which I have spent in quasi isolation, shut up in my room nearly all day, reading the life of Monsieur Olier. Some things in it were never meant for me—others are “right up my street”—and this provides much food for thought. I now understand why I have done so little good over the past year. Would it not be much better for me to limit myself to my college, and allow politics to take their course? Does all this denote an unstable character? Or is it, as I believe, a genuine perception of God’s will? It is hard for me to tell” (*Spiritual Writings*).

all sorts of excuses and find all kinds of reasons to explain their conduct; but the situation, such as they have made it, persists and is no less serious. I must say this without holding anything back, so that the people understand. The consequences of this situation should be no less obvious to them; I must lay them out, so that the people know what they have brought upon themselves. The obligations of the honorable men they have elected are no less rigorous, and they must be made to understand them, so that they won't be surprised if the conduct that the circumstances demand is not what they would have liked.

First, the elections of last Thursday confirm that the situation is very serious. It is evident that the Catholics no longer have leaders. Those leaders have used all of their influence to introduce into the Municipal Council eleven representatives of the minority party, when the great majority of voters had elected Catholics. What will become of a party that has such leaders?

It is evident that from now on the provisional assemblies are perfectly useless in Nîmes; because though such assemblies are well able to come up with a list, the people will endorse the one offered by the first one who comes along wanting to exploit their passions. But however large this majority may be, when it counts on that strength and no longer carries on according to the plan prepared in advance, it risks being overcome by a smart and solid minority.

It is evident that the Catholics consider themselves merely a party, since they don't know how to bring to their actions that moderation and respect for the rights of all that satisfies the needs of reason and truth. But we have too invincible a repugnance for all parties, of whatever kind, not to groan deeply when we see the cause of the Church so debased in being so reduced, by its defenders, to a mere party.

But let us leave aside that painful thought, which doesn't worry very many men anyway. Let us examine the consequences of this deplorable election.

Nîmes appointed its Municipal Council by sections. The government had agreed that several names might appear on the ballot, on the condition that Protestants be included among them. These honorable citizens were placed by the opinion and esteem of all ahead of the Catholics, and we ourselves went along with it. Our representatives committed to the arrangement, and that commitment has not been invalidated. If the government no longer has confidence in these men, whose fault is that?

You will say that no one asked our representatives to make this commitment on behalf of the Catholics. What then? Don't you know that such arrangements are necessary if any of the people's business is to be done? It can then be ratified by a vote, if the people are satisfied with it. But last Thursday the vote went against this business. If the men involved withdraw out of self-respect, whose fault is that?

The government, having gotten over its prejudices against us, once again had confidence in us, and treated us as they had not for many years. But if they think that because we are in the majority in the city, the ouster of the minority Protestants is evidence of our tyrannical disposition, and that they must now take the part of the weak against the strong, whose fault is that?

Despite the most violent complaints, the government had believed that it should reestablish the common law, abolished in our city since 1830. If in fear of a struggle that the last election shows to be possible, it suspends the arming of the National Guard, whose fault is that?

In a word, if the favorable arrangements of the council give way to the former system of oppression, whom will the Catholics have to blame more than themselves?

There is a cost to us for drawing conclusions from this situation, when those who brought it about have not clearly and completely understood its import; but the seriousness of these circumstances compels us to speak up. The evil persists, and we must point it out while there is still time to apply a remedy. Silence would be cowardice, and we will never be guilty of that. We know what we are letting ourselves in for by speaking out, but we will never shrink from our duty. We may displease them, but our duty is to point out to the Catholics the mistake they have made.

It remains for us to consider what is to be done about the twenty-five councilors elected on the first ballot. Our position is unambiguous: they should hand in their resignations. Indeed can the President of the Electoral Committee sit on the Municipal Council when, after the commitments made to the government, after many public declarations, after a dedication beyond all praise, no one has any respect for his authority? And if he leaves, will the rest of those elected be able to remain, without proving that there is no solidarity among the Catholic leaders, that no understanding unites them, that no moral commitment binds them?

Besides, what situation will those twenty-five councilors-elect be in, if they agree to form the City Council? Think of it – they say to the Catholics, “We will be your representatives, on the condition that the Protestant minority be properly represented.” The Protestant representation has not been secured; and will these men, at such a serious moment, agree to bow their heads and remain in their curule chairs? Either we are completely wrong, or in every government based on elective representation, those entrusted with power should keep it only while they retain the confidence of those who entrusted it to them. Well, the second ballot destroyed the confidence the first ballot had demonstrated. The agreements that had been made have not been carried out. What can they do other than step aside out of self-respect?

You will say that in view of the dangers we face, we must not risk letting power fall into the hands of those less worthy or capable. We think that to stay on top of these dangers, we must above all maintain our moral power, and that we lose that when we evince a greater love of political power than honor.

You will also say that a mass resignation of the councilors would displease the people, and that we must not incur their displeasure. We say that if there is nothing more honorable than to be the servant of the people, there is nothing less so than to be their valet.

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