

LACORDAIRE

THE JOURNALIST

1830 - 1848

Paul Fesch

Translated by
The Brothers CHRISTIAN
George, OP, & Richard

© 2012 - All rights reserved

Excerpt from:

Paul Fesch

Lacordaire Journaliste

1830 - 1848

Delhomme et Briguet, Éditeurs

PARIS

83, Rue de Rennes, 83

LYON

3, avenue de l'Archevêché, 3

1897

FOREWORD — LACORDAIRE THE JOURNALIST

About ten years ago, a certain number of priests, convinced they were performing a useful work, wholeheartedly plunged themselves into the middle of ideas: writers, they entered the world of the press; orators, they penetrated into organizations. Some have called this a crime and they still do; others cannot find the words to praise them for what they called a righteous audacity. If I were not using a too-well known expression, I would say that these innovators and brave men deserve

Neither this excess of honor nor this indignity.

In fact, it has probably been noticed insufficiently that others before us, priests included, had faced up to the weariness of journalism and the bellowing of public reunions. Just like us, they were disparaged by their adversaries and criticized by their friends, but it is thanks to them that we are able — to be sure, not without opposition, but with a certain liberty — to announce ideas judged rash, in their day, partially accepted in our time, and that will, in the days of our grand-nephews, be fully honored.

Among these illustrious and courageous individuals who marched ahead of us and used the press to defend the Church to sow religious truth, we must include the men of *L'Avenir*, and specifically Lacordaire.

We say: 'specifically' Lacordaire, because in the midst of his comrades in arms, he filled a prominent place, and because for almost twenty years, from 1830 to 1848, he did, he attempted to do, directly or indirectly, the work of a journalist, a priest journalist.

It is this work undertaken by Lacordaire in *L'Avenir* and in *L'Ère nouvelle* and elsewhere that we will consider. *

* We have tried to collect articles written by Lacordaire in different journals: we hope we have succeeded. These articles will be found subsequently, in the order of their publication. It is possible that some have eluded us; but we can affirm that we have not reproduced any without assurance of its authenticity. The few that remained doubtful, we omitted, leaving it to a later date, when the benevolence of a learned friend will furnish proof that they really originated from Lacordaire.

BEFORE L'AVENIR

On 7 May 1828, Lacordaire wrote to one of his friends in Dijon, Mr. Foisset, who had recently founded a newspaper and who requested his collaboration, a long letter from which we reproduce the following peculiar passage, and in which we find the characteristic idea regarding journalism being entertained by the future collaborator of *L'Avenir*.

In considering the *Provincial*¹ as an undertaking by men whom I know, whom I cherish or esteem, I ought to be tempted to take part in it. The *Provincial* will do much good; this would be another reason for my cooperation. Nonetheless, I need to discuss this point with you and to present my reasons that will prevent me from my ever writing a single line in any newspaper whatsoever. Some are taken from the task itself; the others from my character or from the taste of my mind.

A newspaper appears to me as an unrighteous item. It is a place where periodically, at short intervals, one judges the books or actions of contemporaries, even though the brief time interval does not allow sufficient investigation of the truth. It is a place where a few men, preoccupied with matters of the private individual and of the citizen, gather together to discard the free time of their studies, as if such the arbitrary justice of their century did not deserve that someone at least devote his life to it and a life already seasoned. It is a place wherein men are taught what they should think about everything, even concerning things not comparable to the immutable law of human duties, thus propagating in society opinions which the teacher himself will no longer hold on the morrow. Thoughtlessness, uncertainty, lack of mission, absence of sufficient knowledge (one must know everything when one talks about everything): are these the signs whereby we learn justice? Newspapers are the *pulpit of opinions*, that is to say, of what I despise the most; far from making opinions, I have stopped reading any. Opinions kill truth. This is the movement of the century, we are told. We must follow along, or fight on a battlefield devoid of enemies. May God keep me from following the enemy into swamps wherein I would get bogged down with him! When the Jews were led into captivity, the prophet sat, alone, at the gates of the deserted city; he chanted lamentations that did not reach the ears of the winners or of the vanquished. There comes a time in the life of nations when there is nothing left to say to present-day men, when one is found to speak to himself alone, and conceal his books in tombs, between the feet of the dead, as in Jerusalem the holy fire was hidden in a well. There comes a time when Cato must reave his entrails so that — his sword unable to fight any longer — his blood might speak to generations better than those who saw him die. There are times when release can be lost. Minister of only perpetual and universal truths, never, never will I announce to men opinions, never will I announce the truth to them in that same place where their idleness is amused with mental games. Faithful souls, we will console ourselves as best we can, and those who are capable will prepare, in philosophy and in theology, the double or the single revolution that those two sciences need so as not to lose other

nationalities.

Newspapers are lethal for individual talents. They wear out, by fruitless studies and hasty productions, minds not yet formed. One gets accustomed to confining his thoughts within a restricted framework; pages and pages are printed; one assumes a striking style that is suitable in one column and misplaced everywhere else. I am convinced that the facility of writing in newspapers is the cause of our current literary mediocrity, and that many young persons every day lose in them a share of the genius entrusted to them by Providence. One must light his own fire before distributing live coals to neighbors.

Thirdly, a newspaper edited by many cannot hold a fixed belief. Reason, applied to each event, to each book, will correct a few false ideas; it will not bring about movement. No intellectual revolution came about because of a leading principle and pressed to all its consequences; thus, Christianity, thus the Reform, thus each philosophical sect of yesteryear.

Were I to create a newspaper, I would uphold the cult of Apis the Bull [the sacred bull of ancient Egypt - Trans.] rather than supporting colorless universalities. The time for reason never did exist; it never will.

I can see Bayle [Pierre Bayle, French writer; 1647-1706 - Trans.] composing his paper all by himself; this is a way of printing his books and having them read. The *Globe* really grasped my thought, or I understood its thought well; they replaced religion with *hope*; they drift on the Ocean, like that Christopher, and while waiting to cry our "Land!," they amuse themselves shooting birds that fly by.

And now to my character. I cannot do two things at the same time; and asking for the tip of my finger is to ask me for the feet to the head.

Add to that, dear friend, that a priest, more than ever before, has to hide himself and be a stranger to everything that is not religion. One could easily believe in my desire to be recognized, without my giving the occasion to think it. Obscurity, a long-lasting obscurity, small places, free time, this is what pleases me and is the plan I have made for myself.

I am a priest and will never be anything more than that; I am a priest, and it is by myself that I study the duties of my state. I do not follow usage without reflecting on it, and you know that the spirit of imitation has never been my shortcoming.²

All is not false, all is not to be disdained in the evaluation that Lacordaire makes here concerning that 'unrighteous item' that is the newspaper. The picture he draws is rather the picture of the newspaper of his time rather than that of the ideal paper.

But, first of all, is there a standard for the newspaper? The idea is up for discussion: following the experience of history, it seems to us that the newspaper has varied greatly following the ages, the countries, and the journalists themselves. Some want to make it the vehicle for a thought, a belief; others see it only as a ‘pulpit of opinions,’ diverse and contradictory, propounded one after the other; still others, a kind of kaleidoscope — come on, be up-to-date, cinematography — parading before the eyes of the reader images of facts and innovations from the entire world; finally, others pretend to use it as a tool to shake up matters financial, industrial, or commercial. Would truth not lie in a happy medium that blends these different opinions proportionately, according to the importance we give them, and also to the needs of one’s age?

Basically, what was that of Lacordaire? On checking what he condemned we can deduce what he would approve.

For him, the newspaper was the place where intelligent men, seasoned, if not by age at least by knowledge, devoting themselves ‘from head to toe,’ announcing ‘only timeless and universal truths,’ or simply, ‘truth’ and not opinions.

If such an ideal newspaper were to be established would it in fact be ideal? He does not say, but as we will soon see his behavior in a similar matter. Meanwhile, he considers the newspaper as an unrighteous matter, in which a priest should not collaborate, because ‘a priest, more than ever before, has to hide himself and be a stranger to everything that is not religion.’

To this objective evaluation, which we can discuss, Lacordaire added a subjective one to which all those who have a serious practice of the press will subscribe.

“Newspapers,” said he, “are lethal to talented individuals.” Understand him rightly. This is not a question of a man who, in the silence of his office, will write calmly, at his leisure, an article or two a week, but of a true journalist, of him who gives himself ‘from head to toe;’ who, everyday, faithful to the editing room, finds himself having to write impromptu, without, however, having much time to think about an article, without notes, *de omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis* [of every knowable thing and some others - Trans.]. If he has prepared himself for his role by long and serious studies, literary, political, religious, philosophical, social, he will be able to manage his task for a while. But caught in the daily exchange, lacking the ability to renew by adequate intellectual nourishment the losses of his mind, he will gradually feel the emptiness in his brain, he will be ground, worn out. The brilliance, the ‘sharpness’ of style may deceive the distracted eye of the mediocre reader, but it will not hide, even to the quick consideration of the attentive reader, the emptiness of the thought.

This strain does not overlook the strongest ones, those who are regarded as *leaders*, the masters of journalism. Do we not know some of them whose name made the fortune

of a newspaper, but who, by repeatedly producing and becoming exhausted from overstimulation, inured themselves, so to speak, to replace with invective the inadequacy of reasoning?

Lacordaire sought to avoid this danger of ‘mediocrity’ and not open himself to losing ‘that portion of genius that Providence had entrusted to him.’

In him, this was an idea long delayed and solidly anchored. Six years earlier, he was already telling the same Foisset: “Believe me, my friend, it is dangerous to place oneself too far up front in one’s youth. . . Let us begin our political life late; let us start it when we will be able to be useful to our country; then will be the good time to sacrifice our happiness to our principles³!” Ten years later, recalling in a letter to his young friend Montalembert the spirit of his late father, the latter will make Lacordaire give Montalembert the following advice: “Beware of an untimely dispute⁴.”

This was a standard of wise prudence: to keep working and to wait for one’s hour.

Lacordaire did not believe the current moment to be opportune; he says so in his letter to Mr. Foisset, with a touch of pronounced melancholia. In two years, Lacordaire would repeat this to him in about the same tone:

I am tired of thinking and of speaking; I am like the theology faculty of the Academy of Paris; I have hung up my harp on the willows of the Sorbonne. How can one think when there is no longer any Catholic thinking? How can one speak when all Israel sleeps and when, like David, one has not yet taken away the sword of the enemy? No, truly that cannot be possible; let the shepherd sleep to the sound of the wind, and do not ask him what he sees in his dream. The sleep of the shepherd is not that of the prophet. Both have their head resting on the ruins of Babylon in the desert; both have dreams and a guardian angel to protect them; but one is a seer of the Lord, who is aware of the history of the stone where he sleeps; the other is but a shepherd. The shepherd does not envy the sleep of the prophet; he gets up, and sings while whistling; it is an old book that said he would whistle; but he has not read that old book; he is but a shepherd. The shepherd has childhood friends, on the other side of the Tiber; his friends ask him what he has seen in the plain, and if the ruins said anything as the rain fell. The shepherd is touched, because his friends speak to him, and that the sun of the sands has not dried out his heart in Arabia; but what can the shepherd answer? The ruins did not speak to him: the Lord of the ruins has not told him anything; when the rain fell, the shepherd heard nothing. Let the shepherd sleep; the sleep of the shepherd is not that of the prophet.¹

Who cannot recognize in this the accents of discouragement, unnoticed perhaps by some of us, when weighing in our mind the immensity of the task we propose to undertake, we realize the weakness of our arm and the scarcity of our companions , and that we let

ourselves fall while uttering a cry: “No, decidedly no; there is nothing to be done.”

With Lacordaire, this discouragement was only momentary.

“There is nothing to be done,” said he, on pointing out the days in which he lived. It was also with the same feeling of expediency, of present interest, that we must read that passage in his letter: “a priest, more than ever before, has to hide himself and be a stranger to everything that is not religion.”

One should not see in this a saying generally applicable to all times and to all countries.

Quite to the contrary, Lacordaire has proven, and by different words, and in all the living of his life, that the priest was not to remain only enclosed in his church or in his sacristy to pray to God, but that he had to go out because he could not remain a stranger to anything that goes on here below.

In stating this principle that the Catholic religion is the sole path to salvation for individual men and for nations, he knew of no other means, to preserve that religion, than religious education. Moreover, he shuddered to see education neglected, either by the indifference or the laziness of priests who were content to watch over the sanctification of a few privileged souls, without bothering themselves with the large mass of unbelievers.

What do these priests do in the ordinary exercise of their duty? They preserve the knowledge and the practice of Christian truths in women, in some men, in some young persons; now and then. They withdraw from the midst of error a few souls in whom faith has awakened, and that is it. The mass of impiety escapes their action; enclosed in the interior of the sanctuary, wherein they watch over the stones remaining there, they cannot defend it from external attacks: sometimes they look from the heights of the walls of Zion, and they find that the number of assailants always increases; coming back down to the interior of the temple, they recount what they have seen with sad and eloquent words that barely touch those who do not need them.⁶

This is how he spoke in private, in 1826; later, in 1843, from the height of the pulpit of Notre-Dame, after a personal experience of almost twenty years, he would refute with a rare achievement of phrases, as fitting as they were arresting, the opinions of those who sought to make of the clergy a separate caste, living apart from the rest of mortals.

One day, Frederick II, King of Prussia, was telling his friends: “ To put an end to the Catholic Church, do you know what has to be done? We must turn it into an owl...” You know, sirs, that solitary and sad bird who stays, ill-natured, in a corner.

That is the secret, (continued Lacordaire): to isolate us from everything, from politics, from morality, from feelings, from knowledge; to dangle us between heaven and earth, without any kind of support, to tell us, while kneeling on one knee: You have God, what need do you have for the rest?

We do not accept this view. We hold to everything because we come from God, Who is in everything; nothing is a stranger to us, because God is not a stranger anywhere.⁷

Oh, you who limit the field of the priest to his church, listen to Lacordaire: “The priest has to go everywhere because God is to be found everywhere, and because everywhere there may be a soul to be instructed, consoled, or saved.”

These few explanations were perhaps not insufficient to show that at that moment in Lacordaire’s life there was no sudden leap to get him from one point on the horizon of thought to an opposite one. He was always true to himself, waiting for his hour to ring.

That hour, he believed had not yet arrived; this is why he refused to collaborate in a work that was not undertaken following his ideal and for which he did not see himself with the aptitudes required.

And yet, he was preparing himself, awaiting “the orders of God, whose will is often made manifest in unforeseen events⁸.”

Basically, what had been tormenting him for several years was the secret desire to penetrate — he a priest and as a priest — into society, into public life, and willingly to bring there the word that sets people free by means of truth.

It was this torment of soul that gave to his life that appearance of uncertainty and of irresolution noted about him at this time; it was also the torment of soul that guided him in his studies.

For three years, (he wrote,) all my readings and all my thoughts dealt with this: *The world being what it is , what need a priest believe about the relationship of religion to philosophy and to the social order?* In a word, I was trying to resolve the double problem of the relationship between religion and reason and spiritual society with material society. Any priest who has not learned this, I used to tell myself, can be a pious and holy man; but unquestionably he will understand nothing of his time, nor of the history of the Church, nor of the future.⁹

Ceaselessly did his restless spirit seek to specify the place and the role of the priest in modern life.

To the first part of the question he asked, he replied in a quick and brief fashion: “Individual reason and the sense of the Catholic Church must necessarily be in accord.”

In fact, that was not what preoccupied him the most, and he did not dwell on it.

The second part interested him more: “What should a priest believe concerning the relationships between religion and the social order?” Three plans were presented.

Lacordaire reviewed all three of them.

The spiritual society and the material society have to live together without destroying each other. — They can achieve this in three ways: the superiority of one over the other, absolute independence of one from the other, variable interdependence of one with the other by means of reciprocal concessions. — The third means is false because at all times, and especially in those where faith is weak, it leaves the Church to the mercy of material society, that, basically, always passes judgment on questions said to be mixed. It makes of the Church, in the eyes of the people, a fearful society, enemy of liberty; sooner or later, it ends up into a national Church. From Constance to Basel, God works admirably to prove it.

The second means, which today is ratified in the United States, places the Church very high in the estimation of people, makes of the Church a male society, well adapted to centuries of popular liberty, but it divides the world, and is so metaphysically false that never would a people of faith ever think to adopt it. It is a splendid remedy, but only a remedy. — The first means places the spirit before the flesh, makes of the social body a perfectly original being; it is the system of the popes from Charlemagne to Henry IV, during more than eight hundred years, and it is so simple, so moderating of people and of power that a truly Christian nation never conceived another and propels itself into it without thinking. Besides, it cannot be reborn except in the way in which it was exercised, when people and kings will wonder, on bended knees, what will happen.

After having reasoned in this way, Lacordaire looks for *what has to be done*. He find this in another formula: “To remove the Church from its state of relationships to place her in a state of absolute independence; in a word, to free her. Everything else is a huge matter¹⁰.”

In that letter, in germ, are ideas that Lacordaire, a few months later will develop with an animation not devoid of hostility in his articles for *L’Avenir*. But for the moment, he himself did not know any more. His thoughts were on another topic. It is not in France that he would seek the application of his theories but in America, “because,” said he, “I was persuaded that my clerical occupation would never have unfettered development in France¹¹.”

Summoned before the jury of the Seine¹², accused of fomenting hatred and contempt for the government, as well as of provoking to disobedience of the laws, he related to the court that still recent phase of his existence.

The word of the priest had been entrusted to me, and I was told to carry it to the ends of the world without anyone having the right to seal my lips for even one day of my life. I left the temple with those high purposes and found on the threshold both the laws and bondage. The laws forbade me to teach the youth of France under a very Christian King; and if I had sought, like my ancestors, to escape into solitude, there to build a place of prayer and of a little peace, other laws would have been found to banish me from it. All the efforts of power tended to capture in its hands the ultimate direction of the human mind, except to concede to a pleading and servile Church some concession of royal piety to the first majesty.

It was there, it was in this absolute rule of five or six men over all men and over God that this system ended up. I vowed to fight it all the more unyielding that all the memories of my childhood conspired against it.

But, what to do? I was alone. When one is alone in the world it is best to hide and to wait; I hid and kept waiting. Three years went by; this is little in the life of man but a lot in youth, naturally lively and unable to carry a load for too long. I became tired of life and looked ahead to see if there was not on earth some place where a priest could live unfettered. In those moments when the country causes distress, who has not turned to the republic of Washington? Who did not sit down, with the thought of the shade of forests and the lakes of America? I turned my eyes in that direction, weary as they were from the spectacle they saw in France, and I resolved to go there, to ask them for the hospitality that they had never refused either to a priest or to a traveler¹³.

As a matter of fact, at the beginning of 1830, his mind had been made up. He was to leave for America with Msgr. Dubois, bishop of New York. He had spoken about it with Lammenais, obtained the consent of his mother, and on 19 July, he wrote to Mr. Foisset: “We will leave, several friends together, in the coming spring.”

He had reached this point regarding his projects when God, following His word, came to make His will known by ‘an unexpected turn of events.’

Indeed, eleven days after his letter to Mr. Foisset, the Revolution erupted, overthrowing the throne of Charles X. Nonetheless, Lacordaire had not changed his decision; he found himself in Burgundy, saying goodbye to his family, when he received word from Father Gerbet, informing him that Mr. de Lamennais “was preparing the foundations of a newspaper intended to reclaim for the Church her share of the freedom henceforth acquired in the country¹⁴” and that his collaboration was requested.

“This news,” said Lacordaire, “gave me tangible joy like a kind of intoxication.” With that, he no longer thought of emigrating. What would now be the point?

He was asked to help remove the Church of France “from the state of entanglement to a state of absolute independence.” He was all for it.

He was asked to attempt this by means of the newspaper: he was still for it.

The newspaper is no longer “an iniquitous item,” because today “it is no longer a question of a purely human and patriotic enterprise, but of a religious work¹⁶, and priest that he was, he could no longer remain a stranger to it.

He did not fear consuming the talent that Providence has allotted him: he had worked, and he was ready. Following his picturesque language, he had lit his fire, he could now bring live coals to his neighbors.

He would not be spreading ‘opinions,’ but rather, truth ‘perpetual and eternal’; and he will do this by giving himself ‘from head to toe.’

He will become journalist and he will defend — and with what fire, as we will see later — those two great causes whose names *L’Avenir* highlights: *God and liberty*. He will become a journalist, and in doing so, he will believe remaining a priest and give “to his priestly profession its unfettered development.”

ENDNOTES

1. This was the name of the newspaper in question.
2. Letter to Mr. (Joseph-Théophile) Foisset, 7 May 1828.
3. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 30 December 1822.
4. Letter to Montalembert, 22 April 1832.
5. Letter to Mr. Foisset. Paris, 13 April 1830.
6. Letter to Mr. Foisset. Paris, 25 April 1826.
7. 20th Conference: Catholic reasoning and human reasoning in their relationships.
8. Lacordaire: *Pensées* [Thoughts], II, p. 424.
9. Letter to Mr. Foisset. Paris, 19 July 1830.
10. Letter to Mr. Foisset. Paris, 19 July 1830.
11. *Testament* of Lacordaire, Ch. II.
12. The case of *L'Avenir*, 31 January 1831.
13. The plea of Lacordaire before the jury. *Sermons et discours* [Sermons and Talks], III, 36.
14. *Testament* of Lacordaire, Ch. II.
15. *Idem, ibidem*.
16. *Idem, ibidem*.

L'AVENIR

And so, Lacordaire is a journalist¹⁷.

Before studying the role he played in the spread of the ideas propounded by *L'Avenir*, it is perhaps not without interest to disentangle his role in the production of the newspaper from the point of view of trade.

Indeed, Lacordaire was not a simple collaborator, who, from home, sent in his writing, leaving to the editors the task of *laying out the issue*. He composed the issue; and for almost two months, for the first two issues, the hardest ones, he did this alone.

It was said that Montalembert helped him a lot in this engrossing task. This was true only after 12 December 1830. Absent at the moment *L'Avenir* appeared¹⁸, Montalembert came on board only on 4 November, and met Lacordaire for the first time on 12 November. It was only on the following 9 December that Lacordaire wrote to him, in the name of Lamennais, to invite him to take part in the management council. From that day on, they were two, the two inseparables, constantly filling the gap.

Up to that time, Lacordaire, alone or almost alone, was the only one to contribute. He filled, more in fact than in name, the function of editorial secretary. As is expected of a capable journalist, he gave himself 'from head to toe.'

He was the one, who in that smoke-filled little house at 20 rue Jacob, whose current appearance, broken-down and out-of-date, has probably not changed much since that time, he was the one who gave the orders and every day gave the call to arms. He was the one who read the newspapers from Paris and from the provinces, undertaking with them a controversy which he always ended up winning. He was the one who knew how to discover the incident, the particulars that were to furnish the material and the development for the day's edition.

When one reads attentively the collection of *L'Avenir*, one is struck by the incalculable number of snares whose graphic expression, sometimes violent, bring to mind Lacordaire's style at the time. No doubt, because they are unsigned, they cannot infallibly be attributed to him, but one senses that they are from him.

Besides, Lacordaire did not confine himself to the role of editorial secretary. He also wrote, and he wrote a lot. From 16 October to 5 November 1830, he composed the leading article seven times, and three times the "Varieties" section. It can be said that, during the first two months, he was the guiding force behind *L'Avenir*.

He dedicated himself to this task and wished to carry it out to the highest level of perfection. He accepted the observations of his friends, and followed them. "I thank you very much," he wrote to Mr. Foisset, "for your pleasant letter and your outstanding considerations. We have already taken some steps to benefit from them; you must have noticed the shorter length of the articles, a rather large number of facts, a bit more of reality. The first 'Chambers' were poorly done; we will make them better and better. Starting today, there is a daily meeting to examine the articles so that nothing gets by without having been read, and that there be more cohesion in the ensemble of the newspaper¹⁹."

It was also from that same date that his articles, up to that time unsigned, would carry, for the most part, his initials *H. L.* "It is," he tells Mr. Foisset, "a way of understanding one another and of conversing frequently."

It probably need not be stated that this work must have absorbed him completely, night and day.

Since we are speaking of the material aspect of the newspaper, are we allowed to learn how much the writers of *L'Avenir* earned? Indeed, if man does not live on bread alone, nonetheless he does live on it. Well, we have to admit: it is not from today only that the unfortunate need arises to ask of Catholic journalists their work, knowledge, application, everything. . . for the love of God. The writers of *L'Avenir* worked almost for nothing.²⁰

In spite of everything, Lacordaire enjoyed this life of struggle; he knew how to appreciate the good he was doing — and why should we hide it? — he derived a certain satisfaction from it. He himself admitted it in all honesty some ten years later.²¹ Nothing unusual in this; the first rays of glory are so delightful and touching to the heart of youth.

But Lacordaire preferred friendship over glory.

On the evening of 31 January 1831, with Montalembert, he was leaving the Court of Assizes, where, after being accused of stirring up contempt for the government, he had just been acquitted: Montalembert congratulated him on his eloquent plea. "What are you saying about glory, Charles," Lacordaire told him, "let us talk of friendship. The great struggles that rouse us only half-way, they leave us the strength to think, before everything else, of the life of the heart. . . The days start and end depending on whether a beloved remembrance arises or remains silent in a soul²²."

For all that, we should not think that Lammenais's young right-hand man let him take over his soul by those charming and noble emotions. The light of glory was fleeting: as for friendship, it was for him an incentive and a support in the struggle. "Born to struggle and to love²³," he loved liberty above all; and it is for freedom that we will see him engage in those memorable struggles whose account will always arouse the admiration of posterity.

Those two words: *God and freedom* that *L'Avenir* highlighted were not for him a vain and empty formula.

God, represented by His Church, Liberty in all its forms: he would be their defender, sometimes impassioned, but always generous.

Liberty of the Church, liberty of the clergy, liberty of instruction, freedom of the press, freedom of the word: one after the other will see him break swords in their favor.

Accordingly, if he faced the battles of journalism, it was to free the Church of France “from the state of entanglement to place her in a state of absolute independence.”

By what correlation of circumstances was the Church of France entangled? By the Concordat and by the budget for the Cults; by the Concordat that corrupted the recruitment of the episcopacy, by the budget of the Cults that made the clergy a caste of salaried functionaries, at the mercy of the government. In an article entitled: *The bondage into which, unknowingly, the Catholic clergy is falling*,²⁴ we see a kind of summary of the oppressions by which, at the period of our attention, the Church in France was subjected:

This is where we are after fifteen months of deliverance.

Our churches, returned to us by the stipulations of the Concordat, no longer belong to our worship but to all worship; we have them on loan. And the right of the Ministry is to have celebrated there, at its whim, every ceremony, religious or not, that suits it.

Our bishops are named by this Ministry that, at a specific hour, takes over our tabernacles to offer in them sacrifices to its liking. Among the bishops they give us, some as schismatics, other octogenarians, almost to imbecility, still others despised by the faithful for their ambitious and servile life.

Our important vicars are chosen by the Ministry that provides us with such bishops; at the same time as it confers a miter, it designates the man who, after him, will be worthy to touch it on the brow of the one chosen.

Our regulations have to be approved by this Minister.

Our pastors also.

Our officiating ministers did not need that up to now; but that was an abuse.

Moreover, since approbation would be an illusory right if there was no right to disapprove, the Ministry disapproves of canons, pastors, and officiating ministers presented to it by the bishops, until such time as the bishops approve the canons, pastors, and officiating ministers presented to them by the Ministry.

For fear that they might abuse the great power left to them, the bishops are supervised by prefects who control their mandates.

Our pastors are supervised by their mayors; and if they abuse the holy word, in the opinion of the latter, part of their claim on the public treasury is withdrawn, or the bishops are made to dismiss them.

Our major seminaries have to be administered by delegates of civil authority.

Our minor seminaries are allowed to have only a certain number of students, who must wear the cassock at the age determined.

Our Capuchins are not allowed to leave their convent wearing a habit of their choice.

Our Trappists are not allowed to cultivate their land together, etc., etc.²⁵

If we sought to bring our subject up to date, we would call attention to how the many complaints of Catholics under the July Monarchy resembled those under the republican regime; and even if we wished to push the comparison to the extreme, the greater intolerance would perhaps not be the endorsement of the latter. But we stay within the limits of our role as simple narrator.

Lacordaire — royalist as he always was — was not gentle with the July Monarchy which he accused of not granting to the country the liberties inscribed in the Charter.

His early articles had as their goal the *freedom of instruction*.²⁶

Fallen from its former power, religion needs to reclaim its liberty, all liberty. . . Before anything else, it needs to remember its divine Founder who told it: “Go and teach all nations,” and it will reclaim that right. “It will remember that Corinth did not refuse Denis the task of school teacher, and a religion supported by people who do not dare to entrust their children to it, that does not even allow it to teach the children of its own faithful, is no doubt the most despised religion that ever spoke of God to men.” Instruction must be free, or the liberty of cults is a word without meaning. For, “as the priest is a man who teaches; the church is a place where teaching takes place; and faith is something that can be taught.”

For the Catholics of France, freedom of instruction is more than opinion, “it is part of the agreement that ties the French to the new crown; it is the condition of our oaths, the price of blood.” Lacordaire then shows that the subjugation of instruction is incompatible with any liberty whatsoever, “because liberty is obtained by teaching, is preserved by teaching, has as its purpose teaching, that is to say, progress of the human race in religion,

in knowledge, in the arts, in industry, in the flesh, and in the spirit.” His reasoning ends with the conclusion that all freedom — and here he enumerates: of the press, of religion, of the lectern, of the bar, of industry, of the arts, of travel — is freedom of instruction. Therefore, “It is an enormous contradiction, in words and in reality, to call liberated a country wherein the rostrum and the pulpit are accessible but wherein the school is closed...”

One final argument employed by the unfriendly writer is this, which we summarize in a kind of syllogistic form: “The French, according to the Charter, have the right to have their opinions published and printed, therefore, they have the right to have their own personal opinions.”

“Now the quality of being French is derived from the very cradle, and therefore, every child has the right to its own opinion.”

The State will say: the child cannot by himself form an opinion: it is up to me to do so. No, counters Lacordaire, it is the right of the parents.

And he ends with a stirring appeal to families, which “for over thirty years, have lost domestic peace, because of the tyranny of the University.”

The time would come, for Lacordaire, when theory would need to give way to action. He would not hesitate: and, basing his idea on the principle whose formula he would unceasingly present to the ears of his subscribers, “freedom cannot be given, it must be taken,” he took the freedom to teach.

There was in Lyons a program by which poor children, destined for service to the Church, received instruction at no cost under the watchful eye of the pastor of the parish. On 26 March 1831, Mr. de Montalivet, Minister of Public Instruction, had a school of this type closed.

Immediately, Lacordaire rose up, and with his valiant pen, he wrote:

The director of the Academy of Lyons has recently addressed to the pastors of that city a letter that we have just now received. Without delay, we place it in the hands of our readers so that between despotism and the rod of publicity little time be lost. Despotism hurries, we have to do the same. Even though we set out later, we hope to catch up with it and to strike it down until the time when France stifles it.

This is how Mr. de Montalivet started at the Ministry of Instruction and of Cults. The beginning is worthy of him. Artless violator of religious liberty and of individual liberty, he insulted with the same candor the freedom of instruction. The little success that his

absolutist adventures obtained from the lectern did not discourage him. In the nineteenth century, he had set himself up as the knight errant of all the preexisting social absurdities; he made it a point of honor to break a last sword in favor of their glory. He would look for the absurdities in one Ministry or another, until at last he could pride himself that, if despotism and nonsense could have been saved, they would have been saved by him. Such was his destiny.

Ours is to take more seriously the enterprises of that young man. He has the incontestable right to be ridiculous: but France and we with her have the right to be free. The Charter has removed instruction from the chaos of the University; not only did it promise to set instruction free some day, but it has already really freed it by annulling the laws and the ordinances contrary to its sovereign will. Several courts concluded to this effect. The House of Peers returned to the Ministry petitions claiming freedom of instruction as an acquired right. A law concerning primary instruction presented to that House recognized the principle of freedom of instruction; and when a noble peer complained that it had been withdrawn, the Minister explained the retraction by the need to present it first to the other House since it dealt with taxes. Not one voice in the parliamentary discussions dared to uphold the University. The latter was tarnished unanimously; its dearest friends requested only that it be allowed to live until such time as another law could repeal it.

If, then, the University is not yet dead, it has nonetheless been condemned. It awaits the executioner. And here, in the very center of its deep humiliation, horror of families and of generations that it lost, exposed to the attacks of its bachelors, licensees, doctors: — desperate shrew that it is, nonetheless it continues to dream of oppression. In Lyons, it has discovered some pastors who taught choir boys the elements of something or other, and its jealousy was aroused. It coveted those poor asylums, not because it wanted, after all, to destroy them — it loved knowledge too much for that — but because it wanted to subject them to the common law, namely, to the tax that it levies on instruction everywhere. Perhaps those schools require no payment, no matter; the tithe is sacred, even on the poor, and charity, which is able to teach at no cost, will buy the right to do so forever in vain. Would Christian charity be less noble than the University's greed? No; God made them both infinite. Having noted that knowledge would lose nothing that charity would win, as would the Treasury also, the University called on the young Minister to support it in so noble a work. And that excellent gentleman believed that he was in a situation wherein *a Minister ought to exercise his responsibility*. It would be, said he, a fourth bill of indemnity to ask of the Houses.

We do not know when the Houses will remind him that he is accountable. But France will never forget its violated houses, its temples turned over to convicts, and its schools to the University; a triple plunder wherein the family, God, and childhood, were the victims. At least this time, Mr. de Montalivet will receive some recognition and the University will console him for the general thanklessness.

As for us, who have just called attention to this new act of despotism, we will do more. The matter has to be decided between France and the University. For a long time, we had the project of opening a school *without authorization*, by virtue of the Charter. The *General Agency for the Defense of Religious Liberty* takes it upon itself to complete this project; within one month, it will be in full execution within the capital. We will then see whether the courts and the Supreme Court of the kingdom will approve or punish the brutality and the unprecedented extortions of the University. We will ask for revenge from our civic officers on that Babylon which drinks to the last drop the blood of France. We will drag it, not in the mud, which is impossible, but in the full light of justice. Until that time, the Catholics of Lyons, the teachers, whoever they are, who love freedom, gather together in a joint resistance against the last breaths of that idiotic feudalism of knowledge. Let all of these, together, yell out a cry of reproach before a thousand tribunals; let them blanch the faces of those who never blushed at anything.²⁷

And so, as he had announced, Lacordaire made himself schoolteacher, supported by Montalembert and Coux.

We will not recount again the *matter of the free school* wherein Montalembert first displayed his oratorical weapons in a very brilliant manner, and in which Lacordaire was surprised by an extemporization of unprecedented boldness, and we add, a very successful one at that.

Besides, this was not the first time that Lacordaire contended against the University monopoly. When chaplain to Henry IV, he published with his fellow chaplains a report in which he pointed out to the Minister of Public Instruction the deplorable state of religious instruction in schools and colleges.

He will return to this topic regarding the ordinance that lowered the standing of chaplain of the college as proctor to that of teacher of freshmen.²⁸ “Before dying,” said he, “the University wanted to soak with some hatred the bread, already very galling, with which it paid the clergy for services rendered.” Moreover he called on the chaplains to disclose the depravity of the colleges, because they were not allowed to “mislead families.”

One of Lacordaire’s last articles in *L’Avenir* had as its subject: *The Entrance of the University*.²⁹ There, he summarized all that Catholics had recently done for freedom of instruction and everything that they were yet to undertake. “. . . Especially, let them not become discouraged. . . Especially when they have been condemned a thousand times to a fine! Even when they will have fifty years of difficulties before becoming free!”

Twenty years were sufficient! And 1850 saw the University’s monopoly fall. The blows struck by Lacordaire had finally carried the day. . .

Will it be the same for that freedom which the valiant polemic claimed for the clergy? What generations will see the priest not as a tyrant — he had never sought that — but free in a republic of free citizens? Perhaps the one that is to follow ours? That one also will owe to the severe contenders at *L'Avenir* justifiable gratitude.

This question of freedom of the clergy was one of the most important raised by *L'Avenir*, the one that would arouse against the newspaper most of its enemies and in the end — perhaps— would lead to its disappearance.

Were they reasonable? Were they wrong? Who knows? Our time is more favorable to them than their time was; the remark has been made, not inappropriately, that many ideas that were criticized, fought over — we were going to say: condemned — in their day, are today very much in favor. In any case, in appreciation of those facts and opinions, we should not forget the thought of Pascal: “When one wishes to correct effectively, and show another that he is in error, one needs to observe from which side he considered it, because it is usually true from that point of view³⁰.”

If Lacordaire seems to have taken it upon himself to fight against the University's monopoly, in his campaign for the freedom of the clergy, he had two stout-hearted collaborators in Lamennais and in Gerbet³¹. Nonetheless, he was the one who attacked more often — and more boldly³².

In an early article³³ he stated the issue. The budget of the clergy needs to be eliminated: “No longer ask of the Treasury for a life that ingratitude reluctantly offers you but lift your eyes towards Him who sent you without tunic and without walking stick to bring peace to the world in exchange for an eventual hospitality.” But not everyone regarded this suppression with the same spirit. Some, supporters of the 18th century, “wish to disparage the Church without persecuting her; but a Church without a budget cannot be disparaged and can only be overtaken by persecution. Thus, all is lost [in their view - Trans.] if religion rids itself of the bondage of the budget.” Others — indeed Christians — fear that suppression. They say: “we no longer have sufficient faith to live only from faith. Consider that not one church, no episcopal palace, no seminary, no rectory belongs to us; all of this belongs to the State or to the townships, to the very enemies of our liberty. We will indeed become free, but just like the proletarian whom nothing can reach because he owns nothing. . .” To those fears, Lacordaire responded, with his usual bravery: “Such sad language which questions whether the children of darkness have greater faith and realize more exactly the power of truth than the children of light. Well! Yes, let us admit it. You will be like the proletarian *who takes his arms and moves on*, in the words of a great writer, certain of finding everywhere both work and bread. You will be like the proletarian, with God as inheritance, with a hope that does not deceive, with millions of souls who love you. Your Master did not have much, and yet he lived. . .” Others, in the end, spoke of the liberation of the Church and of her budget with great disinterest.

Every day, the happenings seemed to vindicate Lacordaire; he rarely had need to find arguments or proofs, the facts furnishing him with them more conclusively than he could have hoped.

This article had barely reached the readers of *L'Avenir* when a new one was published, more antagonistic than the first.³⁴

At that moment, the Prefect of Jura [a district in eastern France - Trans.] believed he was authorized to address the clergy of his District with a proclamation requesting prayers for the King; he based his recommendations on the fact that the clergy received *benefits from the State*. Immediately, Lacordaire gave vent to his indignation in an article too long to quote. Hear this, Catholic priests of the Jura! In our turn, we address a proclamation to you and to all our brothers, to all those who pray to God with a human heart, and this is what we say to them:

Pray for the King; pray for his family, for the quiet of his kingdom and the peace of the world, not because of your prefect, but because God commands you, because your early ancestors prayed in this way. Besides, be profoundly aware of the indignity of the language directed to you and see what the millions from the State are costing you. Moreover, (he continued, saying to Catholics), . . . If Nero came back to life and sent a pretorian guard to ask you for a *Te Deum*, you would be bound to sing it. If he asked for your blessing before he struck the abdomen of his mother and that you had the audacity to refuse him this, all the prefects of the empire would address to you a proclamation, in the name of *the honor of the country*, to remind you that you were living from the benefits of the State. Indeed, hear them: they expect from you prayers that your conscience can no longer judge, and they demand this by invoking another reason: that you are being supported. They have no need to be just: you are being paid. They do not need to give you an accounting: you are being paid. . .

. . . Catholics! Here is what the millions of the State cost you: freedom of conscience! — Catholics! Here is what the millions of the State cost you: the subversion of the Church.

Next, Lacordaire based his reasoning, and this rightly so, on the fact that these supposed benefits to Church did not exist. “We do not claim benefits, but the fulfillment of a treaty, the restitution for a plunder. The Church has never been in the pay of the State, even in her greatest tribulations; when we attack the budget of the clergy, we are far from meddling with the work of the great pontiff who signed the Concordat of 1801. We attack an act of notorious bad faith, by which, every year, the incurring of a debt is changed into a gift, a metamorphosis whose victims we will become, until such time as we destroy completely the sacrifice of our rights.”

Our disputant did not give his readers a chance to breathe. Two days later³⁵, he

answered the objection, concerning the fears of those who saw, in the suppression of the budget of cults, the ruin of the Church, and for the clergy, the impossibility of living. It was in this article that a very noble passage about the Church and the Papacy are to be found.

Events continued to furnish him with arguments, that, skilled antagonist as he was, he used brilliantly.

Meanwhile, in fact, the sub-prefect of Aubusson attempted to force the pastor of one of the parishes in his district to go ahead with the interment ceremonies of a noted public sinner and evident free-thinker. The pastor refused; the sub-prefect had the doors of the church broken down and brought the casket by extreme force into the house of God.

On relating this scandalous abuse of power, Lacordaire called to mind that just a few days before, he had warned Catholics that a similar persecution would surely befall them.

His article was one of those in which his marvelous talent as journalist was best displayed. We would find it unbelievable if his expressions had left unmoved the hearts of Catholics and of the clergy. Listen to him:

Catholics. . . One of your brothers has refused to a deceased man the words and prayers of the final farewell for Christians; he left the care of honoring foreign ashes to those who could tell them: You loved us in life, continue to love us in the beyond. Your brother has done well: he lived as a free man, a priest of the Lord, resolved to preserve his lips untainted by slavish blessings. Woe to him who blesses contrary to his conscience, to him who speaks of God to the dead with a mercenary heart! Woe to the priest who utters lies beside a coffin, who leads souls to the judgment of God through fear of the living and for vile money! Your brother has done well; are we the grave-diggers of the human race? Have we signed a pact with him to flatter his remains, more unfortunate than the courtiers to whom the death of the prince give the right to treat him as his life deserved? Your brother has done well; but the shadow of a proconsul believed that this much independence was not appropriate for so vile a citizen as a Catholic priest. He ordered that the body be presented before the altars, even if violence was needed to do it, and picked the locks of the doors of the sanctuary wherein rests — under the protection of the laws of the country, under the watch of liberty — the God of all men and of a large number of Frenchmen.

His wish was fulfilled; a squad of the national guard introduced the coffin within the interior of the church; power and death violated the dwelling of God, in full peace, without any popular uprising, by orders from the administration. The dwelling of a citizen is not to be violated except by the intervention of the law; the law was not even alerted for it to say to religion: Veil your face for a moment before my sword. A simple sub-prefect, a removable wage-earner, from the interior of his home, protected from arbitrariness by thirty million men, has sent into the house of God a cadaver! He did this while you were sleeping

quietly on the sworn faith of 7 August, while prayers were demanded of you to bless, in the person of the King, the head of the liberty of a great nation. He did this before the law, which declared that the cults are liberated, but what is a liberated cult if its temple is not liberated, nor is its altar, if mud can be brought in there, with weapons in hand? This is what he did to half of all Frenchmen, he and his sub-prefect.

What can Catholics do in the face of this sacrilege? Abandon this profaned church, but also abandon the churches of all the townships of France: this was Lacordaire's advice.

It cannot be denied that this was rather radical; but it is well known that Lacordaire was not a man of half-measures.

He would display this by his own conduct, remaining constantly on his feet, defending liberty, every time that brutality or inequality violated it.

Twice more he would protest vigorously against the use of force by the government to take over church buildings. The first time was after the death of Gregory, the former constitutional bishop, whose obsequies the government ordered celebrated, on its authority, at the *Abbaye-au-Bois*.

The pagans, cried Lacordaire, never committed such a sacrilege. "And these cowardly profaners, do you know how they told us of their attempt against our religion? It was from Police Headquarters, from the wretched waiting-room where constantly the pickpockets, the lost girls, and even most vile spies crowd incessantly, that an official notice made known to us that on the morrow our faith would be dishonored publicly at precisely ten o'clock in the morning. They were right, and Heaven was just: the sacrilege had to pass through a sewer³⁶."

The sentence was hard and brutal; we find many similar ones from the pen of our journalist. He bites hard, but he reasons correctly just as hard.

A few months later, on the occasion of a similar scandal, *L'Avenir* had protested against the violation of a church by the State for its having ordered the celebration of a funeral service in honor of a stranger to the Catholic Church. "It was a question of Mr. Debortier," a former constitutional bishop, like Gregory.

The *Temps* and the *Courrier français* affirmed that the State had not overstepped its rights, in view of the fact that it *lends* the temples to Catholics.

Lacordaire replied smartly:

The State has loaned its temples, I concede, but if it had loaned its temples for stables,

From: George Christian, OP
1104 South 6th Street
Louisville, KY 40203-3114
USA

TO: David Adiletta, OP
Dominican Friars
St. Martin de Porres Priory
40100 Kisumu, Kenya
AFRICA

could it not, on a day and at a time of its choosing, take them back and devote them to another purpose? No, the laws forbid that. The user would need time to leave, to take out his horses, to find another location. Even animals cannot be expelled from a building of the State in the manner the State uses to expel God, when convenient. It has loaned its temples, I agree: but is this loan not subject to some conditions, of which freedom is the first? Is there in the world any government that would dare to say before men: 'Here is a house, place there your altars, altars holy and free; but remember that I will have offered there sacrifices that will please me by such men as I choose!' Even a stable would not be accepted at this price. And here it is a question of religion, of what, in all centuries, was the binding force of society, of what is the hope and the life of a multitude of men! Ah! We have fallen on times worthy of pity; never has the human conscience been so outraged³⁷!

You have to admit that this reasoning is not without a certain appropriateness.

That the priest not lower himself to receive from the State what it throws to him as alms the pay for his services; that he abandon all the churches whose possession by him a Voltarian government tolerates, that he regain his freedom of action: this is what would be good, according to Lacordaire. And yet, this would be insufficient, if at the same time, the clergy did not recover its freedom to recruit.

This relates particularly to bishops; but the bishops themselves, what would they do if they continued to receive their mandate from administrators as changeable as they are irreligious? Would they not, at some point, find themselves bowing their heads down while trembling before those who appointed them and paid their salary? And then, what will become of the Church of France? It was *To the Bishops of France* that Lacordaire addressed the strong expression of his fears, to the bishops of France whom he declared "had fallen to a level worse than that of the Greek bishops, at the capture of Constantinople."

He demonstrated that in the past, among other nations, the churches perished "by a corrupt intervention of power in the formation of the episcopate," then continued:

Now your time has come, sacred remains of our bishops; your turn has come to suffer that insensitive attack of authority. They have glanced over your heads whitened from the previous hardships; they counted your years and they rejoiced, because the life of man is short. As soon as you die, they will place on your chairs priests honored by their confidence, whose presence will subvert your ranks yet without destroying your unity. Later, a remnant of shame will later disappear from their actions; in secret, ambition will achieve horrible actions. The last of you, as you lay dying, will be able to descend the steps below the main altar of his cathedral in the conviction that his funeral ceremonies will be those of the entire Church of France.

What will be for us the guaranty of their choice? Since the Catholic religion is no longer that of the country, the ministers of the State hold and need to hold to a legal indifference toward us; is it their indifference that will be our guaranty? They are laymen, they could be Protestant, Jewish, atheist: will their conscience be our guaranty? They were chosen from the ranks of a society imbued with an stubborn prejudice against us; will their prejudice be our guaranty? In fine, they have been in office for four months; will their past be our guaranty? They have opened their mouths only to threaten us; they held out their hand only to beat down our cross; they signed ecclesiastical ordinances only to justify the agents who violated our sanctuaries, who allowed some dead bodies to rot there before God. They have tolerated that in all theaters our vesture become the dress of infamy while the right-hand men of Generals ordered us to wear it under penalty of being arrested as vagabonds released from penal servitude. Not once did they protect us on a single point of France; they even offered us as the premature victims to all strong emotions. There you have them, the rationale for security they offer us! These are the men from whom you would consent to receive your colleagues in the task of leading pastors!

The episcopate that would come from them is a doomed episcopate. Like it or not, it will be a traitor to religion, it will be parricide, a necessary plaything for the thousand changes that transfer power from one hand to another. It will mark in our ranks all the ministerial and anti-Catholic gradations that the majorities, one after another, will cherish as their work. Granted that, on one point, the new bishops will bend their clergy into trembling submission before the most foolish whims of a minister or of a prefect. In that Babel, the language of servility is the only one that will not change. Frivolous souls are never lacking to those who are looking for them. They will find some; they will train some. . . What do you fear? Are you not bishops? And you are also Frenchmen. . .

In completing this article, which some found bold, Lacordaire protested because of his respect for the episcopacy, of his filial submission to the authority of Rome, which he took as witness to his protest. “We will carry it, barefoot if necessary, to the city of Apostles, to the steps of the Confession of St. Peter, and we will see who will stop on the road the pilgrim of God and of liberty³⁸.”

It is easy to understand that similar words would arouse a certain enthusiasm in the clergy of France, some complaints among bishops, and in the government a rage that soon turned into prosecution. Called before the tribunal, accused of having incited hatred and contempt for the government, Lacordaire was acquitted after a memorable presentation which he himself delivered. . .

This matter of episcopal nominations, a matter of supreme importance for the good government of the Church, he held deeply in his heart. Moreover, he was to return to it again later on.

The case in point was the nomination of a certain Mr. Rey, to the see of Dijon. While announcing this nomination, *L'Avenir* stated that Lacordaire was fulfilling 'a painful duty,' and concluded in this way:

It is time that the indignation of Catholics be seen; we can only encourage the clergy and the faithful of the diocese which would threaten the ones chosen by the current power, to place at the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, in unanimous protests, the expression of their pain and of the hopes inspired in them by the immortal wisdom of the Holy See.³⁹

Two days later, Lacordaire returned to the topic, and in an eloquent denunciation, making the comparison between the proceedings of Napoleon and those of his ministers in the July Government — of Mr. de Montalivet, among others — he cried out in terms that could easily be applied to other persons and to other times:

When one wishes to act like Napoleon, one Mass should not cause fear. One should attend it with his ministers, his marshals, and his soldiers, look all around himself, and if some priest of virtue and talent is found, he is to be solicited and told, in the tone of Napoleon to Maury: You are the archbishop of my fair city. Then, if God allows, one can seduce a clergyman. But to tremble at being seen making a sign of the cross, to hide in one's room when three men cry out against a church, to have ministers demanding respect for the sanctuary in the name of the fine arts of Greece and of Rome, to look in shallow places for some priest very servile and strongly despised, or at least suspect, then to send him, in confidence, two months before daring to say it, a miter in the three national colors, and to believe — with the help of all that — that one will find a clergyman so stupid as to place himself under the four feet of the throne, is enough of a folly to make posterity die of delight [laughing]. . . Today, however untainted the intentions of the Ministry, in the choice of bishops, it is impossible for an honorable priest to accept a see from the hand of power, from the hand of men who have only one hope, that of corrupting; more than a care, it is to seek in the mud insects that are holy and are for sale. It is more than joy to have found one.⁴¹

Whatever value we may attribute to those lines, we should recognize that they build up with a certain pride, especially if we remember that they were written by a priest.

Besides, Lacordaire never knew fear. To the contrary, one had only to question his courage to see him immediately spring into action.

A significant proof was evident at the time of the lawsuit brought against him for his article *To the Bishops of France*. On the day following the judgment, *L'Avenir* had announced that it would reproduce in its columns Lacordaire's admirable plea. The latter wrote to the editor-in-chief to inform him that this was impossible because he was unable to collect his impressions⁴¹. In a burst of his usual simplicity, he continued: "Let them be forgotten those brief moments of a glory that disappeared in the grandeur of another triumph. I am satisfied with my obscure part; I prefer to keep the secret and never find it except in my remembrance that for a quarter hour I was standing beside a great man⁴²."

Two days later⁴³, these words, in energetic and proud brevity, could be read in *L'Avenir*.

Paris, 6 February 1831

To the Editor of *L'Avenir*

Sir,

I have learned that the non-publication of my plea has been attributed to the fear of my presenting to the public the words that I pronounced before the jury. Since one should never be cowardly, nor let it be believed that one is such, you will have my speech tomorrow, with not one syllable missing. I will devote one night to it.

H. Lacordaire

On 9 February, the presentation appeared in a supplement of *L'Avenir*.

Never had Lacordaire retreated when a word had to be said, a line to be written when the defense of liberty was at stake.

Because guided by this idea, he addressed on 24 December 1830 a letter to the staff-carrier of the order of lawyers, informing him, that although he was a priest he was resolved to retake his place at the bar. ". . . I a priest today. The duties which this name imposes on me at first distanced me from the bar. But immeasurable events have changed the position of the Church in the world; she needs to break all ties that chain her to the State and to build up ties with the people. This is why, devoted more than ever to her service, her laws, her ceremonial, I believe it useful for me to get closer to my fellow citizens, by pursuing

my career at the bar.”

We know that the Council of the Order, after a long and stormy discussion, decided that Lacordaire could not be inscribed on the list. For all that, the latter had done his duty in reclaiming freedom of speech.

Defender of all liberties, it would have been unusual for Lacordaire the journalist not to claim freedom of the press. He did not fail to do so.

In a first article⁴⁴, he especially attacked censorship which is nothing but “ministerial infallibility substituted for papal infallibility.” He holds that liberty is worth more than anything else because liberty is the order willed by God. “Far from the order being destroyed by the free combat of error against truth, that very combat is the basic universal order. In the designs of God, nothing was accomplished by way of censure and everything by way of repression. Hell exists only because censure from God Himself is impossible; at least, instead of the rule of censure, He preferred the rule of Hell. Because, even if Hell produces condemned souls, it also produces men, and saints, instead of having peopled the world with immortal idiots.” Besides, “it is in no way true that evil be stronger than the good, and that, here on earth, truth fights with weapons whose inequality needs to be made up for by help from absolute power.” In the end, he shows that everywhere persecuted truth has triumphed over protected and powerful error. “The days do not kill the centuries; liberty does not kill God.”

In a second article⁴⁵, he approached the question from another angle and proved that “freedom of the press is necessary for these times, a condition for social regeneration, the most effective means for truth to manifest itself in full daylight.” Concerning decentralization and the local press, there are within that article some passages that would be applicable to our times.

One could say as much for the article on *Prédications*⁴⁶, which we could well print in full today, and which we could rightly believe was written concerning Miss Conesdon, the apparitions of Tilly, etc., etc. We need to read its conclusion: “And yet, here are the dreams with which France is flooded and which contributed to shake up the public spirit. The ground is covered with prophets, male and female, who peddle from one bell tower to another some hearsay from the other world, specters coming from their mind and a piety that is blind to the genuine needs of nations. Notice to what end they push these mournful games: to inertia, to fatalism, to the idea that all is lost if God does not bring about a coup d’État. Strange men! So weak, so empty that they need God to appear in person for them to become something.”

It is not possible for us — without excessively lengthening this study — to summarize all the articles written in *L’Avenir* by Lacordaire⁴⁷. Those that we have cited are sufficient to show that he fulfilled the promise he had made to himself to defend freedom.

He gave himself completely to that noble task. When the *Messenger des Chambres* manifested its astonishment at “finding him among the most exaggerated partisans of freedom,” Lacordaire explained himself in a dignified manner:

As far as we are concerned, we do not know in France any exaggerated partisan of freedom: we know of only three parties eager for power, which one lost and regrets it, the other obtained and wants to hold on to it, the third never had but wants to have it. Beside those three, newly arrived men who do not regret the first party, support the second, and do not wish for the third, given that they grieve over, desire, and love only liberty. But what do they mean by liberty? Just this: the inviolability of the person and of the residence, the establishment of domestic independence by the *emancipation of instruction*, a national representation *that is not that of a caste*, freedom of cults which is not *that of violating their mysteries and their altars*. And why do these newcomers claim all that? Because this has been promised to them for forty years, and that they wish to avoid the yoke of the three parties that have tormented us for those forty years — the party that lost power, the one that conquered it, and the one that would like to have it in its turn. If these newcomers speak a language that is fiery and severe, it is because, after three or four republics, four or five monarchies, ten or twelve constitutions, we sometimes get tired of always being led by would-be liberals who repeat to us, with a prudence passed from office to office up to our time: ‘Sirs, you need to know how to wait. Patience is the first virtue of the citizen!’ In that case, France has the first citizens of the world, and we have the misfortune of not being one, but our exaggeration is easy to forgive. It is that of men bound hand and foot since birth and who have the audacity to open their mouth because they were told: “March! For example, around their cage they heard the cry: Freedom of instruction! Abolition of the monopoly! Deliverance of minds! Independence of opinions! And having heard all that, they were speaking only of grammar to a few small children, when their lips were sealed because of their impatience. Indeed, there is no reason to be angry at them⁴⁸.

In each of Lacordaire’s articles, even in his “*Variétés*” section, we can say that he gave a trumpet call arousing his readers to the defense of freedom. From his pen, this was a call to arms. “Every Catholic is a soldier,” said he, “and now is the hour to remember that⁴⁹.” He encouraged his brothers in faith to abandon the role of victim that they had played for too long and to reclaim their rights as citizens.

He was not satisfied merely to develop these ideas; as a competent journalist, he sometimes attacked men who personified for him oppression and intolerance. Take the King who calls himself a Christian, but does not attend Mass⁵⁰; take the minister, “a shameful hermaphrodite, male before the weak, and female before the strong⁵¹.”

Nonetheless, it must be noted that, unlike certain polemics of our day, when he attacked individuals, he looked only at the official personage, keeping totally aside the private life: he was quite able to recognize merit and dignity wherever they were found. He

had that respect even for the civil servants of the University. “We are attacking things and not men. Men are unknown to us; it is unlikely that the University does not have many of great merit, and many whose character is honorable⁵².”

Since one could have become convinced after having read the citations we made, Lacordaire sometimes pushed his fervor to insult. He also knew how to vary his talent: there are three or four articles in which he shows himself a capable reporter — in the meaning understood today. Sarcasm, sharp irony were not unknown to him⁵³. Moreover, if he had the fangs sharp and the words coarse, he never lost the nobility and the elegance of the form. His style, that some today might find *overblown* or *bombastic*, can be accounted for by the youth of the writer and the tastes of the period. In spite of everything, in reading him — especially in reading him aloud — he again left a good impression. What was it like, in 1830, when these fiery sentences arrived every morning in the rural rectories? . . . It is easy to understand the feelings of love or of hate that he must have aroused. Besides, this is the attribute of ideas and of men who have some value.

What did Lacordaire think of *L’Avenir* and of leaving at his own will? He provided an evaluation, matured by time and experience, in his *Testament*, published at the head of his letters to Mr. Foisset⁵⁴.

L’Avenir, too, (said he) made some mistakes; therein the journal did not indicate precisely enough the boundary of its opinions. It seems to skirt the edges of excess by the intemperance of its language. Freedom, as everything which is of earth, has some limits. Otherwise the press would have the privilege of inflicting injury, defamation, slander, or immorality. Religious conscience would not dare to consider building public temples to the most shameful passions of the heart of man. Dealings of the Church with the State could not be broken off entirely nor constricted to the point of servitude. The newspaper *L’Avenir* acknowledged all those reservations, but too often it masked them in a statement wherein youth revealed its inexperience. In addition, against the power emanation from 1830, the newspaper displayed an attitude that was too aggressive, not to say violent. Undoubtedly, this power did not recognize the rights claimed by the Catholics; it intended to shut on them the bronze doors which an uncommon legislation had forged, to their detriment.

After having shown how great Louis-Philippe’s error was, Lacordaire continued:

It would have been better that words less harsh convey our complaints and that our tone of voice reflect Christianity more than the license of the times.

Despite its faults, and despite its chief, *L’Avenir* brought about a remarkable commotion. . . Yet this movement did not have a base sufficiently widespread; it had been too foolhardy and too forceful to sustain itself for any length of time. A consistent success presumes deep roots implanted in spirits over time. Even though O’Connell had preceded us, France was

in some respects unaware of him. We appeared to the clergy, the government, the parties, like a band of lost children without ancestors and without posterity. The situation resembled a tempest coming from the desert; it was not the fruitful rain which freshens the air and benefits the fields. Accordingly, it was necessary that after thirteen months of daily combat, we should consider retreat. Funds were depleted, courage wavering, forces diminished by clear overuse.

Nonetheless, the activity of *L'Avenir* was far from having been sterile. In 1844, Lacordaire wrote:

Just about fifteen years ago, there were Ultramontanes and Gallicans, Cartesians and Mennaisians, Jesuits and men who were not. . . Today, all the world embraces, the bishops speak of freedom and of common rights; the press, the Charter, the present time are accepted. . . There is, therefore, a clergy of France, a clergy that speaks, that writes, and that joins together before the powers-that-be, the professors, the journalists, the deputies and the princes; a clergy that has left behind its past lives, no longer addressing the King, but the nation, humanity, the future. Fourteen years and one occasion were sufficient to bring this about⁵⁵.

When he was writing these lines, I say that Lacordaire could, without a spirit of pride, have taken credit for having had a part in that 'unbelievable spectacle' and to tell himself that the union perhaps would never have been achieved if, as early as 1830, *L'Avenir* had not sounded the call to the flag.

For the moment, *L'Avenir* has disappeared and the 'pilgrims for freedom' are in Rome. In a way, we can say that it is there that Lacordaire composed the last article of this heated campaign. Indeed, it was to him that his two companions Lammenais and Montalembert entrusted the care of composing the *Mémoire présenté au Souverain Pontife Grégoire XVI by the editors of L'Avenir and Council members of the General Agency for the defense of religious freedom*⁵⁶.

In that report, comprising only nine paragraphs, Lacordaire cast an eye on the state of the Church of France on the accession of the July Monarchy, displayed the inconvenience resulting from her solidarity with the Restoration, and advocated complete separation from political parties and diverse governmental structures.

Moreover, he recommended equally the suppression of the budget of the clergy which would lead — with unconcern about government structure — to the liberation of the Church. Nor did he overlook praising the value of the activities of *L'Avenir* and of the *Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse*.

Mr. d'Hussonville stated: "On rereading the document in which are expressed very discrete considerations of the dangers that political alliances cause to the Church, it is impossible not to ask oneself what reception he would have received if the Holy See had been occupied fifty years ago as it is today. Assuredly that bold thesis which made it a duty of the Church to break all attachment to the State would have received swift approbation, because the Church does not willingly pursue adventures. On the other hand, between the idea of a necessary sacrifice of political attachments in favor of the higher interests of religion, along with the recommendations to Catholics in a recent Encyclical, there lies an analogy so striking as to allow us to inquire whether the second part of the report might not have received approval as did the first. Unfortunately, Gregory XVI was not Leo XIII⁵⁷."

We know the conclusion of this matter, the vigorous although painful separation of Lacordaire from Lamennais and the scandals created by the latter.

Lacordaire was returning to the private life after thirteen months of struggles. This year counted for a lot in his life: he suffered because of it, and he suffered for a long time. Nonetheless, he wrote about it to Montalembert: "It will always remain in my heart like a virgin who has just died⁵⁸." What he was saying here was related, according to the general meaning of the letter, to the pleasant joys tested in the friendship with Montalembert. But it is also possible to apply these words to the emotions aroused by the battles fought during this memorable year — so much is it true that we often attach ourselves to ideas, to things, and to persons, by reason of the sufferings we have endured for them. It must have been so with Lacordaire, "born to battle and to love."

ENDNOTES

17. We do not consider his entry in journalism with an article he wrote for the *Mémorial catholique*, of which Father Gerbet was the founder and director. This article appeared in the issue of March 1824 under the title: *Du droit public* [The public right].
18. The first issue of *L'Avenir* appeared on 16 October 1830.
19. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 13 November 1830.
20. On this subject, we find some curious details in the correspondence of Lamennais:
"We are busy," said he, "in looking for correspondents sought by the *Mémorial* (newspaper of Toulouse), but these would be extremely difficult to find; and when we found capable men, no one would want to assume that kind of work for the pay offered. I am very sorry. . . An editor was being sought also by the *Journal du Puy-de-Dôme*; another for that of *Deux-Flandres*. No one wants to move for such mediocre advantages as are being offered, all the more since only talented men need be presented, such men as we ourselves would

be very pleased to locate for *L'Avenir*. The reality is that, up to now, the principal editors of the latter have worked almost for free.” (Letter to Marquis de Coriolis, 14 January 1821).

21. One day, Mrs. Schwetchine asked him to send her the newspapers that spoke of him and of his conferences. At first, he did so, then he stopped. “I have given up,” said he, “sending those articles all of which repeat the same thing. . . I have very little inclination to spread what is being said about me; in the early days at *L'Avenir*, I was sensitive to seeing my name appear in public; I have indeed shed that sensitivity. (*Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 19 December 1841*)

22. R. P. Lecanuet: *Montalembert*, p. 139.

23. *Montalembert*.

24. *Avenir*, 8 November 1831.

25. Are supporting facts for this affirmation sought? They are easy to quote:

Mr. de Cosnac, today archbishop of Sens, received his Bulls, and must go to his diocese next week. The prelate had to take possession recently through a proxy. The See of Sens has now been vacant for thirteen months. Mr. Cardinal de la Fare had died on 10 December of last year. (*Avenir*, 8 November 1830).

In the diocese of Lyons, there are at this moment eight country parishes to which Msgr. the Archbishop has named respectable clerics whom Mr. de Montaliver, for the heights of his ministerial infallibility, had refused to authorize. The same is true for the township of *Saint-Laurent-du-Pont* (Isère). (*Avenir*, 14 October 1831).

At the invitation of the Prefect of the Cher Department, the Archbishop of Bourges recently addressed a circular letter to the pastors of his diocese, to direct them to have their churches at the disposition of the mayors of their respective townships so that the latter might conveniently proceed to the elections required by law concerning township organization. (*Avenir*, 8 October 1831).

Elsewhere, similar results took place for the election of the National Guard.

L'Avenir (29 June 1831) published a letter of protest to the bishop of Montauban concerning the ban on processions.

26. *Avenir*, 17, 18, and 23 October 1830.

27. *Avenir*, 13 April 1831.

28. *Avenir*, 30 July 1831.

29. *Avenir*, 12 October 1831.

30. *Pensées* [Thoughts], Edit. Havet, art. VI, 26.

31. Lamennais developed the thesis from a general viewpoint, in three articles entitled respectively:

De la séparation de l'Église et de l'État [Separation of Church and State] — *De la position de l'Église de France* [The position of the Church in France] — *Oppression des catholiques* [Oppression of Catholics]. Gerbet wrote two articles on *La liberté de l'Église*

[Liberty of the Church], and two on the Abolition of Concordats.

32. We have from him ten special articles on the question, not to mention notes in newspapers.
33. *Avenir*, 27 October 1830.
34. *Avenir*, 30 October 1830.
35. *Avenir*, 2 November 1830.
36. *Avenir*, 31 May 1831.
37. *Avenir*, 25 October 1831.
38. *Avenir*, 25 November 1830.
39. *Avenir*, 19 August 1831.
40. *Avenir*, 21 August 1831.
41. *Avenir*, 5 February. Supplement.
42. It was Lamennais, pursued on the same day as Lacordaire, for an article entitled *Oppression des Catholiques*, and equally acquitted after a plea of Master Janvier of the Angers bar.
43. *Avenir*, 7 February 1831.
44. *Avenir*, 12 June 1831.
45. *Avenir*, 27 June 1831.
46. *Avenir*, 17 October 1830.
47. They number thirty-eight; each one is much longer than what we are used to seeing in our day. Besides, we will see them further on; nonetheless, here is a list of the titles, in the name of curiosity: Three on Freedom of Instruction. — Six on Suppression of the Budget of the Clergy. — Two on Freedom of the Press. — Catholicism's upward Movement. — Predictions — A schism . — Gœtz of Berlichingen. — From a circular letter of the Minister of Cults, and an article in the *Figaro*. — What they are and what we are. — Obsequies of Mr. Grégoire. — Subscription for the rebuilding of the archiepiscopal residence in Paris. — Revolution in Italy. — Poland. — The protest of Mr. de Montbel — The battle of Ostrolenka. — Accession of Prince Leopold of Belgium. — A circular letter of the Minister of Cults concerning prayers for the King. — What law is. — A tomb of July. — Funeral notice on the late Count de Montalembert. — The selection and nomination of bishops. — The position and duty of Catholics. — Reply to the *Messenger*. — Festivals of July. — The law dealing with chaplains of the colleges of the University. — The nomination of Mr. Rey to the see of Dijon. — The college of Baupréau. — Reply to the *Temps* and the *Courrier français*. — Reopening of the University.
48. *Avenir*, 23 July 1831.
49. *Avenir*, 11 July 1831.
50. *Avenir*, 27 July 1831.
51. *Avenir*, 11 July 1831.
52. *Avenir*, 12 October 1831.
53. *Avenir*, 23 December 1830: a Variety, entitled "A circular letter from the Minister of Cults to the bishops of France, and an article from the *Figaro*."
54. Poussielgue, publisher.
55. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 16 June 1844.
56. Since we saw no end to the indefinite state of waiting in which it seemed they wanted to leave us, we believed that we had a duty to address to the Pope the following report, written almost

entirely by Father Lacordaire, and which Cardinal Pacca very kindly offered himself to present." *Lamennais*. — *The matters of Rome*.

— This report was not printed in the Works of Lacordaire, but can be found in those of Lamennais, in front of the *Affaires de Rome*. We will read it later.

FROM *L'AVENIR* TO *L'ÈRE NOUVELLE*

At the hour of weakness which follows energetic efforts not crowned by success, do we not feel inclined to cast a glance at the past? Our fate excites us, and by instinct, in comparing it with that of our predecessors, we deem it worthy of compassion by crowds. It seems to us that their combats were not as heroic, nor their bruises as smarting as ours: men were less unjust toward them and Providence was a more tender mother.

Nonetheless, little by little, calm returns to our mind; our dried tears have restored the clarity of our gaze, we see better and we judge more judiciously and our new judgment comes to replace the first.

What we are experiencing, our predecessors experienced; the blows that struck us beat their shoulders; the blood that marks the traces of our steps is their blood mixed with ours, just as the battles that we waged were simply a repetition, often attenuated, of theirs.

As they have acted, so must we act.

Were they obliged to break their pen or silence their word: they took advantage of the situation in silence and in study, to prepare for future combats. While waiting for a favorable occasion, they perfected their method and their weapons.

At least, this was how Lacordaire used them during the enforced rest provided by Providence after the disappearance of *L'Avenir*.

What will he decide to do? Very simply, he will take up again that life of peacefulness that he had set aside to jump into the fray; he will take it up even with a certain joy. "I will, first of all, return to my modest place as chaplain to the Visitation Sisters, which I held in 1828 and 1829, and which became vacant by the death of the poor young man to whom I had ceded it. For me, it is a delightful place. There, modestly and slowly, I will allow the rest of the storm to pass — a heavy part of which lies on my head. I will allow the prejudices to die out, I will prepare works of oratory and a work in which I aim to show the parallel of the Church to the world in these days, and in which I will take up a multitude of questions in a conciliatory spirit⁵⁹."

Did he not harbor the dream of retiring in the deep of a hamlet, there to devote his life to the evangelization of humble folk? "I hope," he used to say, "to bury myself deep in a hamlet, to live only for a small flock of men, to find all my happiness in God and in the fields. Then will I be seen as a simple man without ambition. Farewell to my major works! Farewell to reputation and to great men! I have known the vanity of this and I desire only to live humbly and simply⁶⁰."

Retired at number 6 of the New Saint-Étienne-du-Mont Street, at the feet of Mount Sainte-Geneviève, he lived with his mother who had returned a second time to share his solitude.

Not at any price would he consent to return to the press. “I did not want,” he would write, “to enter into the career of journalism. I have done my time of service, albeit short, and I received enough wounds to have been declared invalid⁶¹.” He was offered, “many times and with entreaties,” absolute direction of *L’Univers religieux*⁶². “It was the Archbishop’s wish,” wrote he, ‘but I did not want to. *L’Univers religieux* is a work in transition⁶³.”

One month later, his rejection was not as strong. During a trip along the coast of the Rhine, he met Msgr. Humann, bishop of Mayence, who strongly encouraged him to become the head of “an enterprise for a periodical that would uphold the true principles.” He was greatly perplexed. “Oh! What to do?” he wrote to Mrs. Schwetchine. “For a moment, I dreamed of combining *L’Univers religieux* with *L’Ami de la religion*, the only magazines that, frankly, uphold the true doctrine, though with different outlooks. I will have *L’Univers religieux* any time I want it, and today *L’Ami de la religion* would suit me quite well. On the other hand, I am afraid of devoting my life to this unconventional work, albeit certainly useful. I bob amid contradictory thoughts⁶⁴ .”

Is he caught in weariness, disillusionment, disgust? Should we apply to his external life what he himself has said of his interior life? “For the past ten years that my life completely and suddenly changed by my consecration to the clerical state, I have not had one single moment of stability, of interior rest, except for the unshakable awareness of my vocation. Except for that, my spirit was filled with troubles, changes, error, doubt. . . So many projects on the pathway! So many questions resolved now in this sense, then in another! I had almost become a Jesuit, almost to the point of moving to Poland, to the point of going to America (do I remember all that I thought and all that I had wanted?). There is in me something energetic and unexpected. And yet, there is also a basis of cold, persevering reason, which navigates within me through all my tempests and that finally brings me to port, with the grace of God⁶⁵. . .”

There it is! The true reason: burning with intense desire to devote his life to the defense of the Church and of freedom. As yet, Lacordaire did not know what weapons he would be given: the pen in journalism, the word in preaching. At the moment in his life that we have reached, Providence seemed to have shown him his pathway. Indeed, he had succeeded admirably in the series of conferences which he had begun at the Stanislas college, on 19 January of this year 1834, and he felt sure that in this truly lay his calling. We can understand why, from then on, he would hesitate to take up again the ‘unconventional’ work of journalism. For all that, his hesitation was rather short-lived; he wrote to Mr. Foisset to inform him of his decision.

I have completely abandoned the idea of writing in newspapers on behalf of the defense of religion. Newspapers are of two kinds: daily, or those that appear as Magazines every now and then. The daily papers have no sufficient nourishment except politics, and the speed required for their composition carries all the inconveniences of hastiness. However remarkable it was through talent and originality, *L'Avenir* is without a doubt proof of this; if it had lived longer, the weariness of the editors would soon have relegated it to the rank of ordinary pages. It perished because of the impossibility of performing such a task with composure, wisdom, impartiality, and without throwing itself into the muddy torrent of the most human matters. Besides, every day newspapers lose out in public opinion; they are too soiled a weapon, and will never have renown except in those perilous moments when a nation can be moved from top to bottom, and plunged into civil war or into an exterior war. The Church, always calm and self-possessed, must defend herself by other means, unless perhaps it be in a time of persecution, a schism of some other great catastrophe. Then there is nourishment sufficient and glorious for those daily combats. In that sense, *L'Avenir* had appeared to be relevant. Note that the Church necessarily governs herself from *top to bottom*, following her divine establishment; newspapers, on the contrary, if they have a genuine influence, introduce an administration from *bottom to top*. To avoid such a problem, the episcopate would have to create a newspaper; that it will never do. The example of Ireland and the United States does not negate this thesis, because these two countries fall into an exceptional case, that I noted above, and, if need be, I will not be afraid to apply myself to it, for a specified time, at the head of a daily paper.

There remain the *Revue mensuelles*. They are something else. A magazine in which all scholarly Catholics who knew how to write would set down their abundant thoughts and reply to the attacks of the enemy, would be an excellent entity. In it, there would be no haste, no passion, no political embarrassment. But the elements of this *Revue* are not present today. Mr. de Lamennais, lost as a rallying point, is once more an obstacle to union. All his former friends align in different ways, and the chief, necessary in everything, is no up to that work. Is there anything so pitiful as that *Revue européenne*, in which Mr. Ballanche, the first of modern heretics — since he denies the eternity of punishments and that he is more than a follower of Origen — writes and is presented as Catholic, wherein Mr. d'Eckstein, who unceasingly propounds the deliverance of the century and of reason, is an oracle? Friend, all that disgusts me; it is nothing else but the dissolution of the party of Mr. de Lamennais into its many branches; it marks the close of the last fifteen years. There is in this magazine no life, no hopes, no wisdom, no understanding of the Church and of her beliefs. It is but a miserable stew⁶⁶.”

But this was not a final farewell that he addressed to journalism. When there come ‘exceptional’ times or those ‘perilous moments when a nation can be entirely shaken, and propelled into a civil war,’ we will again see Lacordaire “place himself, for a specific period, at the head of a daily newspaper.”

During these equivocations, explainable and understandable, he had not forgotten the road to editing. On 2 May 1834 there appeared in *L'Univers religieux* an article by him, entitled: *De l'état actuel de l'Église de France* [The actual state of the Church of France].

This is how he began: “Thirty-four years ago, the Church of France exhibited to angels and to men only a vast ruin.” The author then demonstrated the doctrinal powerlessness of the eighteenth century, personified in the French Revolution, then in the Concordat and the Coronation. He pointed out that in 1830, absent any religious doctrine they could offer to the people, the winners were obliged to let France quietly enjoy that true religion which the eighteenth century had believed so strongly it was able to destroy. He stated that: “emerging from the ashes as sprightly young and unblemished virgin, the Church of France had only to conquer an error spent by victory.” Unfortunately, minds were completely divided on questions of the highest importance, especially on the teaching of philosophy. On valid grounds, Lacordaire attributed this division to Mr. de Lamennais, to the latter’s system about certitude and about the school he had founded. Lacordaire took the opportunity to make this solemn declaration: “Up to yesterday, the school about which we have been speaking remained alive; enfeebled and divided by a word from the Holy See, it had, nonetheless, retained its head and its disciples. Today, we can announce that this school, which we left a long time ago, no longer exists; that all common activity between its former members has ceased, and each one of them, faithful to whatever his heart will demand regarding the past, recognizes no other guide than the Church, no other need than unity, no other ambition than to rally around the Holy See and its bishops which its grace and divine mercy have given to France.”

The importance of these lines will not be overlooked by anyone when it is remembered that they were written only a few days after the appearance of *Paroles d’un croyant* [Words of a believer].

Lacordaire was not content to sever the bond that had joined him to Lamennais: he wished to do this in a more striking manner. Accordingly, he published his *Considération sur le système philosophique de M. de Lamennais*⁶⁷.

An analysis of that document does not fit into the framework we have traced: we mention it only to state the polemic that it provoked between Baron d’Eckstein and Lacordaire.

In *France catholique*, Baron d’Eckstein offered a sharp critique of Lacordaire’s book, and attacked him personally. He rebuked Lacordaire for “beating his wet-nurse, for chastising himself by beating his master’s back,” at a time when the world was casting stones at the latter. He told Lacordaire that he was too young, fickle, lively, inconsiderate, irresponsible, lacking philosophical understanding. . . that he was rejecting completely human reasoning. . . ,” and that he was breaking violently “the bond between science and faith.” He did, however, allow that Lacordaire was not among men *of the sacristy*, “one of those hateful words,” said Mr. Foisset, “that the parties are so clever in devising in order to make their antagonists loathsome, but that an honest adversary would never utter⁶⁸.”

Lacordaire's response was not long in coming⁶⁹: it was sharp, but dignified. "I included the most simplicity and most sincerity that I could muster," he wrote to Mrs. Schwetchine, "but I fear I did not find the right measure, until you assure me otherwise⁷⁰."

All these events took place in 1834; up to 1848, Lacordaire will no longer write in a newspaper. His conferences at Notre-Dame, his trips to Rome, the restoration of the Order of St. Dominic, took up all his time. Nonetheless, in 1845, it did not take much to have him pick up his pen as journalist.

This was the occasion.

The bitter and unduly personal argument against this brave fighter had frightened some of his friends and the shareholders of *L'Univers*, who, in the general assembly of 1844 rose up against the editor-in-chief. From another direction, Bishop Affre, affected by what he found excessive in the polemic of the newspaper, threatened to abandon it. An editorial committee was proposed which would include Fathers Lacordaire and de Ravignan, Messers Dupanloup, de Montalembert, Beugnot, and Lenormand. Mr. de Coux was to be chief editor.

This project did not succeed because of the withdrawal of Father Dupanloup whose official post — at the time, he was Vicar-General — might have brought the diocesan administration to incur some onerous responsibilities.

Nonetheless, the dream continued of founding another newspaper to counterbalance *L'Univers*. Lacordaire would have been one of the directors. As early as 4 June 1845, he wrote to Mrs. Schwetchine about it. He told her again, at the end of the month: "We have had two meetings that ended up sealing our gentleman's agreement; funds have been assured; unless the devil plays a very cunning game — which is not impossible for him to do — in October or November will have a famous newspaper⁷¹."

In the meantime, the Jesuits were dispersed, under well-known circumstances. "With that," Lacordaire said, "our future newspaper floated down-stream. Father Ravignan could no longer stay with us. I regret this from one viewpoint, that of a better defense of the Church, but, to tell you the truth, the character of some of the collaborators portended cruel battles. I find no comfort in this kind of action. Nature has mixed into my energy an ingredient of extreme gentleness and simplicity that makes me unsuitable to the harshness of almost all those whom I see manipulating our interests. This is, nonetheless, proof that God does not want me in that kind of service. And so, I have become again a poor and gentle monk, reading, writing, hearing confessions, while awaiting the greatest peace of death⁷²."

Event though he took little comfort in that kind of action, he understood the need for the press: his life, up to now, stood as proof of this. Very often, wherever he passed, he

had the opportunity to get involved in it and to promote the establishment of some newspaper. This is what he did in Lyons, where he had just finished preaching. “The people of Lyons, up to now divided by politics, had been unable to agree to found a purely religious newspaper, and yesterday evening, they remained in great uncertainty. They harangued me on the subject, and I lectured them in return. In brief, the evening ended with the subscription of men of all opinions for the initial costs of a religious newspaper. Now, a subscription will be launched throughout the city, and the birth will reach its term⁷³.”

Thanks to his generous support, the *Gazette de Lyon* was founded. Its program stated that it had to be “Catholic above all,” following the expression in vogue today, and that we did not invent.

We would be remiss in not pointing out that, as supporter of the press, Lacordaire wanted it to be held in the highest esteem, and that it be treated with the greatest circumspection even in its ill-conduct. For more than fifteen years after *L’Avenir*, he held on to almost the entirety of the ideas he previously held concerning freedom of the press.

“I have just read in *L’Univers*,” he wrote in 1847, that the bishop of Chartres was attacked for an order in which he embarrassed the irreligious newspaper of his diocese. To be sure, the right to do so is clear from a religious viewpoint, and perhaps even from the point of view of freedom of the press. In admitting the incontestable right on the part of the Bishop, is that a procedure that could be of some good to our generations, so timid before the power of faith? This is the thought that engrosses me; I understand that in a regime of full liberty, the use of that freedom is a problem of major importance⁷⁴.”

A new age and new battles will spring up for the former editor of *L’Avenir*.

ENDNOTES

57. Comte d'Haussonville: *Lacordaire*, p. 68.

58. *Lettre à Montalembert*, 29 October 1834.

59. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 16 February 1833.

60. Letter to Mr. De Montalembert, 1832.

61. Letter to Mr. Lorain, 24 February 1834.

62. Founded by Father Migne.

63. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 9 May 1834.

64. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 26 June 1834.

Besides, he is called on from everywhere to edit newspapers: “. . . The Bishop of Nancy took me aside, the other day, to ask me seriously to write for the *Gazette de France*, for which Mr. de Genoude continues to be editor and hopes to create a holy little publication! I did not agree, as you well understand, and that left me hanging concerning another proposal made recently, that of writing for the *Mode*.” Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 4 October 1834.

65. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 15 August 1834.

66. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 28 August 1834.

67. They appeared on 29 May 1834.

68. Foisset, *Vie du R. P. Lacordaire*, t. I, p. 265.

69. *Univers religieux*, 22 June 1834.

70. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 26 June 1834.

71. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 30 June 1845.

72. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 12 July 1845.

73. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 25 February 1845.

74. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 17 March 1847.

L'ÈRE NOUVELLE — LACORDAIRE DEPUTY

Really, now, what were Lacordaire's political ideas? Was he a constitutionalist, as he has often been accused, or simply an open-minded progressive? . . . This is not an idle question: we need to discuss it briefly, at the time when the illustrious orator will assume the direction of *L'Ère Nouvelle*, and participate in parliamentary debates.

He was never a constitutionalist on principle; he himself was astonished by the opinion certain persons had formed about him on this matter, because "he had never said a word nor written a line that would have indicated the slightest tendency toward the party called republican⁷⁵." He was even accused of being very hard on this form of government in his *Lettre sur le Saint-Siège* [Letter on the Holy See]⁷⁶ when he wrote: "One discovers deep in the hold of society a kind of faction that believes itself to be republican about which we dare not speak disparagingly if only because it has a chance of cutting off our head between two monarchies." But we have to note that this applies more to revolutionary demagoguery than to the republic, as he himself explains elsewhere: "If the republicans win, that is to say, those ambitious knaves in every city and town, they will be the dread of freedom. . . and a wearied France will throw itself into the arms of a master who will do with us whatever suits him⁷⁷. We will see later what he thought about the men of '89 and of '93.

Lacordaire was a monarchist, but a constitutional monarchist. Listen to him as he dictates on his deathbed the report of his life: "A partisan of parliamentary monarchy from my youth, I had limited all my wishes and all my hopes to see it established among us. . . Liberal and parliamentarian, I knew myself very well; republican, I did not see myself in the same way⁷⁸."

Why, then, did he accept the Republic in 1848? Because, first of all, this form of government, when it becomes habit, contains nothing in itself contrary to the laws of nature or of religion; it even presumes more virtue in people because it could not subsist except by a deep devotion to the commonweal and by a major impartiality in those who occupy its high responsibilities⁷⁹.

Moreover, he accepted it as a trial run, "a necessary experiment, after the consecutive fall of three monarchies⁸⁰." He accepted it especially, because, basically, he was a man of no party: "Before all and above all, I wanted to be a man of God, of His Church, and of His Gospel. . . I gave my pledge to no party, intending to preserve my right to tell them the whole truth, as is my duty⁸¹. . . . My political ideas," said he later, "are reducible to this: outside of Christianity, no society is possible, except for a society out of breath between the despotism of the one and the despotism of the many. Secondly, Christianity cannot retrieve its mastery in the world except by a frank battle, wherein it is

neither oppressor nor oppressed. I live within this world and am a stranger to everything else⁸².”

If we may be allowed to use a contemporary expression, we could say that Lacordaire was a won-over individual, that is to say, as a Frenchman, he accepted any form of government that could bring to his country peace and happiness; as a priest, he demanded of that government that it respect the freedom of the Church and all freedoms, just as he demanded of the Church that she no longer place herself in dependency to thrones. “This Church must detach herself from hope in nationalities, adhere to Christian freedom and conquer it aching in the pains of battle⁸³.”

Louis-Philippe had just fallen; uncertain minds did not know what to do because they knew not where duty lay, where salvation lay. On this matter, Lacordaire explains himself very well:

Establishing a constitutional monarchy following the two dreadful falls of 1830 and 1848 was not possible; founding a republic in a country governed for thirteen to fourteen centuries by kings also seemed impossible. But there was this difference between the two situations: the monarchy had just fallen, while the republic was still standing. Now, what is standing has a better chance of surviving than what is on the ground; then again, even if there was no hope of seating the new regime in perpetuity, it could at least be recognized as a shelter, and be used as such to provide France with a few of the institutions whose absence had quite clearly caused the downfall of two thrones and of two dynasties⁸⁴.

Here is something very well said, something on which many people of our times could usefully meditate.

For all that, Lacordaire himself did not know which side to take.

While I was deliberating with myself, Father Maret and Frédéric Ozanam knocked on my door. They came to tell me that trouble and uncertainty reigned among Catholics; that the rallying points were disappearing in a confusion which could become irreparable, making us hostile to the new regime and depriving us of the chance of obtaining from it the freedoms which the previous government had obstinately refused us.

“The republic,” they said, “was well disposed toward us; we do not have to reproach it for any acts of disbelief or cruelty which marked the 1830 revolution. It believes in us, it hopes in us; why should we discourage it? Besides, what else to do? With what party to associate? What are we facing if not ruins, and what is the republic if not the natural government of a society after it has lost all its anchors and all its traditions?”

My two interlocutors added other higher and more general views, drawn from the future of European society and from the inability of the monarchy ever to find again a principle of stability. I did not wander off to that side as far as they did. Constitutional monarchy always seemed to me the more desirable form of government; nonetheless, I saw the republic only as a momentary need which it was necessary to accept with sincerity until matters and ideas had naturally taken another course. This divergence was serious and hardly allowed for a common task under the same flag. However, danger pressed and it was necessary to resign oneself in such a serious moment, or else to uplift openly one's banner and bring to society, shaken to its very foundations, the convergence of enlightenment and competence which each individual could muster. Until then, in all public events I clearly had taken a stand; because the difficulties were more serious, should I fall back to the selfishness of a cowardly silence? True, I could tell myself that I was a religious, and could hide under my cowl as if behind a shield. But I was a militant religious, a preacher, a writer, surrounded by a harmony which created for me some duties other than those of a Trappist or of a Carthusian. These deliberations weighed heavily on my conscience. Summoned by friendly voices to speak out, pressed by them, I finally gave in to the reality of events. Although it was repugnant to me to re-enter the career of journalist, I unfurled with those who had offered to follow me a banner wherein religion, the republic, and freedom entwined in the same folds⁸⁵.

He wrote about it to Mrs. Schwetchine in the following heroic terms:

My thought, thanks to God, has taken all its plateful and time will finish granting it. Before anything else, one must combat fear by not backing away from any duty. Perhaps for the first time I have made great sacrifices to God; until today, all had been according to my tastes, but at this critical hour I take up again common sense and I abandon my life, in the full meaning of the term, against my will for the will of God⁸⁶.

Despite his age, his preoccupations and his responsibilities as head of the Order, we find again the Lacordaire of 1830. One has to keep marching because today, like yesterday, it is a question of "God and of freedom."

Accordingly, he accepted. A meeting was held at the *Cercle catholique*; Father Maret and Ozanam were in attendance, appropriately so. In a brilliant impromptu speech, after having presented the various viewpoints, Lacordaire proposed the foundation of a newspaper; this was accepted by acclamation. A fund-raising was open there and then, which, in the hands of the Father, amounted to a sum of eleven thousand five hundred francs. At that time, the Catholics were able to find money to support their ideas in the press. *L'Ère nouvelle* had been established.

The prospectus was released on 1 March 1848.

It was very long; nonetheless, we need to quote its major lines, because it bears, as its first signature, the name of Lacordaire, and we find in it the strong influence of liberalism.

France, (it is said there), is not a people unaccountable or dead. Regarding the true and the just, it holds one aspiration whose unruly movements are but evidence of it. It seeks a government, sincere like itself, that does not make of its existence a permanent contradiction of its hopes. Too much is promised to the people, of whom too little is required; laws recapture from the people what the constitutions had given; restorations have taken away what revolutions had won. In this dreadful game, if the people lose faith in the powers that lie to them and to the things that betray them, they never lose hope of a life usually well-ordered that hallows the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity that Christianity brought into the world. . .

France being Catholic, the stand that its episcopate, its clergy, its faithful will take is of supreme importance, and, so to speak, without limit. What Catholics do not wish will not be done, or will be accomplished under such conditions that its success will be but the evening of the fall and of burial. Today, as on 18 *brumaire* [second month of the revolutionary calendar - Trans.], there are two victors: the nation and religion. This could not be said in 1830, even though it was true. But the veils of 1830 have been rent and all the world — except that small flock of blind persons which every time survives beyond the light — all the world is aware that there are two forces in France: the people themselves and Jesus Christ. If they should part ways, we will lose; if they understand one another, we are saved.

How can they understand each other?

They can understand each other if the Church respects the overall will of the nation, and if the nation respects the traditional laws of the Church. They are able to understand each other, if the Church works for the good of the nation, and if the nation agrees to the good of the Church.

Let us start with ourselves. What does the nation want? It has brought death or allowed to die, which is the same thing, three monarchies in forty-seven years. It is worn out in consequence of that triple and unfruitful experiment. It suspects, at the very least, that there is in that form of government something mysteriously incompatible with the stability of its destinies. It asks itself whether the kings were not condemned by heaven, since they fell so easily, and it wishes, by another great experiment, to attempt to live and to survive under some other form of public administration. Why would we stop it? Did the Gospel or the Church ever condemn any particular form of government? Do not Christian institutions flourish better under the democratic sky of the United States than under the autocratic scepter of the czar? What is the divine reason that opposes the establishment in France of a republic? Assuredly, there is none.

. . . Enough about us. As for the nation, it owes us the sincere respect of our divine constitution. This constitution is well-known. We did not make it; we believe it came from God and we are prepared to sign every one of its articles in all our blood. To attack one of them is to order us to make a choice between the death of time and the death of eternity. Our choice has been made. But the nation owes us more than the respect of our divine constitution: it owes Catholics, as well as all the other cults, a genuine removal of the fetters that, in our country, burden conscience and thought in their right of expression and development. We request for ourselves and for all the world the freedom that has been refused us up to now and that Protestant America refuses to no one since the day of its glorious liberation. We ask for freedom of education, freedom of instruction, freedom of association, without which all others are powerless to mold men and citizens. The republic of the mind is the row of columns necessary for the civic republic. To establish the constraint of minds as principle to the freedom of States is a pagan tradition that produced only slavery for almost the entire human race. The Empire, the Restoration, the Revolution of July, raised French generations without being able to make them monarchical generations; a Republic would raise them without being able to make them republican generations. The mind does not fulfill the services of the State, and the State does not fulfill the services of the mind. For all that, we do not intend to exclude an organization charged with teaching in the name of the State; we find it useful and we want it. A large number of Catholics are members of the University of France; many of the signers of this *Prospectus* are already long-time members; they, and we with them, look to the University as a condition for the literary and scientific life of the country. We will defend its rights like we do ours, and hope that it will end up defending our rights and it does its own. It is impossible that there not be within its bosom, as with us, many men worthy of understanding and hoping for the happy medium that will reconcile us all.

On claiming from the Republic freedom of conscience and of thought as primary, we do not make it the sole object of our wishes, as if by a sacred egoism, Catholics would forget, on looking to heaven and to the soul, all the other interests deserving their attention. The Gospel did not misunderstand, did not overlook anything that touches man. Nourished by its lessons, we do not separate from our concern what God does not separate in His. We look with anguish on the moral and physical afflictions of so many of our brothers who, here below, carry the heavy portion of common work, a portion that has become even more pressing by the very development of industry and of civilization. We do not believe that these evils are without remedies. If suffering is the fate of all the children of men, charity united to science is able to do something to lighten the scourge, if not destroy it completely. The Church has worked on this constantly; in every epoch, she never lost sight of the poor people, and more than ever — if that is possible — because of the new and strange afflictions of the world, she has kept her eyes and her heart on the wounds of humanity. We await, we are bound to await the Republic that it use its power to relieve the troubles of the greatest number of its children.

We also expect that the Republic will take under its protection people who have lost their nationality by reason of unjust conquests that time has not ratified, and those other people who, following our example from afar, aspire to their political and moral liberation. The goods of France belong to the whole world, and brotherhood has no frontiers. We should no longer be accused of indifference, given our generous efforts, nor should we be suspected of disregarding any oppression. The name of France must be united throughout the world with that of Pius IX, and, in a one and only movement, thrill all those who are suffering, all who are hoping, all who hunger and thirst for justice, all those who await the final confederation of the human race under the same law of work and of love.

We have found in the National Library, at the beginning of the collection concerning *L'Ère nouvelle*, a folder of four pages — unpublished, we believe — that is not lacking in interest. It is a letter addressed to Father Lacordaire by a former general-editor of *L'Avenir*, Mr. Victor-Amédée Waille. We know nothing about his contacts with his previous collaborator, de Lamennais; but the fact remains, that he allows himself to offer some advice, not all of which is to be rejected.

Here it is, omitting certain phrases that appeared utopian or visionary.

To Rev. Father Lacordaire

Paris, 4 March 1848

Reverend Father,

I have just read the prospectus for *L'Ère nouvelle*. You do not need my membership, so little is it worth, but I offer it to you more willingly in that it has taken me so long to await the current circumstances to form an opinion on the march of events. I, too, am a *political victim* . . . (if I did not know the reason for my actions, I would have said *Catholic*). I was abandoned by everyone except myself and, I hope, except God. To put together what was left, unlike many others, I did not have to find or support a more or less plausible scheme; and so, I applied myself, and I still apply to myself what is said about all unfortunates: *Let the justice of God take over*.

Be on guard not to commit the same faults as *L'Avenir*. France remains a great nation. An effort was made to recapture it *from the top*, then *from the middle*, and now many people imagine all that is left is to recapture it *from the bottom*. Triple error. The nation will not be saved except with and by its entirety, without excluding any class. You already have surpassed the goal slightly, you have already gone a bit beyond the reality. You will realize it yourself. France is not a democracy at the point of having its elements break apart, as the United States once was. It has its unity, its essential organs, all its major vital functions. This is the side by which it is to be taken, if we wish to learn its goal and to direct it

towards the ends which Providence reserves for it. Otherwise, an operation would be performed as if on a corpse.

On its own, the number is nothing. But it is everything if it is raised by the construction of those elements, to which it is applied, to the state of power. The fundamental duty of the national body is without contradiction that of the Church, of the clergy. The organization of competencies by the separation of the spiritual from the temporal, following upon the process admirably presented by the *Institutions diocésaines* of the bishop of Digne, is much easier when one takes that viewpoint.

The budget of the clergy is more than a debt, it is a necessity. No one could eliminate it without damage to France. *L'Avenir* made a serious, irreparable error in calling for the suppression of the budget of the clergy. The deviations from doctrine were but a personal or polemic accident, independent of any evil intention. . .

Victor-Améd e Waille
Publisher-editor
Former Managing Editor of *L'Avenir*

Do we have to admit that this letter had sufficient influence on Lacordaire to make him modify his ideas and his manner of presenting them? We do not think so. This would be to attribute an undue effect to so slight a cause. Nonetheless, a notable change can be seen in his articles in *L'Ère nouvelle*, if we compare them to those in *L'Avenir*; an awareness that is much easier to arrive at when his articles in *L'Ère nouvelle* deal with the same subjects as the most remarkable ones in *L'Avenir*, namely, the *Budget des Cultes*. Moreover, if we did not fear offending dignity in so grave a matter, we could say that therein, we find Lacordaire refuted by himself.

How to explain this variation?

Oh! In a very simple way.

Youth is the age of illusions and of intolerance. Its thoughts must be executed immediately. Its eyes see the goal, the ideal, and to attain this, youth must unceasingly work at overturning obstacles. It hardly understands that what must be ought not be; it is unable to make the necessary, obligatory distinctions between thesis and hypothesis; it does not reflect that if perfection were of this world, already it would no longer be this world. Moreover, it is easily unyielding, violent, accepting no excuses nor any extenuating circumstances, and hiding under the mask of unmoved corrector of wrongs, the attractive gentleness of its age which it reveals only in the intimate outpourings of friendship.

This is the Lacordaire we saw at *L'Avenir*.

Little by little, the course of life brings experience at the same time as it adds years. A clearer understanding of men and of matters calms the ardor of early days, in no way reducing the original convictions. The ideal has not changed, but we learn that it may be attained just as well — or perhaps better — by turning the obstacles around rather than trying to destroy them. We can admit more easily the existence of imperfections inherent in human nature; moreover, we become indulgent, tolerant of matters as well as of men. We seek less to fight than to convince, and we arrive at learning to be content with the possible, in hope for the better.

This is how Lacordaire appeared in his campaign at *L'Ère nouvelle*. He himself refuted the objections he accumulated at *L'Avenir* against the budget of the clergy, and concluded to its retention⁸⁷.

In the meantime, and on the eve of the elections, he wrote an article on *Candidatures du clergé*⁸⁸ [Candidacy of the Clergy]. Here is an excerpt:

Tomorrow is election day. . . The clergy also presents itself. For the first time in half a century, it finds in itself the courage to offer itself, and in the people, the courage to accept. . . It could and it was obliged to. Withdrawing in such a moment would be like renouncing military service at the hour of the battle. . . But above all, the clergy had to aspire to mark a place for itself in the National Assembly to declare to the eyes of France and those of the entire world the softening of religious emotions in our country. . . And yet, the political role of the clergy appears to us as a transitory accident. Once the Republic has been established, the priest will find himself in the presence of a nation very protective of the distinction between the two powers, spiritual and temporal. For a long time, the Republic has had such an elevated idea of the priesthood that it suffered greatly over everything that tore it down, even for a brief time, from the heights of Mt. Horeb and those of Calvary.

This article borrowed a certain flavor from the actual position of Lacordaire; he offered himself as a candidate for deputy.

To speak of his candidacy and of his election is not to wander from our topic. On the contrary, it is like a culmination. Because at that moment, and many times since, the journalist was called to become a deputy.

Those who have reproached certain priests of our day — men bolder and more courageous — for compromising their cassocks in dance halls transformed into demagogic clubs, have forgotten that the robe of a monk had taken a risk in those very places and that it was not soiled, rather the contrary.

In fact, Lacordaire had to defend his candidacy in public meetings. He appeared at

them twice: first, in the lecture hall of the School of Medicine, where his success was huge; then, at the Sorbonne, on 11 April 1848, where he had been invited to explain his political and religious principles before the *Union Club*. Two or three thousand listeners had thronged into the hall, while an innumerable crowd, unable to gain entrance, packed into the courtyard of the ancient building and disturbed with songs and shouts the challenges and discussions inside.

Lacordaire displayed remarkable energy and confidence and faced the storm without taking one step backward⁸⁹.

We have no intention of reporting the long and animated sessions in all their extent. It is enough for us to cite the most characteristic replies of the candidate.

Lacordaire was asked what he thought of Mr. de Montalembert's talk on the Swiss question. At that moment, Lacordaire was estranged from his former friend. Even so, he made a very dignified response which ended thus: "I would not have said what he said, and yet his talk does not prevent me from recognizing that Mr. de Montalembert is a good Frenchman, a man of talent, devoted to public affairs; as a result, I have remained full of esteem and friendship for him."

That answer did not satisfy his interlocutor who riposted:

CITIZEN BARNABÉ — The question I asked of the candidate was not a religious one: I simply requested of Father Lacordaire if he accepted the judgment given on the liberals in general and on the men of '93 in particular, by citizen Montalembert.

CITIZEN LACORDAIRE: In his talk, citizen Montalembert passed judgment on those he called *radicals*, present and past: the radicals of 1793 and those of 1847. For my part, I declare I am not at all *radical* in the meaning ordinarily given to this word. — The name *radical* in our language carries a meaning that, up to now, has not been favorable. . . (*The candidate was interrupted at that moment. — Varied demonstrations inside. — Clamor outside*).

Sirs, in two words, Mr. de Montalembert has spoken badly of 1793. Well, for my part, there are men of '93 about whom I could never speak well; that there were equally in 1847, in 1848, and that there will be even in 1849, some talks, some activities of certain revolutionaries about whom I will never be able to speak well. Now, who are these revolutionaries? They are the men who desire neither freedom in order, nor order in freedom. I regard both order and freedom as two essential elements for human life; whoever is adjudged of having been enemy of order is enemy of freedom. (*New uproar outside. — Calm returns after a few minutes.*) I despise tyrants because they are enemies of freedom; I despise revolutionaries because, basically, they are tyrants under another name. Between tyrants and revolutionaries, I see no difference.

CITIZEN BARNABÉ. — I do not find your response explicit. I ask citizen Lacordaire if the discourse which was entirely a long, virulent satire against our fathers of '93 deserves his praise or his blame.

CITIZEN LACORDAIRE. — I am told *explicitly* that citizen Montalembert was against the fathers of '93. Well, for my part, I declare that I do not recognize any father of '93. I recognize in 1789 some men who wanted the destruction of a great number of abuses, who fought for that destruction; I recognize, from 89 to 93, men who died to combat those abuses, either in the interior, on the scaffold, or in the exterior, in victories that we won. The men who persevered in their will, in their struggles for freedom, these are the ones whom I call my fathers. Among all those who died at that period, I distinguish those who died to defend freedom, and those who *made others die* precisely to obliterate and keep at bay that very freedom⁹⁰.

Presented in Paris by the *Comité central des libertés politiques, civiles, et religieuses*, Lacordaire was not elected but obtained 62,333 votes⁹¹. While he was losing in the capital, the electors of *Bouches-du-Rhône* chose him as their representative, something he never expected.

Lacordaire thanked them in this letter filled with noble and Christian language:

Paris, 3 May 1848

Sirs,

I have received the letter in which you made known to me that you had presented me as candidate to the National Assembly and that my candidacy had just succeeded, thanks to your efforts and the cooperation of a large number of electors for Marseille and of the Bouches-du-Rhône. I cannot tell you, Sirs, the feelings I experienced on receiving unexpectedly a message so honorable for me.

I had never sought nor rejected the position of deputy. A stranger to political life, it seemed to me that my career had been set by God very far from and very high above the tumult of the forum; and yet, from another point of view, I believed it was impossible for me to refuse the wishes of my country, if I were called by its choice to serve at a difficult and perilous time. Struggling between these two thoughts, I had resolved to let Providence act, and to accept what it desired by an election in which I had taken no part. That is how, presented in Paris, in the Côtes-du-Nord, in Mayenne, in Isère and in the Var, I lost everywhere for not supporting the benevolence of the electors who had presented me.

Only you, Sirs, have been stronger than my inertia; you wanted me and you elected me without my knowing anything about it. God had chosen you to give me His orders; I

receive them from your mouth, and I will conform myself to them. I will attempt to be, in the National Assembly, a representative worthy of you, to give a seat, in my person, to your religious faith, your love of country, your dedication to Christian and to national freedom, your desire to offer help to the poor and to the suffering, your respect for family and property, finally, your enthusiasm for that divine and human entity at the moment called *Republic*, and which will always bear the name if together we learn how much to hope for the future, to recognize it and to lay its foundations.

Receive, dear Sirs, my very humble thanks for a choice so sublime in my heart. Three months ago, when you welcomed me on your sunny shores, I had no idea that your fraternal cheers would be changed into a choice of a higher order and that, already your friend, I would become your deputy. Now, it behooves me to justify these two titles in the sight of France. The task is bold; it will be glorious to perish while serving you and in serving what we love, you and I: God, Fatherland, and humanity.

I have the honor of being, in high respect and in endless gratitude,

Sirs,

Your very devoted fellow citizen

Father Lacordaire

Deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône

Following the advice of the archbishop of Paris and of very important individuals, Lacordaire had at first decided to wear the cassock to approach the National Assembly⁹². No doubt he thought it over because he decided to wear his religious habit, to the cheers of the crowd⁹³.

During the few days that he sat at the National Assembly, only twice did Lacordaire speak.

It is apparent that his biographers have left us too much in the dark about this phase of his life. No doubt they thought that, placed in the light, this stage would not have added anything to his glory: some even thought that it would diminish him, claiming that the illustrious Dominican had not brought to the parliamentary rostrum the brilliant eloquence he displayed in the pulpit.

We will not discuss their reasons; but surely we will be allowed to say that it is better to forget the rhetorical formula in order to see only the thought and the nobility of the feelings that inspired it.

In addition, we will report *extensively* the summary of his debates that won for Lacordaire congratulations and praise, and made many people, later, regret that he had not felt the need to remain in his seat as deputy.

The first time he mounted the rostrum⁹⁴, the question was whether the Assembly would itself directly nominate intermediary ministers up to the definitive settlement of the executive power or whether it would entrust this mandate to a permanent and accountable commission of five members. This last course would give some members of the previous provisional government the opportunity to regain authority, under the control of the Assembly. With the goal of reconciliation, Father Lacordaire supported this opinion of the minority. The reporter concluded at direct nomination.

Here is the summary we find in *L'Ére nouvelle*:

Mr. JULES FAVRE, in a speech that made a strong impression on the assembly, upheld the system contrary to the majority of the commission and asked for an executive commission. As for me, said he in concluding, it is not in the name of authority, rather it is in the name of repose for my country, in the name of principles, in the name of the revolution that I implore you not to deceive yourselves about the gravity of the situation, to establish an energetic power, and not to sow defiance and fear in voting because you will harvest anarchy and storms (*Approbation from several seats.*)

FATHER LACORDAIRE. – Representatives of citizens, the reasons just presented to you to name an executive commission are, in my opinion, so evident, of such weight, so needed, in a way, that I need not have mounted to this rostrum, and after having heard the citizen offer the first opinion, I would not have stepped down from my chair; and my conviction, if it had still wavered, would at this moment be decided and perfect.

But I had asked to speak because the citizen who offered the first opinion was saying that, basically, principles were not being debated, but that in the discussions underlying the principles — given that those discussions fade in the depths of conscience — there were other reasons for not wanting an executive commission, wanting instead a purely ministerial power, emerging from secrecy, from the mysterious base of the electoral ballot box. This is why I decided to mount to the rostrum. (*Movement of attention*) It is precisely because of this secret thought, that, independently of the last reasons that have been given, I would vote for an executive commission. And if the discussion brings back the proposition of citizen Dornès just as he had signed it with us, the names that he had presented and supported, I too would vote for and support it. (*Very good! Very good!*)

Why is that? It is that, fundamentally, even though we are republicans, we have all acclaimed the Republic in this building and before the French people who were watching us, were listening to us, mixing their applause to ours. Nevertheless, if it is true that we are all republicans, as for me, I declare that I am a *new* republican. I declare that before 24 February, I was a monarchist, that I was not a republican; therefore, I understand very well that with elders and former members in the Republic, it is not appropriate for me, so young am I in this opinion, and who have not yet proved myself, to turn aside mysteriously or

publicly those whose thought is so far ahead of mine, (*Très bien! Très bien! [Very good!] Long applause*), those who won through battle what I myself can barely see at a distance: things possible and an uncertain future.

Moreover, I wish that those who preceded me in this triumphant opinion, that those who were the avant-garde of victory and who have paid for it by their sufferings, if not by their blood, I wish that their names not be pushed aside. I do not approve of everything that has been done; who approves of everything that the government does? But what I do not approve of is that in public needs there are actions that no citizen who is not at the helm of matters should bear responsibility for, nonetheless it follows that I recognize acquired rights, that I recognize merit, and that I recognize them all the more strongly when the circumstances were more difficult and more powerful themselves.

There you have my first reason, my first secret reason; there you have my first internal reason, independent of reasons from metaphysics and public order, in pursuant of which I would vote for an executive commission.

Moreover, fundamentally, among us citizens, the ancient republicans are a large minority; well, it is precisely because they are in the minority that I want that minority to have a voice in government that will arise from the majority — not that this will unite contrary parties, but that the minority and the majority of the republican party be united in one bundle of conviction, of strength, and of resolution; so that we never cede territory that we have conquered at different levels, but that, fundamentally, we have won together. (*Bravo! Bravo!*)

Mr. CAZEL, from his place. — I protest against these words. . . (*Interruption. – Let him speak!*)

Father LACORDAIRE. — The former government had an immense majority; it died in its majority and by its majority. It is for this reason that, if God has given me the grace to follow a political life that is just beginning, I will always have for minorities and especially for minorities that are the reason for the establishment, of which I will be a part, profound respect, a profound desire to take their side.

It is for this second reason that I will vote in favor of nominating an executive commission, such as was proposed by citizen Dornès⁹⁵.

I have nothing else to say. (*Lively applause*)

Mr. GATIEN ARNOUD believes that an executive commission lacks the democratic spirit, because there are only three major ideas that contain politics entirely: to reign, to govern, and to administer. Who, today, is reigning? It is the people. Who administers? The Assembly. Who governs? That can be only one ministry. The orator concludes in favor of

the commission.

Mr. FERDINAND DE LASTEYRIE. — Even though I requested the floor before citizen Lacordaire, I had happily ceded it to him because he came to plead the same cause as I did; but after hearing him, I retake the floor because he defended this cause in terms that I cannot accept. If, like him, I defend the executive commission, this is not to give a medal of consolation to the losers because I do not recognize winners and losers among us.

It has been only one day since the great battle which brought down the power against which all of us were fighting. We have barely opened the discussion and we would see ourselves, some as victors, others as vanquished. By a kind of compensation that I do not understand, by a politeness not adequate to the circumstances, we would like to offer consolation to the vanquished. As for me, I set aside such a system. (*Stirring* .)

Father LACORDAIRE. — I did not speak of that.

Mr. FERDINAND LASTEYRIE. — I support the commission, but this support is on principle; because I deem it to be a good thing in itself.

Mr. LAMARTINE. — . . . In these terms, the speaker praises the words pronounced by Father Lacordaire.

When I heard a while ago an illustrious minister whose language was so appropriate and elevated, in keeping with the holiness of his mission of peace, recommending that you make the partition, not the parties — we said there were none and there could no longer be any, and at the very time when they declared themselves parties, they would be overwhelmed, submerged in the mass of national sovereignty; but to recommend to you, in favor of the great varieties of public opinion, a certain justice and a certain appreciation for the services that, under various licenses, all of us have loyally fulfilled for our country, to the measure of our abilities, I recognize in that the true language of politics, because religious and political feelings intertwine in that justice, in that wisdom, in that moderation which instead of provoking an internal war — the war, do not deceive yourselves, the war of parliament, of the House, at the origin of institutions — rather, establishes there harmony, voluntary cooperation, trust, and peace.

Oh! That thought of conciliation has always animated me also. Rally together, unite, forget your differences of opinion, if there are any. Dedicate yourselves as a single body and a single soul in favor of public safety. This is what the people told all the members of the provisional government of 24 February⁹⁶.

These were the beginnings of the parliamentary life of the celebrated Dominican. Without a doubt, we admit, no term can possibly compare these words to those of the

conferences of Notre-Dame, nor with the articles that we will see later. But they reveal sufficient liberalism for us to be able to quote them. Besides, it is in this meaning that *L'Ami de la religion* [The friend of religion], generally little sympathetic to Lacordaire, congratulated him for his 'frankness' and for the noble sentiment of conciliation that inspired him⁹⁷.

Four days later⁹⁸, Lacordaire again mounted the rostrum for the second and last time. He intended to push back an untimely — inconvenient would be better — attack against his religious garb brought up by Mr. Portalis in a discussion relative to the formation of a Ministry of Cults.

This is how Mr. Portalis expressed himself:

Mr. PORTALIS. — I am well pleased to protest against the formation of a Ministry of Cults. I declare that this is an unfortunate innovation and I do not understand how it is the Republic that produces a creature that the Restoration and the quasi-Restoration had not dared! . . . (*Very good, very good!*)

That the cults be a division of the Ministry of Justice, I approve completely. But to wish to make the cults a special inspection, a particular work, this is to give some questions an importance that they do not deserve. . . (*Complaints*)⁹⁹

Thank God, we live under a regime of freedom; we have in our assemblies men who formerly would not have dared to show themselves in a costume that laws have prohibited. (*Murmurs*)

Father LACORDAIRE. — I ask to speak. (*Stirring*)

Mr. PORTALIS. — Representative of the people, representatives of freedom, we accept all that, we accept the men and their costume. (*Very good*)

But we should not be deceived, and let them not imagine that in entering this Assembly, that it is a pedestal we have raised for them to take over power. (*Complaints*)

It is freedom, it is equality, it is fraternity that we desire, brotherhood between men, brotherhood between cults; but it is good that, from the first step, some voices be raised to signal the peril, should one arise. (*Denials*)

Father LACORDAIRE. — Representatives of Citizens; I have to offer thanks to the honorable for his opinion; because he said that, even though we had presented ourselves in the majesty of this hall in a habit that was not entirely in conformity with the laws, yet it is the Republic that had taken us under its safe-keeping and that it accepted altogether

the man and his habit. Unless I am mistaken, these were the words the honorable orator pronounced, and I felt — not by any need to fight on this point — but the need to applaud him and to thank him.

In fact, citizens, I do not wish to pause before this homage to the incidental phrase that preceded it, namely that I would not have dared, under other circumstances, to wear my habit publicly. Under all regimes, at all times, having believed it appropriate to wear some kind of vesture, I would have had the courage and the dignity to wear my habit, and I am sure I would have gotten it accepted. Or, if violence had protested against it, my right would have found an asylum and a defense in those who would have been witnesses to such an outrage against individual freedom, the freedom of cults, the freedom of opinions, all the freedoms that merge together in a citizen who is in possession of all his rights, not only in the bosom of the Republic, but also of any kind of government. (*Approval.*)

The addition took place, nonetheless, that it was feared we would have been very misled by the reception that you, representatives of the people, and, under the pillars of the building, that the people themselves had given us personally. No, citizens, we are not being misled; there should be no fear that we were misled. No, we do not believe that a pedestal had been erected for us, under cover of the Republic, for claims that would be injurious or unworthy of our character.

The pedestal on which the applause of the people and your acceptance placed us is the pedestal of fraternity, whose habit I wear; of equality, whose habit I wear; of freedom, whose habit I wear.

There was a time when another Republic forbade it, that was on 28 August 1792. And, I ask you, citizens, why was that? It was because then, following the misfortunes of the time, this habit, in the eyes of everyone, in the eyes of this republic, was not the sign of what I just said. It was perhaps the sign, or one could think that, of an opposition that protested by forces, within and without, against the establishment and the dependability of the republic. Those times are far behind us, representatives of the people, and once more what my habit represents here is the Republic itself, triumphantly generous, and something else, moreover, a Republic just and consistent with itself. (*Signs of approbation*)

Mr. COQUEREL¹⁰⁰. — Citizens' representatives, I have no kind of comment to make on the words you have just heard. But I would be lacking in an important task as well as in propriety and fraternity if I were to make the slightest hint to the discourse just pronounced before us.

It is not to my colleague, and I am using the term deliberately, it is not to my colleague, to the one of our colleagues who belongs to a religious order, that I come to respond; it is to the orator who preceded him. I come, briefly, in support of the formation of a committee solely for the affairs of cults, and I request, before delving into the question, permission to

express two simple preliminary thoughts.

The orator to whom I am responding spoke of a pedestal to raise oneself up. In my understanding, that pedestal cannot be found in the pulpit of Notre-Dame any more than in the pulpit of the Oratory. To move upward to power, there is only one pedestal left in France, the rostrum from which I now address you.

Secondly, you heard speak of the dangers that the religious question could provoke.

The most sure means of bringing forth dangers that did not exist is to speak as if they could exist. (*Very well said.*) I request the formation of a committee solely for the cults. (*Very good! Very good!*)¹⁰¹.

“It is regrettable,” said Father Chocarne, “that Lacordaire did not expand the debate and take advantage of the occasion to defend with greater forcefulness even religious freedom, imprudently attacked by Mr. Portalis. Evidently, at the rostrum, he was dominated by a feeling of conciliation, very praiseworthy, no doubt, but one that paralyzed his resolution. As a result, he voluntarily sacrificed his renown as orator to the desire of not increasing, by the fire of his words, the animosity of the parties, already too overexcited¹⁰².”

Events did not leave him any time to show whether his attitude had changed.

The take-over of the National Assembly, on 15 May, by the same people of Paris who, shortly before, had acclaimed the Republic, obliged him to make painful reflexions. “The Republic is lost!” he told himself. And three hours later, he handed in his resignation as representative of the people.

This is how he explained it to his electors:

Paris, 19 May 1848

Sirs,

Yesterday, I left the seat of representative whose watch and honor you had entrusted to me. I return it to you after having occupied it for fifteen days, without having done anything of what you expected from me. My letter to the President of the National Assembly will have already made known to you the reasons for my withdrawal. But it is impossible for me not to mention them at greater length to you who have chosen me, to you who gave me the highest mark of esteem that was in your power to give. You counted on me, and I have failed to measure up; you placed your hope in my words, and I hardly moved up to the lectern; you found rest in my courage, while I never faced any danger. How would you not have the right to question me, and how could I not feel the need to forestall the pain of your

questions?

There were in me two men: the religious and the citizen. Separating them was impossible. It was necessary, in the unity of my person, that one be worthy of the other, and that never the action of the citizen cause any anxiety to the conscience of the religious. Now, as I advanced in a career that was very new to me, I could see the parties and the emotions more clearly displayed. Vain were my efforts to rise above their agitations; composure escaped me, in spite of myself. Before long, I understood that, in a political gathering, impartiality leads to impotence and isolation, that one had to choose his camp and embrace it wholeheartedly. I was unable to resolve the issue. From then on, my resignation was inevitable, and so I tended it.

God knows, Gentlemen, that your thoughts strongly fought against my decision. I feared saddening you; I reproached myself for breaking in a manner so rapid and so unforeseen the links that I had forged with such contentment. My only consolation is to consider that, in the very brief actions of my political life, I followed the inspiration of a conscience that is in harmony with yours. Elected without having sought it, I accepted out of self-sacrifice, I sat without partiality, I resigned because I feared that I could no longer be what I wished to remain always before God and before you. My resignation, as was my acceptance, is a respect that I granted you.

Please accept, Gentlemen, these explanations, no doubt imperfect, but that I believe sufficient for you to understand me indulgently. Deprived of the glory of representing you in the National Assembly, I believe that I still represent you by my faith and my patriotism, as well as by the respectful affection I will have for you all my life.

I have the honor of being, in these undying sentiments, Gentlemen, your very humble and very dedicated fellow citizen.

This resignation would not pass without arousing astonishment in some people, and reproach in others. Lacordaire was accused of inconsistency, weakness, lack of foresight. Complaints and accusations reached him directly, whether from adversaries or from friends.

To some, he replied, others he ignored, conscious of having done his duty.

In fact, he wrote to Mrs. de Prailly:

I am certain that you have been very worried on my account and that you have prayed for my intentions. I never believed I could have had such a horror of political life; it is at a level that you cannot imagine. I saw myself as a poor little monk, and not at all a Richelieu; a poor monk who liked peace and quiet¹⁰⁴.

For all that, he shortly praised himself for what he had done.

Every day (he wrote again to Mrs. de Prailly), offers me greater certainty that I followed a fortunate inspiration in resigning from the Assembly. It becomes so evident to me that I no longer feel the unfavorable judgments whose object I have been. Be assured that one day these will be the matters for which I will most be praised. Besides, in whatever situation, one must consider duty and not opinion. To do one's duty, at the risk of being blamed, is one of the most genuine credits of which man is capable. At the moment, I am like a man who had fallen into a pit where he was to die, but from which he was miraculously rescued. I received some most touching letters in that vein; generally, however, the impression was painful. Few men can see the future. I have written only two or three letters to justify myself with some friends; it is better to await the justification of time.

How many times, Oh Lord, have I been badly judged! If you knew in Paris, in the parlors of the ruling party, and in many other places, what is being said of me, you would be amazed. These are storms that we must let pass without becoming agitated. Besides, solitude is a protection for me, one that has become more absolute for some time¹⁰⁵.

In the first of the letters we have just cited, there is a phrase that gives us an explanation of the resolution taken, about the same time, by Lacordaire: his departure from *L'Ère nouvelle*. Here is the phrase: "I could not take a stand outside of democracy and yet, I could not accept the democracy I saw."

From its very first days, *L'Ère nouvelle* enjoyed total success, for which the talent of its editors was not irrelevant. In the month of March, Lacordaire had said: "These three months will decide whether Catholics approve of our conduct or not, and whether they prefer a feverish excitement to a cautious enthusiasm based on reason and charity¹⁰⁷. In less than three months, *L'Ère nouvelle* had three thousand two hundred subscribers, and published four thousand five hundred copies. This is what Lacordaire had asked for: "If in three months, we do not reach three thousand subscribers, I will see the struggle as lost¹⁰⁸." The battle was won by force, because in June, sales in Paris amounted to ten thousand for each issue; certain bookstores of Rouen, of Orléans, and of other cities, took one hundred to two hundred copies every day.

It was therefore not the lack of success that moved Lacordaire to leave the newspaper, which he had hoped to make "a voice for the *fourth phase of the 19th century*¹⁰⁹."

He no longer had any faith in the Republic; he found it repugnant to print opinions that were not his own. "Since 15 May," he wrote later, "I had arrived at my decision to resign from *L'Ère nouvelle* and from the Assembly, as well, and for the same reason. But

since matters were not at all that pressing, I had to wait for a favorable moment. It came little by little. My caution, as regards democracy and the Republic, did not suit the most ardent of our collaborators and gave to the newspaper an uncertain and vague look. There was wrangling; we all felt that we needed to give stronger impetus, but my state of mind would not allow it¹¹⁰.”

Lacordaire had a hard time getting a kind of program-article entitled: *To our subscribers*, accepted and inserted. This outlined the duties of journalists and of subscribers in the 19th century. He complained bitterly about the matter in a letter he addressed to *The Gentlemen Editors-Founders of L'Ère nouvelle*¹¹¹:

You have seen, Gentlemen, all I have done to give to your enterprise a solid base. You indicated to me that this work would rest in large part on me, that it would reflect solely my characteristics and absolute direction, that the partition of characteristics and direction was an impractical scheme. Despite the size of the burden, I did accept and prepared an article by which I gave myself over to the newspaper as much as was possible. But, at the same time, I outlined the overall traits of the mind by which I thought it ought to be directed. This article was read yesterday morning; you approved of it. It was taken to the print shop, everything was concluded; that is where everything stood at noontime. Now, let us look at what became of all that at nine o'clock in the evening.

At nine o'clock of the evening, all the founding members except Mr. de Coux declared that my article was *inadequate*.

Consequently, it is obvious that, on the one hand, my direction was not accepted unanimously, and on the other, that my point of view was found almost unanimously to be *inadequate*. In the presence of this double result, is it possible for me to accept the material and moral responsibility for a work that slips away from me in two ways? What say you? Everything would depend on me, and I would not be director? Or else, I would be director but with an outlook that would not sufficiently express that of everyone? Were I to resign myself to such a situation, I would not only be making a sacrifice but an act of outright imprudence. On the other hand, it is clear that matters could not remain in their current state, and that no other arrangement has been recognized as practical outside of having unique characteristics and absolute direction, both resting on my head. I am therefore left with only one choice, that of resigning. And so, I do hand in my resignation, although with profound regret in separating myself from a work to which I had attached so much cost and from the men whom I held in links of very profound esteem and attachment.

It was following that notice that the article indicated above appeared.¹¹² Lacordaire remained, but Father Maret, whose ideas of democracy were more advanced, decided to resign. Lacordaire had to entreat him to do nothing.

I hasten (he wrote him) to repeat to you in writing the sincere wish all of us expressed yesterday to have you remain among us. You cannot doubt the esteem and affection we have for you, I in particular. Nowhere else will you find men who agree so much with you about the foundation of ideas. If some *distinctions* separate us, who are the men in whom you will not find any? The decision taken destroys none of the genuine freedom of anyone of us, to the reasonable degree which Christians must preserve it as they unite in cooperation for a good work. No more than the others can I listen to my personal opinions all by myself. These have to be enlightened by the opinions of others, make some sacrifices, and undergo some modifications. This is the basic condition of any society¹¹³.

It is easy to understand that the development of a newspaper would feel the effects of this internal wrangling, and develop a vague and uncertain look. This was noticed, if not by the public, at least by the friends of Lacordaire. Despite everything, the latter defended *L'Ère nouvelle* as the child of his flesh:

One should not judge a newspaper on one article, nor on one sentence, but on the whole. When one is unaware of the intentions which inspired a page, one imagines them and judges according to that imagination. Impartiality and fairness are so rare in the world, that one does not believe in them, or is startled as if facing a weakness or a betrayal. The hardest part of our work is the application of the Christian spirit to politics, that is to say, of the spirit of charity and of peace to that object which produces the strongest hatred and the most terrible divisions. When we visit those condemned to forced labor, the prisoners, the poor, the sick, Christianity runs smoothly; everyone understands. Nothing is as convenient as the prejudices of factions; nothing is as difficult as justice towards factions¹¹⁴.

Nonetheless, discussions arose incessantly in the meetings of the editorial council. It was after one of them, on 17 August 1848, that Lacordaire decided to retire. He chose as his excuse the need for a bond imposed on the newspaper; Father Maret took over the direction of *L'Ère nouvelle* on 2 September 1848.

At that period, Lacordaire's correspondence reveals the deep satisfaction he experienced:

Everything turned out well between us. Far from weakening the newspaper, my resignation will strengthen it by providing a solid base, and also by allowing it to take on a livelier and more determined character. In any case, I am at peace, convinced that I did my duty, whether in founding or in leaving *L'Ère nouvelle*. I reviewed these past six months before God, and apart from some trifling faults, it seems to me that in those terrible circumstances I did what religion and patriotism required of me. My calling had never been political, and yet it was impossible not to brush fleetingly against this stumbling-block, if only by the error of dedication, if only, also, to have the painful experience of it. My vocation stands firm today, without the good having lost everything. You would not believe in what peace I find myself, and how much better I understand what God demands of me for the rest of my life. Even if I have lost much in the minds of men, what is that if I lost nothing in the

eyes of God¹¹⁵?

Perhaps I was needed for the establishment of the newspaper (he wrote a few days later), at least I was not needed for its effective continuation. No man is less of a journalist than I; my repugnance to attack people is too great, as is my excessive caution in everything that could become a subject for argument. Other than that these qualities or these defects are part of my nature, there remain also some practices of religious life which require an unconventional temperament. The future will judge whether I acted prudently and worthily, whether I did not sacrifice glory and popularity to my genuine obligations, whether I did not give the clergy of France a useful example, about which it will later congratulate itself. But whatever the ultimate judgment of men, I find myself already rewarded in conscience. Self-love can have some regrets, the heart has none¹¹⁶.

On leaving *L'Ère nouvelle*, Lacordaire nonetheless remained linked “in an unenthusiastic way, without action, effective collaboration, or responsibility¹¹⁷. This was surely not inconvenient for him, especially given the characteristics that the newspaper then adopted. He felt he had to explain himself to Father Maret on 21 September 1848, in an honorable letter, reproduced by Father Bazin¹¹⁸.

Father and very dear colleague, every day I read *L'Ère nouvelle* very attentively. The more overt democratic and republican character that it presents from day to day obliges me to open my heart deeply so that you not harbor any illusion about my genuine position regarding you and regarding this work.

You know it, I have said at the rostrum, I have told you personally, and you were able to notice it on hundreds of occasions, that, before 24 February last, I had no inclination, no theory that would have moved me to democracy and to the republic. I was sincerely a constitutional monarchist, persuaded that this form of government was still new, poorly established, and spoiled by governments and parties; not one of these, since 1789, had really sought freedom for the Church and for the truth. I utterly scorned the regime issued in 1830, which from day to day kept advancing in the paths of hypocrisy, of treason and of the most revolting corruption. I took its downfall for granted and hoped for it. It did fall, and I was elated. I valued in the revolution of 1848 an act of supreme justice that would save us, at the minimum, from a long and shameful breakup. The warm sentiments of the people, their respect for religion, their caution in triumph, inspired me with feelings of confidence and made me think that the experiment of the republican form was possible in France under better conditions than those of 1792. I sincerely welcomed this experiment, and *when you came to see me with Mr. Ozanam, to propose the establishment of a newspaper that would bend, to a certain degree, towards democracy*, I offered my hands as to a useful work in the land of religion. It was with this in mind that I entered the National Assembly, and that I took a seat at the extreme left, so as to give immediately a sign of my adherence to the kind of government that the force of events had imposed on France.

That is where I stood on 15 May, or thereabouts, even though the side I was sitting at did inspire some mistrust and some aversion. The day 15 May shook to the very depths the roots of my hopes. It revealed to me projects and attitudes that inevitably would lead to civil war, to a massive struggle, inevitable, obstinate, wherein the extreme left would play a role that for nothing in the world did I wish to take responsibility. From then on, I had only to change my seat, or to resign. To change place: that was a striking and incriminating step, which led to the questions: where to go? what to do? whom to approach? The monarchist parties lifted up their heads; I did not wish to serve them, I could not serve them without compromising religion. I preferred, rather, to resign. And the natural consequence was to abandon the direction of *L'Ère nouvelle*. In this, the danger was less serious, less pressing. By sacrificing the honor of the deputation to my conscience, I had done a loyal and courageous action. The blame which surrounded me was, before God, a crown whose cost brought me consolation. For a little more time, by discretion in favor of my collaborators, and by lessening the appearance of the newspaper, I could remain at the post I had taken. This is what I did. I requested even greater authority; I strove to diminish in our work whatever had too sharply wounded the uncertainty of my convictions. The result was more wrangling and discouragement. The days of June finished the job of beating down my political faith, which had never really been viable, and I informed you that I would not retain the direction of *L'Ère nouvelle* beyond 15 October, at the minimum, and 15 January, at the maximum. All of that was very logical for me, but not for you. Persuaded *a priori* by the excellence of democratic ideas, having fed you with their inevitable future in the world, you could have little understood the pliability of my fascination. I could neither complain about this matter nor blame you for it. Evidently, the fault was mine, and not yours. It was up to me, at the beginning, to examine whether I was going beyond my strength on taking up a path which up to that time had been foreign to all my activities and to my spirit. It was up to me to learn, to know that I was a very novice democrat, and that, without energetic conviction, I would be incapable of doing the work that I was beginning with you. I admit that failing; God will judge it. He will be judge of whether the need to spend myself for His cause could excuse the foolhardiness displayed in my engaging myself in a task about which I was uncertain.

In fine, Father, Providence has led you to take up the direction of a newspaper that answers to your thought but not at all to mine. This is a logical conclusion, the only fair one. I have no regrets for the part I took in this establishment, because I valued your thought as useful, gifted with a certain probability, shared by men whom I loved, whose faith, talent, and honesty, I appreciated. By founding *L'Ère nouvelle* with you, we have all of us together done well; we have given to God and to our country proof of our dedication, and I would say, our justifiable dedication. But everyone goes on only as far as he can. Since 2 September, *L'Ère nouvelle* is your work and no longer mine. On leaving my name in an *implied manner*, I wanted to avoid hurting you by an unexpected separation, as well as to give you and all our collaborators a token of my most cordial esteem. I will go no further. I believe it necessary to tell you this and to reserve for a more absolute retirement my full and complete freedom. You yourself have need of your own.

Please receive, Father, and dear colleague, this outpouring of my heart into yours, and the expression of my most distinguished and most dedicated affection.

Fr. Henri-Dominique LACORDAIRE, of the Friars Preachers

Lacordaire always maintained a lively interest in *L'Ère nouvelle*. He reproached vigorously the attacks against it by *L'Ami de la religion* and Mr. de Montalembert. "The latter's violent attack against *L'Ère nouvelle* was an unfortunate omen. Basically, *L'Ère nouvelle* was useful, despite its democratic exaggerations; if there came to be a restoration, one of the great perils of the Church of France would be for a return to the passion for the monarchy of 1814. Among Catholics we would see only very humble footmen of the most contradictory events along with a complete absence of thoughts and of convictions¹¹⁹."

Were not these forecasts that our era has seen come true? Would there not be some benefit in following such wise counsels? Moreover, what could we not gain in tolerating, in admiring even, in a certain way, the more advanced minds who serve as pioneers of future ideas, clearing the land and preparing the path for future generations? This is another proposal that we owe to Lacordaire. Listen to what he says:

Is it up to us to start a war against honorable Catholics who help us by being more democratic than we are and prove to the world that the Church can accept sincerely all forms of government¹²⁰?

Lacordaire's friends feared that the blows aimed at *L'Ère nouvelle* would end up hitting him, to some extent; accordingly, some of them urged him to break publicly the weak tie that still bound him. Lacordaire continually resisted, moved as he was by the generous opinion of not abandoning his former brothers-in-arms in their misfortune.

In your letter of 19 January, you spoke of the need to declare more clearly that I would in no way participate any longer in the editing and direction of *L'Ère nouvelle*. Even though I had said this formally in the issue of 2 September last, perhaps, in fact — considering the matter in itself — it would be better to repeat it again. But that is no longer possible honorably, given the unjust and passionate attacks of which this newspaper is the object.

The clergy of France, with the bishops leading, have officially accepted the arrival of democracy and of the republic. They commented on the republican slogan in their writings and in their mandates. For its part, the republic has given peace to the Church; in twelve months of assembly, not one strike was leveled against her rights. To turn away from the republic, now, would be an inconsistency, a wavering, an ingratitude. I will never lend a hand to such deplorable conduct. If I were to write a word to separate myself more cleanly from *L'Ère nouvelle*, which I have supported without any claim for more than five months, it would be to agree with the reaction, and, on another hand, to commit an act of cowardice concerning my former collaborators. It is better to suffer patiently some unjust opinions.

Sooner or later, truth will out; if not in this world, then in the other¹²⁰.

And since Mrs. de Prailly returned to the accusation, he answered her in a more unequivocal manner.

Your observations concerning *L'Ère nouvelle* would require a rather long discussion. I will limit myself to repeating that I am a complete stranger to its direction and its editing policy, as everyone here knows. I paid a visit to Father Maret, and he reciprocated. The same occurred with Mr. Ozanam. All our contacts, direct and indirect, were limited to these visits. If I promised them some conferences, this was not a contract that entails solidarity or responsibility, but a mark that I do not approve of the unjust and hateful battle against them and that I do not wish to sacrifice them to their enemies in a cowardly manner. Besides, the collection in favor of the monarchy by Mr. de Montalembert and by the *L'Univers*, has placed Catholics in so erroneous a position that the contrary opinion has become a moral necessity in the present struggle. I am very pleased to note that my name is supportive from a distance, even at the risk of unjust opinions, a movement that does not prevent all Catholics from devoting themselves, body and soul, to the conspiracy of interests and of programs that unflinchingly lead to civil war. I wish to remain unsullied by the evils being prepared against us. I accepted the republic wholeheartedly without having wished for it; I find it necessary for a people divided as we are. I no longer have any inclination for the monarchy, except out of fear that a third dynastic restoration would bring about a stumbling power soon despoised. I would have liked fewer abstract and absolute theories in *L'Ère nouvelle*; but as it stands, it is no longer my work; in between two opposite opinions, I prefer the one that strays very little from my thought, especially the one that respects more a multitude of generous thoughts, totally forgotten by the other side. In short, between two evils, one must choose the lesser one. Besides, this is not the only political question involved; there is one of another nature that you have not noticed and which it would take much too long for me to explain¹²².

Your reflexions concerning the shutting down of *L'Ère nouvelle* correspond to my own thoughts. You have judged the situation just as I have. The events, I do believe, will justify your fears and your regrets. To be sure, *L'Ère nouvelle* was irreproachable, if we examine it carefully and in detail. I have always been persuaded that it is wrong to make of democracy an absolute argument. But if one considers the general spirit of that paper, he will recognize an expansive outlook of charity, a sincere liberalism, a restraint from all excess, a fidelity to the line that the Catholic press had taken during many years, and that had gained for it the honor of contributing to the favorable standing of the Church in 1848¹²³.

This time, Lacordaire held to his word, and would no longer have the fear that death would surprise him far from his brothers 'in the uniform of journalist¹²⁴,' for he will never wear it any more.

In vain did the Archbishop of Paris call on his well-known dedication to favor a religious newspaper that he was founding and supporting, 'in which the political side would only be a talking point¹²⁵,' at first, Lacordaire refused everything, all collaboration direct or indirect. Several months later, he accepted but with conditions. "I will take no other part," said he, "except for a signed article every two months on matters of theology or of religious philosophy, and even so, I reserve the right to see how it will turn out¹²⁶."

Truth be known, he had little hope in the success of the endeavor: he listed some very appropriate reasons. "The *Le Moniteur catholique* (that was the name of the paper) was founded on the absence of all politics, properly so-called, and that is probably what will prevent it from being successful, given that most men want a lively paper that awakens them, that raises them up, that answers to their emotions. This one is diametrically the opposite¹²⁷."

Is what was true in the time of Lacordaire no longer true in our time? Have we not seen some serious papers, well administered, but with moderate demeanor, seeking to teach rather than to please, taken as boring, and end up disappearing, stifled under an avalanche of livelier papers, more up-to-date, flattering emotions — not the base ones — and accommodating themselves, as is said, to that taste of the day, which is perhaps just as great a need of minds?

The Archbishop was advised that his endeavor would fail and that "our time was too passionate for so calm and reasonable an experiment. It depends a lot," continued Lacordaire, "on distinguished men who promised their cooperation by writing articles on different topics; but those men are always busy at something else, and you know that a collaboration is not a matter of obligation. To produce a newspaper well, three or four talented men are needed, men who will apply themselves body and soul, and will earn their livelihood at it. The problem is to know whether one has those three or four men on board. But, in the end, the effort is useful and generous; its success will be noted¹²⁸."

The *Moniteur catholique* never did achieve success and Lacordaire never had to collaborate with it. But this did not prevent the Baroness de Prailly, his affectionate correspondent, from warning him to beware of politics. He sent her a most worthy reply, on which many could profitably meditate:

I do not understand why you keep returning to the idea that *I am engaged in politics*, and that I need to avoid it. The truth is that my failure lies, rather, in my not being engaged in politics, that is to say, by my staying aloof from all parties, and telling all of them, when appropriate, the major social truths of the Gospel. There is no preacher, wishing to toe this line, who does not arouse ill-will because nothing displeases man more than evangelical independence, and than the internal strength with which he resists the emotions of his time. Had I been a *legitimiste* or an *Orléaniste*, I would have been overwhelmed with praise, I would have had newspapers applaud me, support me. Instead, in butting up against all the cliques, I have found only some rare souls to support me, and only a vague kind of commiseration that reaches men isolated from everything. What is seen as politics in me is that I speak the truth, the most general truth, to the rich and to the poor, to believers and to unbelievers. Even in *L'Avenir*, I did not engage in politics: indeed it is not politics to recover freedom for the Church; it is not playing politics to tell unbelievers to respect the

rights of the religious institution, and to believers, to agree that error should battle against them in the open. Only in one moment of my life was I on the edge of a political role; I felt so unhappy and out of place that I ran away as fast as I could. Read my *Life of St. Dominic*, my conferences, my funeral orations: honestly, where are the politics? None are to be found there at all, but everywhere there is the tone of a soul that belongs only to God and that wishes to give itself to Him alone. Some day, when someone reads me — if I am ever read — he will look inquisitively in the corners of sentences for some hints of matters of the time; he will be surprised to find so little of what the common man would have thought to be so plentiful. All my political ideas are reduced to this: outside of Christianity, there is no society possible except one that gasps for breath between the despotism of a single man and the despotism of all men. Secondly, Christianity cannot regain its domain in the world except by a sincere struggle wherein it is neither the oppressor nor the oppressed. This is where I live, a stranger to everything else. I do believe that this was absolutely the state of the first Christians in the Catacombs¹²⁹.

Lacordaire ceased writing for newspapers but he did not abandon his pen. Indeed, was he not the one who wrote:

One must beware of setting the pen aside. There is no doubt that writing is a demanding trade; but the press has become too powerful to abandon its post. We should not write for immortality, but for Jesus Christ. Let us crucify ourselves to our pen. What does it matter if no one reads us one hundred years from now? The drop of water on the shore of the sea contributed no less to making the river, and the river does not die. *He who was the man of his times*, said Schiller, *was a man of all times*. He accomplished his task, he had his share in the creation of eternal things. How many books, today lost in libraries, brought about, three centuries ago, the revolution that we now see with our own eyes¹³⁰?

It is certainly to Lacordaire that we can apply at the end of this study, wherein we paraded twenty years of his brilliant life — it is certainly to Lacordaire that we can apply those final words. Half of that century truly lived from him and by him. “There is not,” said he after *L’Avenir*, “there is not enough organic soil in ruins, at the first generation, for large trees to grow¹³¹.” They lived through the difficult and cruel experience: they were treated as ‘daredevils,’ as ‘blasphemers,’ and ‘almost heretics,’ he and his companions, those great sowers of ideas. The seeds they deposited seemed to have perished, and behold!, in spite of everything, they grew. And the generations of the 20th century, the century of tomorrow, will rest under the shade of their branches and will feed on their fruits.

We should not hesitate to follow their example: let us dig our own furrow, each in the field given him. The soil is hard-packed, perhaps, and rocks are strewn about; the enemy will come along and sow weeds. When we have tired ourselves out, when the harvest offers some hope, others will gather the sheaves. They will nourish themselves with the fruit of our labors; they will live from us as we have lived from our fathers. And they may never even know our name!

But, after all, what does it matter?

Will we not have been amply rewarded
for having worked for *God and freedom*?

Abbé Paul FESCH

ENDNOTES

75. Letter to Mme la Baronne de Prailly, 5 January 1842.

76. Appeared in 1838.

77. La Chesnaie, 2 November 1832.

78. *Testament*, Ch. X.

79. *Id. Ibid.*

80. Letter to Mme la Baronne de Prailly, 5 January 1842.

81. Letter to Mr. de la Perrière, 16 November 1848.

82. Letter to Mme la Baronne de Prailly, 10 January 1850.

83. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 21 June 1845.

Should someone want an exact and succinct summary of his political and social ideas, he needs to read a very interesting letter he had written to Montalembert on 9 October 1839.

Here are some extracts:

“We will not place our hope in the reestablishment of the old monarchy, nor any more than in the reestablishment of the old aristocracy. We can only wait for the new elements hidden in the panting chest of the modern people; without foretelling what will be the future form of their resistance, we must attempt — by the authority of charity, faith, and reason — to reconcile them to the Catholic Church, only source of order and of freedom on earth. The present democracy, born of the old society and corrupted by it in its cradle, has already committed serious faults and great crimes. But this new French nation was a product and not a cause; it has not yet held power long enough to be condemned forever. Besides, it is the only strong element today. It is a vigorous offspring of an aged race; instead of seeking to make it bend under the corrupted rod of its fathers. Religion must raise and enlighten it.”

Moreover, Lacordaire transformed his ideas into axioms:

I. – Any form of government — monarchy, aristocracy, democracy —, when it is regulated by the divine law manifested in Jesus Christ and preserved in the bosom of the Church, is

sufficient to establish here below order, liberty, the spiritual and material well-being of nations.

II. – Any form of government, whatever it may be, enemy of the divine Christian law, or even directed by rationalism, is insufficient to grant to people order, liberty, the well-being to which they have a right.

III. – Democracy — understanding by this vague word the current social condition of the French people — democracy will not survive if it does not grant to the divine Christian law at least full and complete liberty of action.

IV. – The government of the Church and that of ancient religious orders are the most perfect governments now existing. But we will be unable to enjoy their advantages, while imitating them in the temporal order, except by attaching ourselves to the source, that is to say, the Church of Jesus Christ.

84. *Testament*, Ch. X.

85. *Id. Ibidem*.

86. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 16 March 1848.

87. *Ère nouvelle* of 18, 20, 26, and 30 April 1848. Articles entitled: *The Budget of Cults under the Republic*.

88. *Ère nouvelle*, 22 April 1848.

89. *Biographie des candidats à l'Assemblée nationale par un Vieux Montagnard*.

Lacordaire (Henri) before the club of the Union. Recorded in shorthand by Corby (Albert). Paris, republican bookstore of Gustave Havard, 24, rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques; 1848. – An *in-24* booklet of 32 pages.

90. Extract from the *Biographie*, cited above (note 89).

91. To satisfy curiosity, one may perhaps be interested in the list of candidates among whom was Father Lacordaire. How checkered it was.

CANDIDATES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE SEINE DISTRICT

Citizens

1. François ARAGO, member of the provisional government
2. Alexandre ANDRYANE, prisoner of Spielberg
3. Jules BASTIDE, secretary general at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. BAYARD, wood-engraver, deputy Mayor of Saint-Denis
5. BUCHEZ, deputy Mayor of Paris
6. CORBON, sculptor, editor of *L'Atelier*
7. CORMENIN, vice-president of the Council of State
8. CRÉMIEUX, member of the provisional government
9. DELESTRE, painter

10. DELMAS, currently a student at the Polytechnic School; over 25 years old
11. DUPONT (from the Eure district), member of the provisional government
12. GAIGNAGE, typography worker
13. Casimir GAILLARDIN, professor at the University
14. GARNIER-PAGÈS, member of the provisional government
15. LACORDAIRE, Dominican
16. LAMARTINE, member of the provisional government
17. LANY, saddle-worker
18. Ferdinand de LASTEYRIE, former deputy of the Seine district
19. LEDREUILLE, priest, founder of a house of support for the placement of
workers
20. LEROY, jeweler, founder of a worker association
21. MARIE, member of the provisional government
22. Armand MARRAST, member of the provisional government
23. MARZIOU, business ship owner
24. MELUN, president of the Society for charitable thrift
25. PAGNERRE, secretary-general for the provisional government
26. Agricol PERDIGUIER, carpenter, author of a book about apprenticeship
27. Charles PETITJEAN, turner-mechanic, employee in a pawn shop
28. PEUPIN, clockmaker, upright person, delegate to Luxemburg
29. RESTOUT, son, master roofer
30. Amédée THAYER, Battalion chief in the 1st Legion of the suburb
31. Abel TRANSON, tutor at the Polytechnic School
32. TRÉLAT, physician at *La Salpêtrière* [Hospital]
33. VAVIN, former deputy of the Seine region
34. VELU, carpenter, delegate to Luxemburg

92. Letter to a religious, 3 May 1848.

93. Here is how the *Univers* of 5 May 1848 reports those enthusiastic demonstrations.

The day was fine for Father Lacordaire, for the Church, of which he is a minister, and for religious orders of which he is among us the most popular. The Dominican came to the National Assembly where the independent vote of two hundred thousand Frenchmen had called him. He entered, wearing that white robe of the Friar Preacher that he had returned among us. His election was validated without the least opposition, and his monk's habit raised not the slightest murmur in that assembly wherein were seated Mr. Dupin and Mr. Isambert.

But that is not all. When the National Assembly as a whole moved to the courtyard of the Bourbon Palace to proclaim the Republic before the people and the National Guard, Father Lacordaire stepped down, accompanied by Father de Cazalès, major vicar of Montauban, up to the grille being stormed by the multitude of Parisian people. On seeing the eloquent religious and his monastic robe, this generous throng greeted him with their cries. Father

Lacordaire exchanged some handshakes and hugs with a host of citizens and of national guardsmen and was brought back as if in triumph to the doors of the legislative chamber.

At the end of the session, when leaving the assembly by Bourgogne street, he had to cross the ranks of a company of the 10th Legion, which, on seeing him, raised the cry: *Long live Father Lacordaire*.

We can dare say it: from that day on the oppressive laws that we have so long fought, and that all the despotisms that, one after another, were summoned against conscience, against the sacred freedom of repentance and of dedication, those laws were abrogated by that event; they fell, struck to death by the courage of a monk and by the acclamations of the people. The Second Republic repaired today one of the most odious injustices of its predecessor.”

94. Session of 9 May 1848.

95. At the session of 8 May, the citizen Dornès had proposed the nomination of an executive commission composed of: Lamartine, François Arago, Ledru-Rollin, Garnier-Pagès and Marie.

96. By a vote of 411 to 385, the Assembly rejected the direct nomination of the ministers — then decided to name an executive commission of five members.

97. *L’Ami de la Religion* of 10 May 1848.

98. Session of 13 May 1848.

99. Portalis (Ernest), son of Count Portalis, was deputy from Toulon.

100. Coquerel (Athanase), Protestant pastor born in Paris in 1815, engaged in preaching in Holland for 12 years, and became minister in the Reformed Church in 1839. He died in 1858.

101. A decree that divided the Assembly into 15 Committees, of which one, on Cults, was adopted.

102. R. P. Chocarne: *Le R. P. Henri Dominique Lacordaire*, tome II, P. 190.

103. Most of the newspapers were concerned, in their report of the session of 18 May, with the resignation of Father Lacordaire. We wish to present only a few lines from the *Monde républicain* and the *Assemblée nationale*:

“One more resignation! It is Reverend Father Lacordaire who found, a bit late, that the duties of representing the people are incompatible with his religious obligations. Is that the genuine reason that moved the honorable Dominican to abandon political life? We do not think so. On the contrary, we believe that the genuine reason for this resignation — whether too late or too premature — was required of citizen Lacordaire by a profound disgust with the spectacle that for fifteen days the so-called National Assembly offered to a France startled, displeased, and tormented. There you have it, no doubt, what moved so eminent a man as Father Lacordaire to offer his resignation.”

We read in the *Assemblée nationale*:

“The Reverend Father Lacordaire has presented his resignation: according to the terms of his letter, he did not deem it possible to fulfill the duties incumbent on him because of his dual quality.”

“We have given our advice on the presence of the religious outfit in the legislative hall; the vesture of a monk has always appeared to us as bearing little harmony with the tumult of political passions. It is, therefore, with satisfaction that we see disappear the insignia of the Dominican, but it is with profound regret that we see move away the great orator.”

“From a personal viewpoint, the decision of Father Lacordaire is full of wisdom; it honors his character, and will allow us to say that it is in our eyes brilliant proof that for him there is no other interest that dominates the supreme interest that he has given himself to defend and to gain triumph.”

“The rostrum was a danger for him, the pulpit will always be his glory.”

104. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 29 May 1848.
105. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 6 June 18448.
106. The prospectus had been signed with the names: R. P. Lacordaire, Father Maret, Ozanam, de Coux, Ch. Sainte-Foi, Lorain, de Labaume, J.-Tessier, (and) Gourand.
107. Letter to M. de Saint-Beaussant, 4 March 1848.
108. Letter to Mrs. De Prailly, 25 April 1848.
109. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 15 March 1848.
110. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 17 September 1848.
111. On 26 May 1848. Reproduced by Mr. Foisset: *Vie du R. P. Lacordaire, Pièces justificatives, XXIV.*
112. *Ère nouvelle*, 28 May 1848.
113. Letter dated 28 May 1848, and reproduced by Father Bazin: *Life of Bishop Maret*, Book I, p 245.
114. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 1 July 1848.
115. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 7 Septemer 1848.
116. Letter to Mr. de Saint-Beaussant, 11 Septemer 1848.
117. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 17 September 1848.
118. *Life of Bishop Maret*, Book I, p. 246.
119. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 6 November 1848.
120. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 7 November 1848.
121. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 11 February 1849.
122. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 23 March 1849.
123. Letter to Mr. de Saint-Beaussant, 1 May 1849.
124. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 15 September 1848.
125. To the same, 10 August 1849.
126. Letter to Mr. de Saint-Beaussant, 4 December 1849.
127. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 18 January 1850

128. Letter to Mr. de Saint-Beaussant, 3 January 1850.
129. Letter to Mrs. de Prailly, 18 January 1850.
130. 2 October 1839. — *Letters to young men*, published by Father H. Perreyre.
131. Letter to Mrs. Schwetchine, 25 July 1836.
132. Letter to Mr. Foisset, 25 September 1856.