THE CHURCH IN THE COMMONWEALTH

RICHARD ROBERTS

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BY

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GENERAL PREFACE

THE events of the present time have started much serious enquiry into the validity of our accepted institutions and our traditional habits of thought. Our conceptions of the State, of the Church, of the organisation of Industry, of the Status of Woman in the commonwealth, and of many other things have been directly challenged; and it is commonly acknowledged that a frank and thorough-going examination of our current postulates, political, religious, economic and social, is urgently called for. This series is intended to be a tentative contribution to the discussion of the problems thus raised.

The writers of these volumes do not profess to have a complete philosophy of reconstruction; nor have they endeavoured to co-ordinate their thoughts into a coherent polity. They treat of matters upon which they are not all agreed; but they agree that Society should be organised with a view to the free development of all the finer interests and activities of men, and that such organisation must take account of local and spiritual differences. Apart from this general agreement, they have worked out their several theses independently and are severally alone responsible for the opinions expressed in the volumes published under their names.

The volumes in the series will cover the main subjects relative to the function of the State. Those already planned will treat of the State in its relation to other states, to religion, to industry, to society, to woman, to the individual, to art, education and crime.

C. DELISLE BURNS
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CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

I.

IT is reported that a leading layman of the Methodist Church, in a discussion upon the proposals for a "United Free Church of England," urged the view that such a Church would become a danger to the State. This is symptomatic of the confusion which surrounds the whole question of the relations of Church and State. Lord Acton somewhere speaks of "the undiscovered country where Church and State are parted"; and it is probable that neither this generation nor the next, nor the next after will reach a satisfactory solution of the problem. In any case it is quite certain that the solution will not come by way of a readjustment of frontiers or a process of mutual accommodation. It will be achieved only as the result of a profound change of thought and temper throughout Society, which will materially modify the accepted doctrines both of the Church and of the State.

That such a change is coming is clear. Within the last fifteen years, several circumstances have combined to stimulate thought upon the question. The disestablishment of the Roman Church in France (with the emphatic declarations of French statesmen in favour of State absolutism), the Scottish Churches' case, the passing of the Deceased Wife's Sister Act, the Welsh disestablishment controversy, and other incidents have led to a re-examination of the position of the Church within the community, and already some results are apparent. The Scottish National Church has, without

relinquishing some sort of official connection with the State, successfully asserted its independence, thus facilitating the movement towards further Church Union in Scotland. In England, the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State has issued an important report embodying a scheme for attaining spiritual independence without sacrificing the principle of Establishment.

Nor is it Established Churches only that are affected by the unrest. The case of the United Free Church of Scotland showed the insecurity of all Free Churches under the existing arrangements whereby they hold their property. The Presbyterian Church of England for instance, in 1908, found it necessary to affirm its spiritual independence, claiming for itself "the sole and exclusive right from time to time to interpret, alter, add to, or modify its constitution, law, subordinate standards, and formulas, as duty may require; to determine and declare what these are; and for the better furtherance of the Kingdom of God to unite with other branches of the Church of Christ; always in conformity with those safeguards against hasty action or legislation which are provided by the Church itself,—of which conformity the Church acting through its legitimate courts shall be the sole judge, and under a sense of direct responsibility to the everliving Head of the Church, and of duty towards all the Church's members." This declaration was a counterblast to the scandal of the Halsbury judgment, but what

legal validity it possesses it is impossible to say. Its interest lies in the evidence it affords of the Church's jealousy of its autonomy and liberty and its implicit repudiation of the right of the State to interfere in its domestic life.

2.

But the question is wider than one of the external relations of States and Churches. It involves the standing of other voluntary associations within the community, such as, for instance, Trade Unions. Here we enter into a region full of prickly legal problems—the fictitious or "legal" person, the theory of concession, the law of corporations and the like. The Taff Vale judgment raised the question in its broader aspects, and in view of the enormous multiplication of associations of all kinds during the last half-century, the discussion of the points involved is gradually working a change in the doctrine of the State itself. The tendency of political philosophers has been to reduce political obligation to simple terms of the State and the individual; but this view does not and cannot square with the facts of life. Between the State and the individual there are countless associations possessing an independent life of their own, claiming from their constituents loyalties which may not be always compatible with the demands of the State. "A doctrine," says F. W. Maitland, "which makes some way in England ascribes to the State or more vaguely the community not only a real will but

even *the* real will; and it must occur to us to ask whether what is thus affirmed in the case of the State can be denied in the case of other organised groups: for example, that considerable group, the Roman Catholic Church."* Obviously the theory which ascribes a genuine organic life to one association—the State—cannot deny it to others; and there can be no question that the progress of thought in England in recent years has been away from the unreal doctrine by which an independent and autonomous existence was to be regarded as a grant or a concession of the State to a particular group of men. So great a lawyer as Professor Dicey has said that "when a body of twenty, or two thousand, or two hundred thousand, bind themselves together to act in a particular way for some common purpose, they create a body which by no fiction of law, but *by the very nature of things* differs from the individuals of whom it is constituted."† The logical issue of this position is surely that "the State, even if it includes everybody, is still only an association among others, because it cannot include the whole of everybody."‡

This contrasts sharply with what Maitland calls "the motto of the absolute State," the French Declaration of August 18, 1792, which held that

* Introduction to O. Gierke, "Political Theories of the Middle Ages," p. xi.

† Quoted in "The Collected Papers of F. W. Maitland," p. 306.

‡ G. D. H. Cole. "Conflicting Social Obligation."—Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1914, p. 154.

the truly free State cannot suffer in its bosom any corporation, not even those which have deserved well of the country by reason of their devotion to public instruction. The modern tendency—as the result of actual happenings in the normal course of social development—is ever further away from the doctrine of the absolute State.

3.

We may take a broader sweep than the recognised and formal associations which are contemplated in the previous paragraph. The appearance of the "conscientious objector" raises the issue within another sphere. A good deal of learned contempt has been directed towards the "lone conscience," and even doctors of the Church have told us that the caprice of individual consciences has no standing against the common judgment of the mass. It is not within our immediate purpose to discuss the case of the individual conscience, but rather to point out that the conscientious objector does not live alone. He is simply a constituent and sign of a social group which, though unorganised, is nevertheless quite real. To take the actual facts of the present case, there are probably twenty thousand men in England who decline, on grounds of conscientious scruple, to take part in war. They range from the uncompromising person who will not at this particular moment undertake any service on compulsion to the man who is willing to take service in the "non-combatant corps."

But beyond these is the vast number of men who joined the Medical Service long before the Military Service Act whose objection to active warfare is deep and invincible; there are multitudes besides who have become engaged in lenitive and humanitarian tasks connected with the war. And for every man of military age thus affected, we may count at least five other persons who share their view; and, again, beyond this limit, there is a large, undefinable body of people who are sorely troubled in mind about the whole business. It is true that this group is amorphous and unorganised; it is nevertheless quite real. Behind the "conscientious objector" is a social mass as definite and authentic, if not as extensive, as the State. The case of the conscientious objector need not further detain us at this point. It gives us an instance to hand of a permanent phenomenon in a wholesome social life, the existence of unorganised and unincorporated movements of thought and moral aspiration, the genuineness of which Rousseau quite frankly recognised, and for which a stable doctrine of the State must make room. Movements of this kind have historically been for the most part within the religious sphere, and the normal method of dealing with them has been the futile attempt at suppression. They have naturally been as disturbing to the Church as to the State; and one of the commonest "boomerang" errors of the Church has been its readiness to avail itself of the civil arm for purposes of

persecution and extermination. But this was due to ignorance, both of human nature and of the Divine Spirit; and those States which have granted religious toleration have shown a better understanding of facts. It may be disturbing, but it is never dangerous, to leave the door open to the religious and moral pioneer. If he be a charlatan, he will come to nothing; but if he have the Word of God for his generation, soon or late he will force the door open, whether he will or not. The one thing *not* to do with him is to try to suppress him.

4.

In the haze incidental to a state of war we seem in every land to be sliding back to the reactionary absolutist view of the State. One does not expect a profound or coherent political philosophy in the British House of Commons—let anyone peruse Hansard for a period of six months, and he will understand why England must always muddle through. Muddled affairs come from muddled minds. It is not, therefore, surprising that in recent months claims as extravagant have been made for the State in England as any political doctrinaire in Prussia has ever made—for there is no opportunity just now (even if there were the inclination) for historical retrospect and political reflection. One wonders what the shade of Burke is thinking in these days. But the real danger is not in the House of Commons, but in the country. Mr. Cole has

observed that "men have fallen into the idea of State-sovereignty because it has seemed the easiest, if not the only, way out of the slough of individualism."* And when men see the conscientious objector standing stiffly by what appears to them to be only his personal caprice, they tend to react to a conception of the will of the community as absolutely authoritative for all its members since it seems to be the only alternative to this misconceived and impossible individualism. The demand arises for a political uniformity which, in this case, is also a religious uniformity; and we have theologians and preachers urging on us a view of the divinity of the State which gives its demands a sacrosanct character, in the presence of which the vagaries of the individual conscience must disappear. But this is surely to misconceive both the structure of society and the psychology of religion. The former is not to be understood as a single undifferentiated mass demanding a single line of conduct that its individual constituents must toe. Maitland, in an interesting passage† reviewing "the structure of the groups in which men of English race have stood from the days when the revengeful kindred was pursuing the bloodfeud to the days when the one-man company is issuing debentures, when Parliamentary assemblies stand three deep upon Canadian and Aus-

* G. D. H. Cole. Op. Cit., p. 153.

† Introduction to O. Gierke, "Political Theories of the Middle Ages," pp. xxiv. f.

tralian soil," speaks of "Churches and even the Mediæval Church, one and catholic, religious houses and mendicant orders, nonconforming bodies, a presbyterian system, universities, old and new, the village community, which Germanists have revealed to us, the manor in its growth and decay, the township, the new England town, the counties and hundreds, the chartered boroughs, the guild in all its manifold varieties, the Inns of Court, the merchant adventurers, the militant 'Companies' of English condottieri who, returning home, help to make the word 'Company' popular among us, the trading companies, the companies that become colonies, the companies that make war, the friendly societies, the Trade Unions, the clubs, the group that meets at Lloyd's Coffee House, the group that becomes the Stock Exchange, and so on, even to the one-man company, the Standard Oil Trust, and the South Australian statutes for communistic villages." Of such complex and many-coloured stuff is our social life woven, and it must be a very unsophisticated doctrinaire indeed who can obliterate this wonderful exuberance of social form, and shape the terms of political obligation to the non-existent situation of an abstract individual in an abstract State. It may do very well for a cloister; but it does not answer in the actual business of living. The problems of political and social obligation are not to be solved in this airy way. The task of political philosophy is to discover the ways and means,

not merely of rightly relating the individual and the community, but also of relating rightly to one another these various form of living social organisation in which the life of the community resides.

Further, the supposition that the demands of the State, both general and particular, (since the State itself is held to be a divine institute), define the moral obligation of the individual involves at last a denial of the freedom of the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and the Spirit may express Himself through the State. But it is surely a very arbitrary assumption that He always does so. It is very hard to reconcile this view with many passages in history. On this showing the State can never do wrong. When Church and State have been in conflict, are we to assume that the Spirit is speaking with two contradictory voices? The truth is simply that, like every other natural institution, the State is intrinsically neutral from the moral point of view. It has just as much moral authority as its own practical and active righteousness entitles it to have. In a democratic State, moreover, it is questionable whether the State ever embodies anything higher than the average moral level of the community; and if the frontiers of State requirement are to represent the precise boundaries of the moral practice of individuals, then there is an end for good and all to the independent mind and to original and creative goodness. We are condemned in perpetuity to a dull moral mediocrity. Adventurous

virtue becomes a misdemeanour and conventionality the hall-mark of holiness. If it be urged that the State requirement represents the minimum rather than the maximum moral demand upon the individual, and that he is free to express his moral aspirations beyond that frontier, then the only answer we can give is that the practice of States which make claims of this nature is to shoot or hang the moral explorer. Historically, moral progress has been chiefly made, not through, but in spite of States.

5.

It is the more surprising that this view of the State as a divine ordinance demanding the obedience of the individual should receive theological endorsement at a time when the Church was rightly moving towards a real spiritual independence. For a living Church must be a growing Church; and while it must safeguard itself against hasty innovation, it must nevertheless have elbow-room for expansion. Life within the Church, as everywhere else, is marked by variation, and a Church which never changes is a Church which has ceased to live. It must, moreover claim not only this liberty for itself as a whole, but the liberty of its individual members to express in their own personal life the faith and the spirit of which the Church is the trustee and organ in the world. The call of the Gospel surely presupposes liberty to accept the Cross of Jesus Christ in all its consequences, in its gifts as in its moral

demands. If the Christian ethic is henceforth to be regarded as normally coincident with State requirement (and that is what Dr. Forsyth's and Canon Rashdall's criticism of the conscientious objector comes to), then we have been mistaken in supposing the Christian ethic to be the adventurous and creative thing that we said it was. Does this new doctrine mean that the Christian obedience (which is no slavish legalism, but a living, creative thing) is really a permissive affair which may be whittled down to suit an emergency of State? Are we in future to preach a Gospel clipped and crippled, so that it may be accommodated to State necessities? Is the preacher henceforth never to tell men that they must, if they would follow Christ, go forth not knowing whither they go? Must we say that the call of the Gospel and the call of the State are one and the same call? And will that be true whether Radicals or Tories are in power? This is surely a quite impossible situation. The Church which preaches at the same time the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a doctrine of accommodation is no longer the Body of Christ, but an accessory of the State.

It is true that this view of the State as a divine institute may find Scriptural warrant. St. Paul is quoted: "Every subject must obey the government authorities, for no authority exists apart from God; the existing authorities have been constituted by God. Hence, anyone who resists authority is opposing the divine order, and the opposition will

bring judgment upon themselves. Magistrates are no terror to an honest man, though they are to a bad man. If you want to avoid being alarmed at the government authorities, lead an honest life, and you will be commended for it: the magistrate is God's servant for your benefit."* This seems categorical enough until we remember Paul's own conduct. The charge laid against Paul and Silas in the colony of Philippi was that of militant nonconformity and dangerous innovation. "These men," ran the charge sheet, "do exceedingly trouble our city and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." The modern theory (both of politicians and theologians) is that Paul and Silas had no right to publish their personal convictions, still less to act upon them, if the authorities considered them to be dangerous to the State. That, too, was the way the Romans of Philippi looked at it, so they clapped Paul and Silas into prison. In Philippi you must obey the code; toe the line, and no nonsense. It is unethical to be a Christian in Philippi; it is a crime to be a nonconformist. One wonders whether Paul regarded the magistrate who committed him as God's servant for his benefit. It is at least perfectly clear that the divine quality of the "government authorities" was in St. Paul's mind inferior to that of the authority of his own Spirit-led judgment; and it is not without significance that the State which receives so

* Rom. XIII, 1-4 (Moffatt).

generous an interpretation from St. Paul in the pre-persecution days is described in much less complimentary language by the writer of the Apocalypse, who had seen the Flavian Persecution. "The dragon of Rev. xii. 1, the supreme power of Evil, acts through the force of the Empire when he waited to *devour the child of the woman* and *persecuted the woman* and proceeded *to make war on the rest of her seed;* and his heads and his horns are the imperial instruments by whom he carries on war and persecution. The Beast of xiii. 1, with his ten-diademed horns and the blasphemous names on its seven heads, is the Imperial Government with its diademed Emperors and its temples dedicated to human beings blasphemously styled by divine names."* "The State," says Dr. Forsyth, "is an ethical institute of God as much as the family is; and it is, in its way, equally, though perhaps less obviously, powerful for our moral growth." It is the logical inference, then, that the Roman Empire of the Flavian period was an ethical institute of God and powerful for the moral growth of its Christian citizens. It was so, as a matter of fact; but not in the way that Dr. Forsyth's statement suggests.

It is high time to throw overboard this false and befogging mystical view of the State. It is in its largest aspect simply the community organised for particular purposes; in its narrowest, the machinery of government; it possesses simply the

* Sir W. M. Ramsay. "The Letters to the Seven Churches," p. 94.

divinity which derives from the divine will that made man a social animal. The precise degree of its moral authority will depend upon its power to commend itself to the moral judgment, not merely of its individual constituents, but also of all the groups and associations in which those constituents are freely gathered. Unless it is going to make claims for itself similar to those of the Roman Emperors, and to constitute itself an object for worship so that the religious aspirations of its constituents shall be directed to itself, then it must so shape itself that there shall be room in it for the free growth and development of religious associations. The claim we make is that so far from the Church accommodating itself to the State, the State shall accommodate itself to the Church, even though it turns itself upside down in the process.

And not only to the Church, but also to every other living body within the commonwealth, whether religious or cultural, educational or economic, in which the varied interests and aspirations of the people express and embody themselves.

CHAPTER II: THE INCONGRUOUS MATING

I.

When Coleridge set himself to examine the relations of Church and State, he found it necessary to draw a distinction between a national Church and a Christian Church. "It is the function of the National Church to diffuse through the people *legality*, that is, the obligation of a well-calculated self-interest under the conditions of a common interest, determined by common laws."* The State requires an accessory body which shall provide and teach religious sanctions for loyalty and law-abidingness. It does not, of course, follow that such a body must be Christian. Indeed, "the phrase Church and State has a sense and propriety in reference to the National Church alone. The Church of Christ cannot be put in this conjunction and antithesis without forfeiting the very name of Christian."† Yet in his own country Coleridge found a Church which professed to be both national and Christian. Like the true conservative that he was, he accepted the fact, and then essayed to explain it. His explanation is singular and noteworthy. This coincidence, he says, is "a blessed accident, a providential boon, a grace of God."‡ Coleridge is not very successful in showing how the admitted incongruity of the two elements in a national Christian Church is overcome; but his analysis at least makes it quite clear

* S. T. Coleridge. "On the Constitution of Church and State."

† Ibid, p. 144.

‡ Ibid, p. 66.

that the necessities of a State religion are not intrinsically and inevitably compatible with the witness of the Christian Church. They may indeed be wholly opposed to one another; and where the Christian Church has consistently conformed to the public necessities of the State, it has historically been at the cost of grave compromise, and not seldom of a deadly evisceration of its own appointed message. That a State might exist alliance with which would still enable the Church to remain wholly Christian may not be quite inconceivable. But hitherto such a State has not existed.

2.

That the original attitude of the Christian Church to the State was one of aloofness and isolation is a common-place. "The Early Christians," says Lord Acton, "avoided contact with the State, abstained from the responsibilities of office, and were even reluctant to serve in the Army. Cherishing their citizenship of a kingdom not of this world, they despaired of an Empire which seemed too powerful to be resisted and too corrupt to be converted . . . which plunged its hands from age to age in the blood of the martyrs, and was beyond the hope of regeneration and foredoomed to perish."* Nor did the Empire make any endeavour to conciliate its Christian population. The Christian Society was born at a time

* Lord Acton, "History of Freedom," p. 27.

when the Empire was suspicious of any new social organisation and its officers were constantly alert to suppress any unauthorised religious movements. All religious associations, with the exception of the Jewish Synagogue, were under strict Imperial control, and while Christianity was still supposed to be a phase of Judaism, it possessed a certain immunity from official interference. But this state of things could not last. When the Jews began to denounce the Christians, the difference between the two bodies became apparent. The only cover which the Christian societies retained was a somewhat slender external similarity of observance with the pagan confraternities of the time. This, however, afforded but a precarious and short-lived protection, and Sir William Ramsay has shown that in the persecutions of Flavius, Diocletian, and Decius, it was an accepted principle that "a Christian was necessarily disloyal and outlawed by virtue of the name and confession."*

Notwithstanding persecution, the Christian community thrived. In number it was at the beginning of the fourth century, hardly more than one-twentieth of the population of the Empire, but "what the Christians lacked in numbers they more than made up by their organisation, unity, wealth, and driving power."† Historians appear to be agreed that it was the impression which the power and unity of the Christian Church made

* Sir W. M. Ramsay, "The Letters to the Seven Churches," p. 132.

† "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics" (Hastings), Vol. 4, p. 76.

upon Constantine that first led that Emperor to consider whether it was not necessary to the preservation of the Empire. "He found the Empire distracted," says Newman, "with civil and religious dissension which tended to the dissolution of society; at a time, too, when the barbarians without were pressing upon it with a vigour formidable in itself, but far more menacing in consequence of the decay of the ancient spirit of Rome. He perceived the power of its own polytheism, from whatever cause, exhausted; and the newly-risen philosophy vainly endeavouring to resuscitate a mythology which had done its work, and now, like all things of earth, was fast returning to the dust from which it was taken. He heard the same philosophy inculcating the principles of that more exacting and refined religion which a civilised age will always require; and he witnessed the same substantial teaching, as he would consider it, embodied in the precepts and enforced by the energetic discipline, the union and example of the Christian Church. Here his thoughts would rest as in a natural solution of the investigation to which the state of his Empire gave rise, and without knowing enough of the internal characters of Christianity to care to instruct himself in them, he would discern on the face of it a doctrine more real than that of philosophy, and a rule of life more severe and energetic than that of the old republic."* The first prac-

* J. H. Newman, "The Arians of the 4th Century," (Ed. 1883), pp. 242-243.

tical consequence of these reflections was the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313), by which Constantine and Licinius agreed to grant absolute toleration to the Christian and all other persuasions to follow their own adopted form of worship. This was followed by the "conversion" of Constantine and the adoption of Christianity as the public religion of the Empire, which latter circumstance was authenticated by certain modifications of the existing laws in directions agreeable to the new faith. It is no part of our business to raise the question of the genuineness of Constantine's conversion; but genuine or not, it was no part of his programme to modify in any way his conception of his own authority. "Diocletian's attempt to transform the Empire into a despotism of the Eastern type had brought on the last and the most serious persecution of the Christians; and Constantine, in adopting their faith, intended neither to abandon his predecessors' scheme of policy nor to renounce the fascination of arbitrary authority, but to strengthen his throne with the support of a religion which had astonished the world by its powers of resistance, and to obtain that support absolutely and without a drawback, he fixed the seat of Government in the East with a patriarch of his own creation."* The Church was to be ancillary, not so much to the State as to the Emperor. In its new rôle, it occupied precisely the position of the paganism which it displaced. It was a department of the

* Acton, "The History of Freedom," p. 30.

civil service. The Church Councils had full liberty of discussion, but their decisions had to be ratified by the Emperor, who even declared his own will equivalent to a canon of the Church. The Edict of Milan was obsolete before it was a year old, for the new situation made dissent and heresy political offences; and the Emperor proved his zeal for pure Christianity by setting out to suppress the Donatists. That was a bad day for Christianity.

3.

That the Christian Church could accept this position indicates a certain transformation in its temper and its thought of itself. It is plain that the Empire had not materially changed. In policy and spirit it was still pagan. The change must therefore be sought within the Church itself, and it is necessary and important to inquire into this point.

How did the Apostolic Church conceive of itself? The word ἐκκλησία seems to be used by St. Paul in two different but related senses. He applies it first of all to separate companies of believers; the second use is wider. It would be wrong to say that in this wider sense the word denotes the aggregate of the local communities, or that it represents an ideal society not yet realised on earth. It is neither so concrete as the one nor so abstract as the other. What the word in this large sense is intended to cover it is difficult to define precisely. It was something more than an abstraction by its approximation to which the local *ecclesia*

justified its title. Rather it was something which existed in and subsumed each separate community, the underlying *continuum* of which the individual society was the local manifestation and embodiment. The Church in the whole truth of its being was present in each *ecclesia*. It was many and yet essentially one—one by virtue of an ever present and expanding life which took on a living form wheresoever it found foothold.

The constituents of the Church were variously described: "brethren," "saints," "sanctified in Christ Jesus." These terms described the same fundamental standing. The Church is the society of the redeemed, of those who are *in Christ*. "All who have been brought into this relation of trust and freedom with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are saints. They may not be persons morally perfect or morally advanced, but they are spiritual, related to God and open to the influence of His Spirit. Paul's doctrine, and with it the whole apostolic doctrine, is that the Church consists of saints so understood. The Church is not a visible corporation, kept together by outward bonds of office and ecclesiastical order. It is a unity of spirit through the one Spirit of God working in individual members, who having been individually reconciled to God are the spiritual who can judge all things yet themselves are subject to no human judgment (I Cor., ii, 15). Because in this way Paul can say that Christ is the head of every man (I Cor., ii, 3), he can say that we who are many

are one body in Christ and severally members of one another."* At this stage the Church was still what its Lord and Founder designed, "a society organised on the sole basis of love and equality and mutual service." It had not become a corporation with its recognised seat of authority, its rules and conventions; it was simply a community established and organised upon a basis of love, with indefinite frontiers, without a formal bond. Outward community was established in the face of the world by the acceptance of a common type of conduct, and by the common practice of the ministry of the word, of baptism and of the eucharist. But, as Dr. Oman says, "all this unity was of the spirit and not of official regulation."

Yet even within the New Testament we find evidence of another tendency. It may indeed be argued, with some plausibility, that it is present in the later phases of St. Paul's thought. In Ephesians, for instance, the conception of the Church as the "Body of Christ" presumes a more definite institutional form. It is, however, dangerous to press a figure of speech too far. Evidence of a more direct kind is forthcoming in the Pastoral Epistles, where we find a greater emphasis upon the external and formal elements of the life of the Church.† For the moment we

* John Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," p. 59.

† "In the Pastoral Epistles . . . the Church is the pillar and stay of the truth. Truth is not a renewing trust in God through Jesus Christ, but acceptance of right Church doctrine (Tim. i., 10). Paul himself derives his

are not concerned with the question whether this tendency was healthy or not. We now observe it as a happening—as the beginning of the process by which the Church passes away from its first stage of free fellowship to a more formal and regulated institutional life. We may trace this process farther afield.

The autonomy of the local group in the early Church is beyond question. St. Paul everywhere appointed elders in every Church and then left the new community to develop its own life, only exercising a fatherly pastoral oversight as opportunity offered. When with the passage of time, the Churches grew out of apostolic tutelage, they chose their own officers. The *Didache* enjoins the early Christian committees to elect their own bishops and deacons.* The *Apostolical Constitutions* reflect a later and more elaborate process of appointment, but the evidence is decisive. In Book VIII., iv., of the Coptic version we have, "In the first place I, Peter, say, that a Bishop to be ordained is to be a person chosen by the whole people, whom, being named and approved, let the people assemble with the Presbytery and the bishops that are present on the Lord's Day and let

authority from having the knowledge of the truth which appears to be sound doctrine. (Titus i., 1-4). The Christian ethic is based on how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God. (Tim. i., 3-5)." Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," pp. 62 f. Observe also the room given in the Pastoral Epistles to the question of choosing bishops and deacons.

* "Didache," Chapter 15.

them give their consent." This is explicit evidence enough of the autonomy and freedom of the local congregation, but the changing character of the sanctions and bonds of the Christian society may very well be seen in this particular matter of the appointment of its ministers. Quite apart from the fact that the ministry had come to be a matter of appointment rather than of gift, we see the gradual concentration of the authority of appointment *outside* the local Church. The earlier steps in the process are difficult to trace; but it had gone so far that in 350 A.D., or thereabout, the Synod of Laodicea laid it down in its twelfth canon that bishops must be appointed by the decision of metropolitans and comprovincials; and in the thirteenth that the choice of those to be appointed to the priesthood shall not rest with the multitude. The change did not take place with uniform rapidity throughout the Church. Hefele quotes van Espen in a statement that after the Synod of Laodicea the people still took part in the selection of their clergy; and vestiges of the early usages continue in conciliar decisions to a much later time. In the Synod of Arles (A.D. 443 or 452) it was decreed (Canon 54) that if a Bishop was to be elected, three candidates should be named by the comprovincial bishops, and of these three the clergy and the citizens of the city may choose one. The usage was not uniform for a long time, and in the West the change was not finally registered in Canon law until the eleventh century. But the

general tendency is obvious. It was the gradual passage of the prerogative of ministerial appointment from the congregation by way of the presbyterate into the hands of the bishops.

This is symptomatic of a profound change in the character of the life of the Church. The inner spiritual bond of the first Christian societies is gradually supplanted by external authority, more and more centralised. That the exigencies of the Church's growth should seem to demand some means of regulating and unifying the local societies was natural; and it is not improbable that the centralising tendencies of the surrounding imperialism invaded the Church. But the change is most of all due to the common human inability to believe in the adequacy of spiritual sanctions and the insistent craving for the apparently greater security of external rule and constraint. It is easier to trust to authority and compulsion because these seem more obvious and immediate; and their ascendency in the Church largely suppressed its own original genius and made it rank with the worldly corporations that lived by these means. "When authority and compulsion seemed a true and quick road to truth and unity, it was difficult to regard the Church as other than a worldly corporation and to remember that she stood for God's rule in however few and by God's way of the patient endurance of love, however long."*

* Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," p. 17.

4.

George Tyrrell speaking of the Catholic Church says that "it requires two principles for its development; one a principle of wild luxuriance, of spontaneous expansion and variation in every direction, the other a principle of order, restraint, unification, in conflict with the former, often overwhelmed by its task, always more or less in arrears.* This is indeed not peculiar to the Church. It is characteristic of all living human societies. But a point comes in their history when the principle of order gains in men's minds significance and worth superior to the principle of freedom; and while there is a temporary strengthening of the society by the sense of increased solidarity and unity, it is gained at the expense of the very life itself of the society. That there must be wineskins is clear; but when the wineskins assume a greater importance than the wine, not only have we reached a point of peril but we have already very materially modified our conception of our vocation as a society. We have become curators of wineskins rather than vendors of wine. And the change has taken place from the highest possible motive. We only intended to secure the wine; but that has shifted the emphasis to the wineskins. Our business was to pass the wine round; we have come to occupying ourselves with keeping it safe, arguing that it is too precious a commodity to be spoilt or wasted, forgetting that

* "Tyrrell," "Through Scylla and Charybdis," p. 25.

this particular wine is only kept wholesome by being circulated and distributed.

It was with the simple purpose of securing and conserving the life of the Church that the new bonds of authority and obedience were developed in the early Church. The bishop is vested with a sort of local sovereignty in order that the local community might be kept solidary; and so the process went on until the Church developed into a corporation so compact that Constantine could as it were grasp it in his hand and transfer it bodily into the place from which heathenism had been removed. But all this involved a real change in the Church's conception of its own function and character. The free brotherly fellowship of the first communities has become the closely integrated institution with highly centralised authority, its hierarchy, its formulæ and regulations. The principle of order, the proper place of which, as Tyrrell says, is "in arrears," assumed precedence over the principle of free life; and men became increasingly preoccupied with the creation and definition of external sanctions. The institution must be safeguarded for its own sake; and the purpose of its foundation fell into a more or less subordinate position.

The fellowship of the first Christians was not a fellowship for its own sake. It was a fellowship of service, not only mutual, but to the world; and this service to the world consisted mainly in the preaching of the Gospel. The Apostolic Church

was essentially missionary; and its missionary impulse arose from "the glad sense of possessing in a special degree a salvation which made it a joy to bring men into the fellowship of the Christian society."* The first Christians looked out upon a world involved in an alienation from God, which in their case by the grace of God had been overcome; and it was the passionate desire that the whole world should partake in the peace and love of God that caused the small Antiochene Church to send out Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to it. It is still only with reference to the actual moral condition of the world that the meaning of the Church can be understood. "To consider the world in its length and breadth (says Newman), its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways of government, forms of worship, their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements, and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence

* Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," p. 71.

and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruption, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race . . . so exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world,' all this is a vision to dizzy and appal."* And Newman finds himself unable to explain "this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact" save by assuming that the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. This was also the Apostolic view. Whether one accepts it or not, one cannot deny the moral confusion and disorder of the world; but the early Christians believed that they were entrusted with the word and the power which could redeem the world from this chaos, and transform the welter into a real universe. With joy and eagerness, they went out to offer their gospel to the world.

But gradually the principle of order asserted itself and the process of formal definition of the message began. Creed-making was set afoot. There is no harm in creeds so long as they are regarded not as authoritative statements of truth for all time, but as definitions of so much of the truth as men had at the time apprehended. The confessional formula is not a *terminus ad quem* but a *terminus a quo*. And even then it must be regarded as an instrument fashioned and shaped in the fires of controversy and therefore inevitably partial and biassed. But here again men have

* J. H. Newman, "Apologia pro Vita Sua," p. 242.

tended to care more for the wineskin than for the wine, and have been more jealous of the formula than of the living experience which it endeavoured to capture and define. The faith became of more moment than the gospel; and admission into the Church was henceforth conditional upon the acceptance of a body of truth rather than upon the possession of the new life. Indeed it was even less exacting than that; and it is a very curious and luminous commentary upon the change which had taken place in the life of the Church that while the apostles conceived of the Church as a community of souls in a "relationship of trust and freedom with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and consequently gathered in their converts one by one, in 324 A.D. twelve thousand men, with women and children in proportion, were baptised in Rome, and the Emperor promised to every convert a white garment and twenty pieces of gold.*

It is, however, an interesting circumstance that, notwithstanding the effort to reach final definitions of Christian truth, the formulæ proved successively inadequate to contain the growing riches of spiritual experience which the preaching and practice of spiritual Christianity created and revealed. The creeds were continually being patched up and extended; and it is worth noting that before it reached its present form in 740 A.D., between 150 A.D. and that year, the Apostles'

* P. Schaff. "Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity," pp. 31 f.

Creed had passed through at least twenty phases.* Tyrrell's "principle of wild luxuriance," as a matter of fact, is never wholly suppressed; and, despite all the endeavour to crystallise faith in formal statements, there is always a strain of life which is continually outstripping the definitions. It has been the salvation of the Christian Church that it has in it a core of life which declines to submit to the restraints of definition and tradition, and is, therefore, for ever breaking out in new directions and in fresh places. It has a seemingly inexhaustible capacity for self-renewal, and one never knows at what point it will next overflow the neat and trim banks which schoolmen and doctrinaires have so sedulously built up for it. The living Church will always be a Church with ragged edges. It is at last wholly unamenable to close regimentation.

This, then, was the tendency which was growingly operative in the life of the Church, the tendency to centralisation and incorporation. It developed at the expense of the original prophetic and apocalyptic elements—the elements which require the environment of freedom—in the Church; and, both in respect of its organisation and its faith, it had by the time of Constantine become very much of a close corporation. It had, in fact, become ready for Constantine's great experiment. Christianity, which possessed no genius for the

* See table showing the evolution of the Apostles' Creed in Curtis' "History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith," pp. 470 ff.

part (if we are to accept the New Testament as regulative), was proclaimed the public religion of the Empire. What actually happened was that two corporations entered into a concordat by which the one party attained a certain recognised prestige and power as the price of subordinating itself to the ultimate purposes of the other. The Empire did not become Christian in any real sense; and henceforth the Church became less than Christian. Constantine, it has been said, rendered lip-service to the Church; and the Church promised life-service to the Emperor. It was henceforth delivered from persecution; but it had surrendered its independence. For men to whom this tendency towards centralisation and incorporation had seemed important, in whose minds the idea of authority had gained an ascendency which is never contemplated in the New Testament, it seemed a great opportunity for the Church that it should become the authorised religious cultus of the Empire. It meant political and social prestige, effective discipline, immediate safeguards for orthodoxy, and much more; and it is not strange that they accepted the new situation.

"Constantine is our benefactor," is the judgment of Newman upon this transaction, "insomuch as we, who now live, may be considered to have received the gift of Christianity by means of the increased influence which he gave to the Church."* It depends, however, upon what

* "The Arians of the Fourth Century," p. 242.

one means by Christianity. If Christianity is to be conceived in the light of its origins in the New Testament, it is difficult to appreciate in what way it was assisted by Constantine. It is, indeed, not to be denied that the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Empire did to some extent work out for the moral advantage of the world; but it is highly questionable whether the retention of its independence by the Church would not, in the long run, have proved more effectual for the moral regeneration of the race. "The Roman State, with its laws, institutions, and usages, was still deeply rooted in heathenism, and could not be transformed by a magical stroke. The Christianising of the State amounted, therefore, in a great measure to a paganising and secularising of the Church. The world overcame the Church as much as the Church overcame the world, and the temporal gain of Christianity was in many respects cancelled by spiritual loss.* . . . "By taking in the whole population of the Roman Empire, the Church became indeed a Church of the masses, a Church of the people, but at the same time more or less a Church of the world. Christianity became a matter of fashion. The number of hypocrites and formal professors rapidly increased; strict discipline, zeal, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love proportionately ebbed away, and many heathen customs and usages, under altered names, crept

* Schaff. "Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity," I., p. 93.

into the worship of God and the life of the Christian people."* That the Church of Constantine was historically in the succession of the Church of the New Testament cannot be denied; but, like many another pedigree, this told a story of degeneracy and even of radical departure from the Church's original thought of itself.

The acceptance of the compact with Constantine is perhaps the outstanding historical instance of the bad bargain of "drawing the circle premature, heedless of far gain." Yet it is true that the bad bargain was forced upon those who made it. Rather perhaps we should say that it was made long before by those who elected to trust to centralised authority and external organisation rather than to the original spiritual and ethical *nisus* of the Church. The growth and ascendency of the institutional spirit in the Church had paved the way so effectually that it was bound at last to meet with a Constantine. And it did—to its own and the world's abiding detriment. Having become a close corporation, the only safeguard of its purity and health was persecution; and when the possibility of persecution passed away, it was set definitely on a path of inevitable degeneracy. That it survived this disaster is clear demonstration of its intrinsic and imperishable vitality. But we are to look for the line of its continuous life not in its external history, but along obscure side-roads, largely unwritten and unrecorded, the succession

* Schaff. "Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity," I., p. 93.

of unknown faithful souls, men and women who have tended the flame upon the altar of their own spirits and have passed it on from generation to generation in lowly piety and saintliness of life. The true Church has always been the faithful remnant which has never perished from the land. Dr. Lindsay has shown us how widely diffused throughout Germany before the Reformation was a very genuine and simple evangelical piety, both individual and domestic, owing comparatively little to prevailing ecclesiastical influences,* and it is in such bye-ways of humble social religious life that we are to discover the secret of the Church's survival. It has lived chiefly not through but in spite of its organisation and authority and hierarchical machinery. The living Church of history approximates throughout to the simple elementary social form which we discover in the New Testament.

* "All these things combine to show us how there was a simple evangelical faith among pious mediæval Christians; and that their lives were fed upon the same divine truths which lie at the basis of Reformation theology. The truths were all there, as poetic thoughts, as earnest supplication and confession, in fervent preaching, or in fireside teaching . . . Quotations might be multiplied, all proving the existence of a simple evangelical piety, and showing that the home experience of Friedrich Mecum (Myconius) was shared in by thousands, and that there was a simple evangelical family religion in numberless German homes in the end of the fifteenth century."—T. M. Lindsay, "History of the Reformation," I. pp. 126 f.

CHAPTER III. THE STRUGGLE OF THE CORPORATIONS

I.

THE establishment of Christianity as the public religion of the Empire, while it involved a radical departure from the original view of its relation to the world around it, was in line with the whole tradition of pagan antiquity. In the ancient world, religion was subservient to the purposes of the State and existed under State supervision. It was just that "National Church" of Coleridge's distinction, which the State requires in order to provide religious sanctions for its demands upon the people and for their obedience. For such a rôle as this, Christianity was not cast. It declared an authority higher than the State, in obedience to which there were occasions when the State had to be resisted. And while there had never been a formal abandonment of that position, and frequent assertions of it had been made in the face of the State, in general practice it inevitably came to pass that State requirement came to be regarded as defining the extent of Christian obligation. To this we shall have to attend at a later point; meantime we observe that as a consequence of the new position certain alien elements entered into the life of the Church.

The one outstanding fact is, of course, that the Church had surrendered its freedom. Constantine declared himself to be a divinely appointed bishop, with jurisdiction over the external affairs of the

Church, while the bishops proper had oversight of its internal affairs. But internal and external are here so closely related that this distinction was not of much value in practice. In point of fact, the Emperors after Constantine summoned the Church Councils, the supreme domestic authority of the Church, bore the expenses, and presided at the meetings through commissioners, gave to the conciliar decisions the force of law for the whole Empire, and maintained them by their authority. But the Emperors acted in ecclesiastical affairs even without reference to the Councils. Basilicus, Zeno, Justinian I., Heraclius, Constans II., and other Emperors issued edicts on Church matters without consulting the Councils, and in some cases virtually compelled the Councils to accept and to pass them. There were, it is true, never lacking fearless defenders of the rights of the Church against the civil power; but the liberty and independence of the Church with all that this implies of the power of self-determination and self-development was to all intents and purposes lost. Its life was definitely circumscribed by its connection with the State.

Moreover, the life of the Church was poisoned by the introduction of intrigue into its councils. It is probable that there was some intrigue always present even before the time of Constantine; but when the Church became a political factor, the traditional methods of politicians invaded it. The history of the Councils is on this account often not

very agreeable reading, and there is much in the record of the Church that is entirely discreditable. A depressing chapter might be written of the interference of the Empresses in the life of the Church, and of much evil beside to which the Church laid itself open when it permitted the State to embrace it. The wonder is that the Church survived the transaction at all.

2.

But as a matter of fact, the temporal power had embraced more than it could really assimilate. It was not in the nature of things that the Church should remain the pliant handmaid of the Empire, and from the position of subordination it so far succeeded in disentangling itself that we presently come upon a current conception of a great unity in which the civil and ecclesiastical powers were separate yet co-ordinate departments, neither having priority over the other. This was largely due to the growing power of the Bishop of Rome, who had, by reason of his distance from Byzantium, been enabled to establish himself in a position of great authority in the West; and the division of the Empire in 395 provided that co-ordination of the area of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction which led at last to the conception of the Holy Roman Empire. "The dream was a noble one, of a perfect State, with two elected heads, one temporal and one spiritual, working in harmony for the maintenance of peace and for the ordered conduct of life among Christians in a

polity that should continue all that was of lasting value in the system of the Roman Empire and all that was essential to the Kingdom of God."*

But this was to put too heavy a strain on human nature, and Pope and Emperor entered upon a long continued struggle for supremacy. During this phase the honours were, on the whole, with the spirituality. The Bishop of Rome not only achieved the ecclesiastical primacy of the West but claimed temporal dominion over large tracts of Central Italy. In fact, the Papal ascendency at times became so general that it was the Pope who bestowed the crown of the Empire upon Charles the Great in 800 A.D. and upon Otto the Great in 962 A.D. Though it was not consistently acknowledged, the Pope claimed a *plenitudo potestatis* over Emperors and Princes, and the doctrine of Papal Supremacy was argued on Scriptural grounds. "It is only by the mediation of the Church that the temporal authority possesses a divine sanction and mandate. The State in its concrete form is of earthly, and not like the Church of heavenly, origin. In so far as the State existed before the Church and exists outside the Church, it is the outcome of a human nature that was impaired by the fall of man. It was formed by some act of violence or was extracted from God for some sinful purpose. Of itself it has no power to raise itself above the insufficiency of a piece of human handiwork. In order, therefore, to purge

* J. Neville Figgis, "The Divine Right of Kings," p. 31.

away the stain of its origin and to acquire the divine sanction as a legitimate part of that human society which God has willed, the State needs to be hallowed by the authority of the Church.*

The theory was complete, and Boniface VIII.† embodied it in his bull *Unam Sanctum*. This instrument, after premising the unity of the Church and of all authority, asserts, under the figure of the unrent coat of Christ, that "a body politic with two heads was a monstrosity." It adduces the "two swords" passage from the Gospels in order to prove that the material sword is to be used for the Church, though not by it. The temporal power is accountable to the spiritual, while the supreme spiritual power answers only to God. The millennium since Constantine had turned the tables strangely.

This view did not, however, pass without challenge. Dante, who was contemporary with Boniface, wrote his treatise *De Monarchia* in order to rebut the papal claims, and, indeed, to make a direct counterclaim on behalf of the Empire. He showed that "a universal monarchy is ordained of God, that the Roman Empire won its position through God's grant, and that the Emperor derives his authority not from the Church, but immediately from God. Since all power is of God, if the Emperor's power is lawful at all, the only

* O. Gierke, "Political Theories of the Middle Ages," p. 13. Cf. Augustine De Civ. Dei. XV. 5. *Primus fuit terrenæ civitatis conditor fratricida.* The first founder of an earthly State was a fratricide.

† A.D. 1294—1303.

question is whether it comes from God directly or through the medium of the Church. Dante occupies himself with a careful demolition of the papalist argument which was to remain for centuries the one effectual answer to all claims of the right of papal or clerical interference with the freedom of secular government."* To Dante this was no academic controversy. The papal pretensions seemed to him to be deadly to all human improvement, as well as disastrous to both Church and State.

"Rome that made the good world was wont to have two suns,
Which made plain to sight the one road and the other: that of the World and God;
One has quenched the other; and the sword is joined to the crook;
And the one together with the other must perforce go ill."†

The papal ascendency was, however, only locally and intermittently successful; and Church and State, Pope and Emperor were continually at grips. But it was not before the political strength of the Emperors that the papal claims collapsed. Other influences were at work. William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua (both in the fourteenth century) were laying down new political principles which were destined to have large historical consequences. They were both on Dante's side in the controversy; but they did not accept Dante's version of the Empire. They were advocates of a theory of representative government. Marsilius held that "laws derive their authority from the nation and are invalid without its assent. . . .

* J. N. Figgis, "The Divine Right of Kings," pp. 89, 90.
† "Purgatorio," XVI., 106, 111.

and the monarch is responsible to the nation and subject to the law; and the nation which appoints him and assigns him his duties has to see that he obeys the constitution and has to dismiss him if he breaks it."* But Marsilius and Ockham were signs of the times rather than initiators. They were giving expression to ideas which were already astir; and the movement of thought and sentiment of which they are the exponents was destined in time to change the whole complexion of the problem of Church and State. "The idea of a Church universal in its organisation," says Bishop Creighton, "has been tried and, as a matter of fact, has failed because it could not make room for two forces which have been most powerful in shaping the modern world, the forces of nationality and liberty."† But these forces before they proved fatal to ecclesiastical unity were first of all to break up that political fabric which had continued a more or less shadowy existence as the Holy Roman Empire. The growth of coherent and mighty nations in France, Spain, and England reduced the Empire to a fiction outside Germany and Italy. When once the political framework began to break up, it was in the nature of things that the spiritual authority which was (as it were) stretched over it

* Acton. "History of Freedom," p. 57. How much Marsilius and William of Ockham owed to Thomas Aquinas it is difficult to say; but according to Lord Acton (op. cit., p. 36) he held that the whole nation should have a share in governing itself, and that all political authority is derived from popular suffrage.

† M. Creighton. "The Church and the Nation," p. 214.

should be rent. It only required the appearance of some disintegrating element within the Church to bring about this disruption. That came with the Reformation; and the mediæval dream of external unity passed away for ever.

3.

The spectacle which this period presents us with is the varying fortunes of the struggle of two great corporations for supremacy. In the weapons they used, there is no perceptible difference between them; in the spirit which they showed, they display an almost complete identity. The controversies and conflicts betray an entire absence on the part of the Church of a clear sense of its own *differentia.* Its life was largely external; the conception of its well-being was determined by the ordinary standards of the world. It is not strange therefore that it should be invaded and disfigured by corruption, and that serious men seeking a spiritual salvation should turn from it rather than to it. Donatism and Montanism were to a great extent protests against its corruption; and the great development of monasticism is not unconnected with the wordliness of the Church. Schaff, speaking of the post-Nicene age, says that monasticism was "a reaction against the secularising State-Church and the decay of discipline, and an earnest, well-meant, though mistaken effort to save the virginal purity of the Christian Church by transplanting it to the wilderness. The moral corruption of the Roman Empire, which had the appearance

of Christianity but was essentially heathen in the framework of society, the oppressiveness of taxes, the extremes of despotism and slavery, of extravagant luxury and of hopeless poverty, the repletion of all classes, the decay of all productive energy in science and art, and the threatening incursions of barbarians on the frontiers, all favoured the inclination toward solitude in just the most earnest minds."* But whatever contributory causes there may have been, the central impulse was the impossibility of sustaining a spiritual life within the Church as it had come to be; and a very considerable movement assuming the forms of anchoretism, eremitism, and cenobitism was set up. It is only necessary to recall some of the names associated with the monastic movement to realise how much the survival of the Church owes to it. In the desert, in caves of the rocks, in remote cloisters, the flame was kept alive by the devotion and austerity of men like Anthony, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Martin of Tours, Jerome, and Benedict of Nursa, the founder of the Benedictine Order. That the monastic movement was full of danger hardly needs pointing out; and it did in many instances succumb to the intrinsic perils of its position. Nevertheless it remains as a sincere, if one-sided and partial, endeavour to preserve the spiritual note of the Church in an age when the leaders of the Church itself had lost or forsaken it. The Church, with

* Schaff. "Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity." I., 155.

the astuteness which has characterised its statesmen throughout its history, succeeded in diverting the monastic movement to its own purposes at the time. Like the Franciscan revival at a later stage, it contained possibilities of disruption; but that danger was averted by the insight which recognised in it a power which might be advantageously harnessed to the official chariots of the Church. Here once more we see one of the main streams of the Church's real life away from the centre. In the form it took, monasticism ignored the realities of life and failed in the understanding of the Christian obligation; but in its impulse, and therefore for a considerable period of its actual life, it stood out as an attempt to realise a measure and quality of personal Christianity which a too close contact with the official Church made impossible.

4.

In the mediæval Church, as we see it in historical records, hardly a note of the Apostolic Church remains. The universal outlook of primitive Christianity is replaced by the "catholic" dream of a single visible external unity. The bond of love is supplanted by the bond of authority. The Gospel is buried beneath the Faith; and the Sacrament is elevated at the expense of the Word. All this was the natural and logical result of the process of incorporation and centralisation which exalted the Christian institution above the Christian fellowship which created it. The outward gained a deadening priority over the inward; and, what-

ever external causes may have contributed to the ultimate disruption of the mediæval Church, the chief of all was its own inner disintegration by reason of its secularisation. It had become a worldly corporation. Instead of being a unity of faith and love over against a corrupt world, created in order to save it, the Church had made terms with the world and copied its methods. Nothing could save it from the consequences of this self-perversion; and when the new wine began to stir in Germany, the wineskin went to pieces.

Nor is it possible to discern any countervailing moral advantage to the State or to mankind which can be set off against the calamitous secularisation of the Church. Constantine's compact had not long run before the Church had largely sunk to the level of the surrounding world, and had little to say or to give to it. Here and there we may trace the introduction of elements of Christian morality into civilisation; but once more it must be affirmed that the main contribution which Christianity made to the world during this period was only in a very minor degree through the official channels; for the rest, it came along those hidden and unrecorded streams of humble godliness which, as we have already seen, had prepared the soil of Germany for the Reformation, and had over a much wider area made for the purification and the elevation of the common life of man. The Church as a hierarchy and a corporation has given comparatively little to mankind; but where it lived on

as a real fellowship of love and service, often in regions unmarked in historical records, it has enriched the life of man beyond any reckoning. Its historical continuity is not a thin and precarious trickle through a line of popes and bishops, but the broad stream of lowly piety and faithfulness among common folk, who have come to God through Christ and who through ages of darkness and corruption have kept the faith. Here, as elsewhere, "Not by might or by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER VI: THE NATIONAL CHURCH

I.

WILLIAM JAMES speaks somewhere of "our emotional response to the idea of one-ness"; and Gierke has shown how the instinctive human feeling after unity affected the mediæval polity. The craving for unity did not, however, disappear either with the dissolution of the Empire or the dismemberment of the Church at the Reformation. What happened was that instead of a single great unity with its centre at Rome, there appeared a number of new *foci* for lesser unities. The epoch of imperialism was followed by an epoch of nationalism, and the problem of Church and State changed its setting, but not its substance. Despite Aquinas, Marsilius, and Ockham, the time for popular government had not yet come; and the influence of Roman Law in the West caused, at the dissolution of the Empire, the ascription to territorial rulers of those prerogatives which had hitherto belonged to the Emperor alone. The Reformation led to the claim by princes to spiritual supremacy within their own borders; and of the power which the mediæval Church had claimed and had sometimes exercised over the civil authority, hardly a vestige was left in the Reformed countries. National Churches came into being of which the titular head was the secular ruler of the nation.

Luther, in emancipating himself from mediæval Christianity, did not succeed in freeing himself from the political ideas of the Middle Ages. It is

true that he insisted upon spiritual liberty; and, in his *Babylonish Captivity*, went so far as to say that no Christian man should be ruled except by his own consent. So far as the Reformation principle had a political implication, it was in the direction of the assertion of democratic rights. But so true is it that we never succeed in disentangling ourselves wholly from the traditions of the past, however radically we may profess to break with them, that along with this germinal notion of liberty Luther held the view that the territorial prince, now assuming sovereign authority, was vested with all the prerogatives of the Emperor within his own frontiers. This carried with it the conviction that it was the business of the sovereign to carry through the reform of the Church and that the religion of the sovereign was to be the public religion of his country. The German reformers as a whole preferred a Church in which the sovereign, and not the congregation or the hierarchy, was *summus episcopus*. This was, however, not the universal view. François Lambert had carried the synod with him at Hamburg in 1526 in a scheme for a democratic form of Church government; but this idea had to look elsewhere than Germany for a suitable soil. It was more suited to a Calvinistic than a Lutheran setting. Calvin's view of the relation of Church and State differed from Luther's and approximated curiously to that of Boniface VIII. The end and business of the State, in Calvin's mind, was the

support and defence of religious truth; it was in consequence bound to obey the Church and possessed no control over it. This led to the idea of a pure theocracy; and both in Geneva and Scotland the experiment was made. In the *Second Book of Discipline*, Knox claimed for the spiritual power some kind of direct temporal ascendency. The Kirk is the nation in its spiritual aspect; but not only is the civil power to have no authority over it, it is there simply to execute the will of the office bearers of the Church. The prince is to be deposed if he refuses to obey the Kirk's officers or declines to carry out their findings. But this assertion of ecclesiastical primacy was from the nature of the case bound to collapse.

It is difficult to resist the feeling that the Reformers, both Lutheran and Swiss, were dominated in their religious thinking by the political conceptions of the Middle Ages. It was Francis Thompson who said that we moderns have made the Almighty "a constitutional deity with certain state grants of worship, but no influence over public affairs," and it is beyond question that mediæval notions of sovereignty governed Calvin's theological thought. The conception of divine sovereignty is central to Calvinism, and ideas of sovereignty and authority coloured his speculation and practice respecting the Church. This is true, however, not of Calvin only, but of the whole period. Whether the authority was vested in the prince on behalf of the Church or

in the Church itself, a Church without authority and the power to enforce its mind was inconceivable to most of the Reformers. The Reformation brought no relief from the "corporation" idea; it simply multiplied the corporations. The national Church was obsessed by the thought of power as the mediæval Church had been; and the liberty which the Reformation seemed at first to promise had yet to be striven for over a long period.

2.

Perhaps we can best examine the idea of a "national" Church in England. The struggle between the Empire and the Papacy under Hildebrand, Innocent III., and Innocent IV., and the conflict of claims between Church and State which accompanied them, do not appear to have greatly affected England. The English clergy had on the whole played an honourable and fruitful part in the common life; and the Church was already national in a degree in which it was probably national nowhere else. There were, of course, many struggles between the sovereign and the representatives of papal authority; but there were also frequent occasions which united both sovereign and clergy in a common resistance to the Papacy. The power of the Pope over the nation and the Church had been limited by a series of statutes (e.g., the Statutes of Praemunire, 1353-1393) and by enactments relating to papal exactions and the like. "The Parliament of 1399

declared the Crown and realm to be so free that the Pope could not interfere with it."* The time was ripe for change; and it was unfortunate that when at last the change came to be made, it had to be effected under circumstances wholly inconsistent with its importance, and discreditable to all the parties to it, save one, the unfortunate Queen Katharine.

It is quite clear from the instruments by which the separation from Rome was brought about that the repudiation of outside interference in the domestic affairs of the realm played an important part in the transaction, and this is to be ascribed less to the Reformation than to the now mature sense of compact national existence. But the King's breach with Rome was supported by the Convocation which in 1534 declared that the Pope had no more jurisdiction in England than any foreign bishop. As far as specific declarations could make it so, the severance was complete. "This realm of England" was said to be "an Empire governed by one supreme King to whom a body politic divided by the names of spirituality and temporality ought to bear, next to God, a humble obedience; he being furnished with power and jurisdiction to render justice to all subjects within his realm in all causes occurring therein without restraint or provocation from any foreign prince." The spirituality now being usually called "the English Church" was declared to have power

* The Archbishops' Committee on Church and State Report, p. 18.

when any cause of the law divine or of spiritual learning happened to come in question, "to declare, interpret, and show it," for which task the spirituality was said to have been always reputed sufficient without the intermeddling of any exterior person.*

Henry VIII. had called himself "protector and only supreme head of the Church and Clergy of England," and exercised an authority over the Church hitherto unpossessed by any English monarch. The position was (after the Marian reaction) reaffirmed under Elizabeth. She disavowed the title of *supreme head*, choosing rather to be called *supreme governor;* nevertheless, the effect of the Act of Supremacy of 1559 was to establish her in the position of her father in relation to the Church. In the same year was passed the first of a series of Acts of Uniformity, "the effect of which," as Dr. Selbie says, "has been to produce strife and division in English Christendom from those days until now." It also marks the end of the hope of a really national Church. This Act made the Prayer Book of 1552 (with slight alterations) compulsory for use in churches in order to secure some uniformity in worship and in the administration of the Sacraments. Any other form of worship was declared to be a penal offence; and every man was required to be present every Sunday at the legal services instituted under the Act. As a matter of fact, the

* The Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, p. 19.

Church and its representatives were no parties to this enactment. It was strongly resisted by a considerable body of churchmen; and some of the Bishops and two hundred of the clergy were deprived of their offices and livings for their refusal to take the oath. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were not generally enforced at the time; and in consequence, the disintegrating effects of the latter were not then fully felt.

3.

Hitherto the influence of the religious aspect of the Continental Reformation had not greatly affected England; and the resistance to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity came in the first instance from clergy whose sympathies were with the Catholic Church. Protestant doctrine and worship were not therefore immediately in question. They were, however, destined to enter the situation and to introduce great and insoluble complications. Indeed, it was the influence of Protestant ideas which stimulated the struggles for religious liberty in the years immediately following and which eventually destroyed the idea and fact of a "national Church." Meantime, the supremacy of the civil authority over the Church was reinforced by a theoretic justification of it wrongly associated with the name of Erastus, the Dutch Court physician (1524-1583). In vulgar use Erastianism connotes a view of the relation of the secular power to the Church which Erastus

himself did not hold. He seems to have sought for some method by which the Church's discipline could be secured without the use of coercion by the Church itself. "The real object of Erastus was to give clear expression to the denial of any right of coercive authority in the religious society apart from the State. . . . He was opposed not to the free profession of truth but to the political conception of the Church."* He appears to have been concerned for the purity of the Church and would have deprived it of power which he considered alien to it and which had been undoubtedly the cause of much injury to it. His view was that in a Christian State the magistrate is the right person to punish offences, and since excommunication is of the nature of punishment, it should not be imposed without the magistrate's sanction. But this was the thin end of the wedge, and the name of Erastus is now connected with a theory of the complete subordination of the Church to the secular authority. That he made the church "the plaything of Kings" is a judgment unfair to him, but it is not an unfair verdict upon some who took up the discussion after him.

The inferences which were drawn from Erastus were in complete accord with the mind of those who desired to establish a national Church by coercion; and had there been no other reason for the breakdown of that idea, the attempt to realise it by force would have itself sufficed to prove

* "Cambridge Modern History," III., p. 743.

deadly to it. Experience should have shown that in the religious sphere the attempt to compel men generally to toe a common line—in doctrine or in worship—had soon or late met with effectual resistance. But there were, moreover, inherent weaknesses in the idea of a national Church which were bound in the end to defeat it. The mediæval Church had largely ignored the factor of nationality and aimed at a general uniformity irrespective of the peculiar traditions and outlook of national and racial groups. This led to disaster. But the new phase was an extreme reaction from this position; it made too much of nationality and introduced territorial divisions into the Christian society which were inimical to its intrinsic catholicity. It does not meet the case to claim a catholic character for a Church on the ground of historical continuity. The Church must possess catholicity as well as catholicism; and its historical continuity must be supplemented by an international continuity, if it is to be catholic in a full sense.

4.

The word "national" has a very elusive connotation. We speak of "British" nationality, a term which covers English and Scots folk, yet there is a "national" Church in England and another—of a very different character—in Scotland; there is no "national" Church at all in Ireland. "The English Church," said the late Archbishop Benson, "must be the religious organ

of the English people." What then is the religious organ of the people who claim *British* nationality? What, indeed, is a *nation* to begin with? A nation is a very fluid and indeterminate thing; and while the fact of nationality is of first-class importance to the historian and the politician, it is nevertheless of so unstable a character that it can never be anything more than a provisional and temporary setting for a religious society which claims to be abiding and super-historic. When Dr. Forsyth speaks of a nation as "a collective personality, a historical conscience, a continuity of glory, which fills it with hope and dignity, and of responsibility which connects crime and consequence, error and expiation across centuries,"* his eloquence is not sustained by the facts. Nations are in the first instance the products of geographical and historical accidents. Their frontiers are continually shifting, expanding, and contracting; their characteristics ever in a state of flux. The factors of race, language, even of location, are only secondary in the national consciousness. Nationality is primarily a political fact, and national characters are in no sense fixed and immutable. To speak of nations as having historically continuous identity is fallacious; and "all the most important agents producing the divergent modification of the nations are human products and can be altered.† There is nothing

* P. T. Forsyth. "Theology in Church and State," p. 190.
† P. Chalmers Mitchell, "Evolution and the War," p. 91.

in what Dr. Forsyth says of a nation which is not in its measure true of any other association of men living and working together and possessing any history. The nation must be regarded as a natural community and not as a sacrosanct and mystical society, rooted eternally in the divine decrees. The elevation of nationality into a fact of religious significance has been the spring of untold trouble through the ages.

This is not to say that the principle of nationality is evil or purposeless. On the contrary, it has been of enormous value in the discipline of the race. C. H. Pearson held that the nation is the largest conception of mankind that the ordinary man can handle with any intelligence; but it may be observed that the extent covered by a particular national name is continually expanding in the processes of modern history (without, it should be observed, very materially affecting differences of racial origin) and consequently men are learning to embrace ever larger conceptions of humanity. The process of history which has developed the collective consciousness of a Welsh tribe or a Highland clan into the collective consciousness of what we call the British Empire may without extravagance be regarded as part of a providential discipline by which men are to become at last authentic citizens of the world. The nation is no fixed fact for history; it is simply a stage in the training of the race.

On the other hand, it has to be recognised that

the idea of nationality has operated chiefly in the world as a principle of exclusiveness and strife. It has been said with much good sense that nationality is a good thing so long as it is an end to be struggled for, but once the end is reached it becomes a dangerous thing. The struggle for national independence is essentially self-regarding, and when the goal is attained the self-regard persists and is apt to lead to greedy adventure, as, for instance, it led Italy into its Tripolitan brigandage. The first business of a nation, it is held, is to amass power and wealth, to make itself stronger and larger than other nations, at any rate as strong and as large as it possibly can. It will occupy itself primarily in safeguarding its material interests, defending its frontiers, increasing its prestige and enlarging its territory. That has been in the main the history of nations. On this basis a nation can only pursue its own interests at the expense of other nations. It comes to regard its neighbours as commercial and political rivals, and ultimately as possible predatory enemies. Here is the ultimate source of international conflicts and the prolific source of war. It sets up a series of wrong values, identifying national honour with national *amour propre*, exalting a narrow patriotism above humanity and relegating other national names (when they are not allies in war time) to a category of more or less contemptible inferiority.

5.

It is not surprising that Coleridge found him-

self constrained to distinguish between a national Church, and a Christian Church, even though he had to acknowledge their conjunction in the English Church. There is nothing in the principle of nationality that makes it intrinsically and permanently divisive and exclusive. There is no reason why it should not even become a principle of co-operation and catholicity. But as a matter of historical fact, it has hitherto made almost entirely for separation and division; and the identification of the Church with the nation has obscured the note of catholicity. If indeed "the root idea of the national Church in England is simply that England can manage its ecclesiastical affairs without interference from without, because experience had shown that their interference was a hindrance and not a help,"* and if that root idea had continued to be the controlling principle of the life of the English Church, then the conception of a national Church would have been less open to objection. But the national Church, both in England and elsewhere, has come in the course of time to identify itself with the political interests of the nation so completely that it has ceased to be in any real sense catholic in spirit and outlook. Domiciled within a nation, it should nevertheless be supranational; and it should judge the party-interests of the nation in the light of that universal ethic of which it is the trustee and mouthpiece in the world. But in times of crisis, it almost always

* Mandell Creighton. "The Church and the Nation," p. 212.

suspends its function of moral criticism; and almost without exception in times of war, the national Church has followed the national drum. It invariably finds means of justifying the wars in which the nation engages, and helps to perpetuate the unspeakable tragedy of human antagonism. If the testimony of the Church is to be regulated by the palpable sense of the New Testament, it ought even in the midst of war to bear witness to those principles of goodwill and human solidarity which are central to its practical Gospel and to stimulate the influences which go to the healing of the nations. It is always easy to find plausible vindications of the course which national Churches take in international quarrels. There is always the same ponderous argument about justice and righteousness; and though the idiom may vary, the substance of the argument never changes. The national Church does not escape the psychological stampede which follows a declaration of war. There is an immediate loss of historical perspective and an eclipse of the faculty of radical moral criticism; and the Church has nothing to say which is in essence different from the most bellicose politician or journalist. It always happens so; and it is the consequence of the Church's alliance with an interest which because it is national is also sectional and partisan, and a practical negation of the Church's catholicity.

"The idea of a national Church is in no way repugnant," says Bishop Creighton, "to the con-

ception of one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The local name signifies that it consists of members of that Church living in a particular country. All members of the Church are one through faith in God as revealed in the Scriptures, and that faith is expressed in the creeds of Christendom. These local bodies have no power to change the creeds of the universal Church or its early organisation. But they have the right to determine the best method of setting forth to the people the contents of the Christian faith. They may regulate rites, ceremonies, images, observances, and discipline for that purpose according to their wisdom and experience and need of the people."* If we are to conceive of catholicity as an affair of history and ancestry, then Bishop Creighton may be right. We must seek the ground of catholicity in the past; and we shall find it there, no matter how present circumstances give the lie to the assertion of unity which is involved in the claim to catholicity. But if the conception of catholicity possesses any moral reality at all, we must ask that it should be, if not realised, at least realisable in the mutual relations of Christian men. Now, historically, national Churches, whatever their claim to be catholic, have failed to give the idea of catholicity a real moral content. They have accepted the implications of political nationality as fixed principles, and have even stimulated national tempers and ideals which are destructive of catholicity. The national Church

* Mandell Creighton. "The Church and the Nation," p. 212.

has cared comparatively little for the moral fact of catholicity; and not the clearest catholic ancestry can countervail that failure. How far a national Church which had remained separate from the civil power might have succeeded where actual national Churches have failed, it is difficult to determine. But it is not inconceivable that such a Church might have discovered and taught a conception of nationality which did not conflict with its own catholicity. Meantime, the failure to be really catholic is a failure to be fully Christian; and that is the pit into which the national Church, especially a national Church buttressed by the civil authority, was predestined to fall. The present condition of Europe is the terrible evidence of this failure.

But the living elements of Christianity are too powerful and expansive to be long contained within the limitations of a national Church; and the very influences which were inimical to catholicity struck so directly at the roots of the vital content of Christianity that the national Church was doomed to disruption. The failure in catholicity is a symptom of a radical failure to make room for the development of the distinctive forces of Christianity; and the wine once more made havoc of the wineskins. The truth is that the national Church as it emerged in England had all the disabilities of the mediæval Church as an organ of the Kingdom of God, with one more added to them. It was a national corporation; and it broke up under the pressure of the free expanding religious life of the people.

CHAPTER V: THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

I.

THE Reformation shattered the mediæval dream of a universal ecclesiastical unity. The Separatist movement in England no less shattered the idea of a national Church. The nominal character of the English Church (as *national*) became more and more apparent with the increase of dissent; and it became the State-Church, that is to say, the Church which possesses the official recognition of the State as the expression of public religion and as its organ for such religious offices as it may require of it. No sophistry can do away with the fact that a Church cannot claim to be national which does not command the adhesion of the nation. State recognition cannot make it in any real and effective sense national; nor does its ability to command the majority of the people of a nation entitle it to be so described. So long as there are coherent religious bodies within the nation other than the national Church the term "national" is fictitious.

A passage typical of the highly generalised language in which this question is commonly discussed is to be found in Bishop Creighton's essay on the subject in the Oxford House Papers: * "Church and State are abstractions; but in actual fact they consist largely of the same persons and only express different sides of their activity. When men act together as citizens, they are the

* Series III., p. 42.

State; when they act as Christians, they are the Church. Behind both Church and State stands the nation; and Church and State are alike the organs of the nation, the one for the arrangement of common life, the other for maintaining the principles on which that life is founded." This has a sound of logical completeness until it is put to the test. In point of fact, it has hardly any meaning at all, unless Bishop Creighton included in the Church all the extensive and highly diversified bodies of professing Christians which exist in England, and, indeed, religious bodies which do not call themselves Christians but yet profess to teach "the fundamental truths upon which man's life is based."* All these persons acting together are, *ex hypothesi*, the Church; but when do they ever act together? When, indeed, do even the persons constituting the Anglican Church act together? It is quite hopeless to expect fruitful discussion of this question until Anglican writers get rid of the blind spot which disables them from seeing that what they call the Church, so far from being inclusive of the nation, is exclusive of many large and active religious communities which have contributed, and still do contribute, materially to the life of the nation, and whose membership represents a not inconsiderable part of the nation. What exists in England is a State Church (in the sense indicated above); and in any community which permits freedom of opinion it is inconceiv-

* Oxford House Papers, Series III., p. 31.

able, men being what they are, that there should be a national Church in any real sense. "The English Church," again to quote Archbishop Benson, "must be the religious organ of the English people."* But what if only a section of the English people are prepared to accept it as their organ? What Archbishop Benson says "must be" is not and, from the nature of the case, cannot be. The Anglican Church is at the present time the oldest and largest division of English Christendom, and nothing can alter that fact. It may urge that it may claim to be national because it is under obligation to provide religious services in every parish and district in the land; but unless it is sensible of that constraint independently of its "national" character, then it may be "national," but it is not a Church, for the missionary spirit is one of the authentic and indispensable notes of the Church. It is, moreover, from the very nature of its constitution required to impose terms of communion on Englishmen which have nothing to do directly with the obligations involved in English nationality.

The existence of a single national Church is only possible when by Acts of Uniformity and the like all men can be constrained to acknowledge a connection with it. It was Thirlwall (I think) who said that the difference between compulsory religion and no religion at all was too subtle for his apprehension. Coercion may provide uniformity,

* Quoted in H. Hensley Henson, "The National Church," p. 111.

but it is deadly to vitality; and the problem which began to confront the national Church early in its history was whether it would cease to be national or to be a Church. It did not present the dilemma to itself in this form—was not, indeed, aware of the dilemma—and struggled hard to preserve both characters. But, fortunately for it, events proved stronger than it and delivered it from a position which must have ended disastrously for it. It remained a Church, but it ceased to be national.

2.

It was not to be expected that the Protestant Reformation would leave England untouched, and in the English Church it emerged in the form of Puritanism. The Puritan spirit appears first in the attempt, in 1552, to secure some mitigation of the Act of Uniformity, especially with reference to vestments. No relaxation of the Act was, however, secured. The Act was, indeed, more rigorously enforced, the process reaching a climax in 1556, when a number of London clergy, declining to subscribe to the requirements of the Act, were suspended. The immediate point of the dispute had nothing to do directly with the relations of Church and State; it was formally a conflict respecting forms and ceremonies, though in substance it touched the core of the religious controversy of the Reformation. But the sequel raised the question of Church and State in a definite way.

The deprived ministers and other Puritans held a conference in London to discuss the question of separation from the national Church. Their finding was that "since they could not have the Word of God preached and the Sacraments administered without idolatrous gear, and since there had been a separate congregation in London and another in Geneva in Mary's time using a book and order of service approved by Calvin, which was free from the superstitions of the English service; therefore it was their duty to break off from the public churches and to assemble as they had opportunity in private houses or elsewhere to worship God in a manner that might not offend against the light of their consciences." This was a momentous declaration, and may be regarded as the opening phase of the struggle for religious liberty in England.

But there were those within the Church who were not prepared to accept the drastic remedy of separation. Thomas Cartwright, the leader of the Puritans (1535-1603), was no separatist in principle. He hoped for a reformation of the English Church which would bring it into line with the Reformed Churches on the Continent. He addressed two "admonitions" to Parliament, in which he set out his plea for a truly reformed Church, purged of Popish survivals, and more closely conformed to what he conceived the New Testament model to be. In discipline, he claimed that the Church was self-sufficient and should

therefore be autonomous. "The discipline of Christ's Church that is necessary for all times is delivered by Christ and set down in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore the true and lawful discipline is to be fetched from thence. And that which resteth on any other foundation ought to be esteemed unlawful and counterfeit." He outlines in some detail the machinery of ecclesiastical discipline as he conceived it should be, and claims that in the last resort the civil magistrate should "provide some sharp punishment for those that contemn this censure and discipline of the Church." In his view the Sovereign, if not head of the Church, was in position of some authority over it. "We heartily, plainly, and faithfully profess that the chief governors in civil matters have chief authority over all persons in their dominions and countries and are the foster-fathers and nurses of Christ's Church. And as Jehosophat having chief authority did by his authority defend not only the civil government but also the true reformation of the Church at that time, in his dominion, and Cyrus in his, so we refer the same authority to our Sovereign, beseeching Her Majesty and the whole State to proceed in it." Cartwright, though he reflects a sharper differentiation of Church and State than was current in his time (as appears from Whitgift's answer to him), was not primarily concerned with this problem. His chief interest lay in the reform of the Church, which to him chiefly meant the substitution of

presbytery for episcopacy. But Cartwright was leading a forlorn hope. The civil magistrate showed no haste to reform the Church; and the logic of the Puritan position under the circumstances led to Robert Browne's *Treatise of Reformation without tarying for anie*, which appeared in 1582. This marks a new stage in the discussion of the problem of Church and State. Browne's vehement tract is chiefly directed against those who, desiring a reformation of the Church, were waiting for the civil authority to do it. Browne asserted the independence of Church and State in round terms: "They put the magistrate first, which in a commonwealth are indeed first; yet have they no ecclesiastical authority at all but only as other Christians, if so be they are Christians. Because the Church is in a commonwealth, it is their charge, that is, concerning the outward provision and outward justice they are to look to it; but to compel religion, to plant churches by power, to force a submission to ecclesiastical government by laws and penalties belongeth not unto them, neither yet unto the Church. The outward power and civil forcings let us leave to the magistrates, to rule the commonwealth in all outward justice belongeth unto them; but let the Church rule in spiritual wise and not in a worldly manner, by a lively law preached and not by a civil law written, by holiness in inward and outward obedience, and not in straightness of the outward only." This was the justification of the Separatists of 1556 and

the charter of the Separatist movement for many a day. Browne's notion of Church government was a blending of presbytery and independency; and his chief significance lies in the emphasis he lays upon the democratic character of ecclesiastical order. His treatise was the most Christian utterance concerning the government of the Church since the days of the primitive Church. Nor did he preach to unready hearers. Within four years of the publication of Browne's treatise, Sir Walter Raleigh told the House of Commons that there were nearly twenty thousand Brownists in England. Persecution followed—with the traditional result. In particular, the execution of Greenwood and Barrow in 1593, and of John Penry a little later, together with the Conventicle Act of 1592, while they secured a temporary triumph for the national Church, served ultimately to rally men to the cause of separation in such numbers and in such enthusiasm that no subsequent measures of hostility materially affected its progress.

Lord Acton's judgment upon this period is worth recording. "Many years before the names of Milton and Taylor, of Baxter and Locke were made illustrious by their partial condemnation of intolerance, there were men among the independent congregations who grasped with vigour and sincerity the principle that it is only by abridging the authority of the State that the liberty of churches can be assured. That great political idea, sanctifying freedom and consecrating it to God,

teaching men to treasure the liberties of others as their own and to defend them for the love of justice and charity more than as a claim of right, has been the soul of what has been great and good in the progress of the last two hundred years. The cause of religion, even under the unregenerate influence of worldly passion, had as much to do as any clear notions of policy in making this country the foremost of the free."*

3.

The next stage in the story is occupied with the struggle of the Separatist bodies to secure their right to exist within the commonwealth. The religious conflicts of the Commonwealth, the rivalry of Independent and Presbyterian, show that there is no virtue in mere forms of Church government to secure or to establish religious liberty. On the face of it, we should expect that democratic forms of Church government would naturally make for the freedom of religious practice, especially when those forms had had themselves to struggle for the right to live. But a democracy, whether in Church or State, can quite easily pass over into a tyranny.† Milton, however, with his

* Lord Acton. "The History of Freedom," p. 52.

† There is a very relevant paragraph in Lord Acton's "History of Liberty," which is worth quoting in this connection: "Democracy, no less than monarchy or autocracy, sacrifices everything to maintain itself, and strives with an energy and a plausibility that kings and nobles cannot attain to to override representation, to annul all the forces of resistance and deviation, and to secure by plebiscite, referendum, or census free play for the will of the majority. The true democratic principle that none shall have power over the people is taken to mean that none shall be able to restrain or to evade the power of the people. The true democratic principle that the

vivid insight into the conditions of liberty, saw the moral of the proceedings and controversies of the commonwealth and stated it in his letter to Cromwell: "If you leave the Church to the Church and discreetly rid yourself and the magistracy of that burden, actually half of the whole, and at the same time the most incompatible with the rest, not allowing two powers of utterly diverse natures, the civil and the ecclesiastical, to commit fornication together, and by their promiscuous and delusive helps apparently to strengthen, but in reality to weaken and finally subvert each other; if also you take away all persecuting power from the Church, for persecuting power will never be absent so long as money, the poisoner of the Church, the strangler of the truth, shall be extorted by force from the unwilling as a pay for preaching the Gospel, then you will have cast out of the Church those money-changers that truckle not with doves, but with the Dove itself, the Holy Ghost." The times, how-

people shall not be made to do what it does not like is taken to mean that it shall not be required to tolerate what it does not like. The true democratic principle that every man's free will shall be as unfettered as possible is taken to mean that the free will of the collective people shall be fettered in nothing. Religious toleration, judicial independence, dread of centralisation, jealousy of State interference become obstacles to freedom instead of safeguards when the centralised force of the State is to be wielded by the hands of the people. Democracy claims to be not only supreme without authority above, but absolute without independence below, to be its own master and not a trustee. The old sovereigns of the world are exchanged for a new one who may be flattered and deceived, but whom it is impossible to corrupt or to resist, and to whom must be rendered the things that are Cæsar's, and also the things that are God's." This was written long before the passing of the Military Service Acts of 1916, but it supplies the appropriate commentary upon that unhappy episode.

ever, were not ripe for so drastic a solution. The Presbyterians and Independents, despite their own experience of persecution, both alike joined in persecuting the Quakers. But the religious troubles of the Commonwealth taught some wisdom. In 1653 the Council of State declared that "such as professed faith in God by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth shall not be restrained from but shall be protected in the profession of their faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others or to the actual disturbance of the peace on their part"; and it was provided that "none be compelled to conform to the public religion by penalties or otherwise." To this concession there were certain exceptions; it did not cover "Popery or Prelacy or such as under a profession of Christianity hold forth and practise licentiousness." This toleration probably went a good deal farther than the public opinion of the time warranted; but it remains as one of the outstanding landmarks in the progress of religious liberty.

4.

The Restoration brought a reaction, broken only by a few flickering moments of toleration, mainly engineered by Charles II. in the interests of Roman Catholics, but providing Nonconformists also with a little breathing space. The chief episode of this period was the Act of Uniformity of 1662,

followed by the ejection of those ministers who declined to subscribe to the formula of assent to the Book of Common Prayer. It is said that some two thousand clergy, mainly Independents and Presbyterians, who had been appointed to parochial livings during the Commonwealth, went out into the wilderness; and among them were such men as John Owen and Edward Calamy, Richard Baxter and John Howe. It was this Act which, as Dr. Selbie has said, set up the cleavages that exist in English society to this day. For the next twenty-five years, despite its illegality, Nonconformist preaching and worship increased rapidly throughout the land; and neither the Conventicle Act of 1664, nor the Five Mile Act of 1665, nor the Test Act of 1672 (disabilities hardly compensated for by the short-lived Declaration of Indulgence) provided any material arrest to the growth of Nonconformity. By a paradox, however, the reign of Charles II. marked a distinct advance in the achievement of liberty. The later years of the reign gave us the Habeas Corpus Act; and the doctrine of personal monarchy and the divine right of Kings received a severe shaking at the hands of Parliament. Even though the King's Declaration of Indulgence brought some relief to Nonconformists, it was all in the right direction that Parliament should repudiate it on the ground that "penal statutes in matters ecclesiastical cannot be suspended but by Act of Parliament." This must not be taken to mean more than that they could not

be suspended by the caprice of the monarch; for it does contain an assertion of the supremacy of the Parliament over the Church. The repudiation of the King's action reflects the tendency which was presently to lead to the Revolution, when with the coming of William of Orange and Mary, personal monarchy disappeared from these islands and constitutional monarchy took its place. So long had it taken the doctrines of William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua to be translated into terms of political fact.

The passing of power from the Sovereign to Parliament involved changes in the conception of the State which were not then fully realised. The seat of authority was transferred from the King to the people; and the gradual development of this conception and practice has been the main and is still the uncompleted task of statesmanship. In the religious sphere the most significant sequel of the Revolution was the Toleration Act of 1689, an inadequate measure which, however, secured liberty of worship to Nonconformists, but only on condition that they subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles. They were still compelled to pay Tithes and Church Rates; but once more these disabilities proved no material hindrance. The main battle for religious liberty was won, and subsequent controversies have been in the main skirmishes for the outposts. One by one, Nonconformist disabilities have disappeared, and few now remain. The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed in

1826, and the Church Rate was abolished in 1868. Nor is it only the Protestant dissenter who has profited by this enlarging liberty. The place of the Jew had been one of difficulty and hardship, but he received the suffrage in 1832 and the right to sit in Parliament in 1858. The ban on Roman Catholics was removed in 1829. But the reign of toleration does not mean that the problem of Church and State has been solved.

5.

But even if the problem has not been wholly solved, the right of religious bodies, separated from the State Church, to an independent existence has been secured. The struggle in England had, however, been a purely domestic affair. The separation of the English Church from the Papacy had cleared the field for a struggle unaffected to any extent by outside influences. But in France the defeat of the Reformers left the Roman Catholic Church in possession, and the relations of Church and State were mixed up with questions relating to the authority of the Pope over the Church. The problem which had been summarily solved in England by Henry VIII. lingered on in France for many generations and involved that country in many unhappy episodes.

The authority of the Pope in France was qualified by what were called the Gallician Liberties —a body of unwritten laws which seem to have grown into authority in the course of events. But

they are indicative of the general tendency of the French attitude to the Papacy. Papal bulls, for instance, did not run in France without the consent of the King; decisions of the Roman Congregation had no legal weight in France; French subjects could not be cited before a Roman tribunal; and French civil courts had power to act in ecclesiastical affairs where the law of the land was in question. The conflict of Church and State in France has been between the French assertion and expansion of these "liberties" and the ultramontane claims for the authority of the Pope. Bellarmin and the Roman ultramontanes, resting upon the claim of Papal infallibility, asserted what they conceived to be the political implications of the doctrine. Ecclesiastical affairs were declared to have priority over all others, and of these the Pope was the only judge. He had a right to impose his will upon temporal sovereigns and to mobilise Catholic powers in order to depose recalcitrant kings. It is not to be supposed that this set the clergy on the one side of the conflict and the laity on the other. The clergy were divided; and on the whole it would appear that the Gallician clergy were the more influential. In the reign of Louis XIV. the outstanding figure among them was Bossuet, who held the doctrine of the divine right of Kings, though not in the English Jacobean sense. Bossuet's position may perhaps be described more accurately as a belief in the divine right of constituted authority, whether monarchical or

republican, and what he meant by this was that the right was intrinsic and not mediated through the Pope. The State, however, hardly needed clerical reinforcement of its claims; and Louis, in spite of his religious professions and observances, was not the person to permit any interference with his prerogatives. On the contrary, in 1673, he determined that all the exceptions to his own rights, for instance, to the appointment of bishops and other ecclesiastics, and to the *regale*, the custom by which the stipends of vacant benefices reverted to the King, should be cancelled, and a perfectly uniform practice established. A dispute concerning a Royal nomination which a bishop repudiated, but which his metropolitan confirmed, led to the intervention of the Pope on behalf of the bishop. This papal interference was much resented by Frenchmen, and naturally it strengthened the hands of the King. A protracted dispute followed, which led to a special assembly of the clergy in 1681 at which a compromise was effected by Bossuet. The Pope was declared to have no jurisdiction over temporal affairs and his authority to be inferior to that of a General Council. The sanctity of the Gallician liberties was reaffirmed, and the right of judging in doctrinal matters was asserted to belong to the Pope and the bishops jointly. The concession which was made to the Pope was the admission that the chief share in judgments upon doctrine belonged to him, and that the Papacy, while it could err on particular occasions, could not be per-

manently wrong. This was, however, not enough for the Pope, and nine years of unhappy controversy followed. The end of this episode came along a channel not immediately connected with the points at issue. As Louis XIV. grew older, he became more superstitious; and desiring to set himself right with the Church he determined upon the extirpation of Jansenism. In 1713 the Bull *Unigenitus* had condemned Jansenism root and branch; seventeen years later it was made the law of the land, and all the clergy were ordered to accept it on pain of deprivation. It was a triumph peculiarly for the Jesuists, though Jansenism survived in more or less furtive ways for a considerable period. Meantime the Church had scored a point in securing the exercise of the civil arm for the stamping out of heresy.

The struggle in this particular case was to secure the authority of the State from any encroachments on the part of the Church. The claims of the Papacy made it necessary for the civil power to assert itself and to set limits to the jurisdiction and power of the Church within the Commonwealth. It was really a defence of the State against the Church; and though the Assembly of 1661 had defined the limits of the Papal authority with a good deal of severity, the subsequent proceedings against Jansenism, carrying with them the employment of the civil magistrate in the interests of the Church, constituted a very substantial mitigation of the conditions. But the Church was yet to suffer

for its unfortunate traditional readiness to accept the help of the civil arm to enforce conformity.

It is a curious circumstance that the Church has generally on the morrow of a triumph declined into indifference and arrogance. Secure in its position, it becomes somnolent. This happened when the struggle against Episcopacy was won in Scotland; and the French Church of the eighteenth century became similarly torpid. Its position was secure; it was the State Church; it enjoyed a measure of self-government. A National Assembly met every five years, though it could publish none of its decisions without the King's knowledge and approval. But by the end of the eighteenth century new forces were astir in the air of France. There was a political ferment, set afoot by the writings of Rousseau, and this carried in it claims on behalf of the State which were bound to affect the standing of the Church very materially. The back-swing of the pendulum was beginning. Hitherto, the State was in a position of self-defence against the pretensions of the Church. Now the State was carrying the war into the other camp and the prerogatives of the Church were rudely assailed. First came the abolition of tithes, then came the confiscation of Church lands, and the suppression of the religious orders. The clergy had hitherto been an *estate* of the realm; they were now subjected to a "civil constitution" which virtually reduced them to a civil service. The promoters of these changes maintained that they did not touch

worship and doctrine, that they only affected discipline and order; in point of fact they completely altered the status of the Church. All ecclesiastical offices were made elective; and French citizens were forbidden to recognise the authority of any bishop whose diocese lay without the realm, though it was later conceded to a newly-appointed bishop that he might write a letter to Rome declaring unity of faith and communion with the Head of the Church.

6.

These episodes are characteristic of the entire course of the struggle between Church and State, where the claims of the one are supposed to come in conflict with those of the other. There is a curious family likeness between these struggles in whatever land the struggle is pitched. When the Elizabethan Act of Supremacy was passed, certain bishops and clergy declined to take the oath and were in consequence removed from their offices. In the same way, when the French Assembly in 1791 decided to demand from all beneficed ecclesiastics that they should swear in all events to maintain the constitution decreed by the Assembly and accepted by the King, the clerical members declined to take the oath; and eventually twenty-eight prelates and a large number of parish priests were deprived of their benefices for their refusal. And not only in such incidents as this but in all the main lines of the struggle there is a seemingly perpetual identity. In Germany, the

greatly extended claims of the State after 1871 led Bismarck into the ill-starred *Kulturkampf*. It is not necessary to follow the course of that struggle. As usual the assaulted party carried the honours. Bismarck was determined to destroy all Roman influence in Germany. The religious orders were expelled in 1872, the "Old Catholics" were constituted (and unfortunately agreed so to be regarded) as the Catholic Church of the country; in 1878 the property of the Catholic Church was sequestrated. The clergy refused to accept the position imposed upon them by the restrictive Falk laws, and were fined and imprisoned in large numbers. Their goods were distrained, but no penalty moved them. But Bismarck, astute statesman as he was, came to recognise that he had started upon a longer road than he had reckoned upon, and in 1880 he began to reverse his policy. The property of the Roman Catholic Church was returned to it; and the Pope secured the control of ecclesiastical discipline, and of ecclesiastical education, his control over his clergy, the restoration of public worship which had been suspended for some years, and some conditional understanding that the religious orders might return. The spoils of the *Kulturkampf* were considerably less than the losses; and probably the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany was ultimately very much stronger than it was before the struggle.

What we have in this story, as in the French episodes, is the continued struggles of the corpora-

tions. It is a reduced version of the great conflicts of the Middle Ages—the old fight fought on a national scale. And which side so-ever triumphs, the struggle is always disastrous to religion. For the Church, whether on the defensive or the offensive, when it meets the State, uses weapons proper only to the State and alien to its own mission and genius; and the consequences are invariably calamitous to both. One corporation may gain an advantage *as a corporation* over the other, but in the last analysis the advantage is a catastrophe to the real cause which the victor exists to serve.

7.

The story of the conflicts of Church and State, and of the struggle for religious liberty is not edifying; and in many of its passages it is creditable to neither. It is illumined here and there by the great sacrifices and the personal courage of individuals; and these are almost invariably those who have, like the English Separatists, struggled against the evils of a religious monopoly—or, like the Covenanters, against a civil attempt to change by force the character of a popular Church; or like the Catholic clergy in England, France, and Germany, who at various times resisted the encroachments of the State upon their allegiance to the Head of their Communion; or like the various companies in the Church of Scotland down to the Disruption of 1843, who chose to suffer the loss of their livings rather than surrender the freedom of the Church in things spiritual to the will of

the State. The heroic figures of the struggle—in whatever Church or land—are those who uphold religious liberty. The struggle has not, moreover, gone with equal momentum in all lands, and there is in Europe to-day a great variety of practice. In England, there is a State Church, with "tolerated" religious communions outside it. The same conditions exist in Austria, where the Roman Church is established, but with the exception that the clergy of all legally recognised religious bodies are paid by the State. They have virtually the same status as civil servants, and for their support a religious tax is levied, exemption from which is, however, granted to persons who declare themselves to be of no religion. This is much the situation in modern Germany, but exemption from the religious tax involves an exceedingly cumbersome process. In France, the connection of State and Church has been completely severed by the legislation of 1904 and 1905. It has been said that the plight into which the Law of Associations and its sequel, the Law of Separation, plunged the Catholic Church in France was the recoil on its own head of its persecutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But however this may be, it is hardly to be doubted that the main motive of the laws was to shatter utterly the power of the Church in order to assert and exercise an extreme doctrine of State authority. M. Combes, the statesman most responsible for this legislation,

stated his view that "there are, there can be, no rights except the right of the State, and there is, and there can be, no other authority than the authority of the State"*; and in accordance with this doctrine the right of existence was denied to any corporation save only as it received recognition from the State. Before the Associations Law was passed there were 910 recognised religious bodies and 783 not recognised. Of these latter 448 asked for recognition, and it was denied to them, as everyone seemed to expect, for it was well known that the law was directed against the religious orders. By the Separation Act, the Communes ceased to pay the salaries of the clergy. Catholics, like other religious bodies, were, however, allowed to form *associations cultuelles*, associations for public worship, but there was no guarantee that these associations either could preserve the Episcopal government alone recognised by Catholics or could retain the necessary property of the Church with any security. It was an inexcusably harsh piece of legislation and is not improperly regarded as a persecution of the Church by men who wanted, as they said, to "de-christianise" France. But proceedings of this kind recoil upon the heads of those responsible for them; and so far from moving in the direction of a secularised France, subsequent events have stimulated a deep and widespread revival of French Catholicism. The

* Quoted in J. N. Figgis. "Churches in the Modern State," p. 56.

events of the war may, moreover, go far to re establish the Church in the affections of the French people; and if it be wise enough to be satisfied with securing a real liberty, without proceeding, according to its unfortunate custom, to utilise the arm of the State for the promotion of its own purposes, there seems no reason why it should not become, under the influence of modern liberal ideas, a great regenerative force. To seek a monopoly will be deadly to it. Roman Catholicism is at its best and commends itself most successfully to reasonable men where it is set over against other popular religious communions. It presents a very different spectacle in England and America from that which it presents in Spain; but it will be a difficult task to persuade the Roman Curia of the truth of this fact. The example of Belgium is, however, to hand for demonstration. In that now unhappy little country, "the freedom of religions, and their public exercise, as well as the right of expression on all subjects, are guaranteed, with the exception of misdemeanours committed in the exercise of the right." There is, perhaps, no European country in which the ascendency of the Catholic Church is so pronounced; yet it owes none of it to the possession of a formal political status. It has been the tragedy of religion in Belgium that the devotion of the clergy has been equalled by their strong reactionary tendencies; and pre-war Belgium was distinguished neither by a high ethical tone nor a

genuine national culture. It may be that the fires of war will present the world with the spectacle of a new Belgian nation in the days to come.

8.

Religious liberty, providing as it does the opportunity for the expression of all the ceaseless variations in which a living religion is bound to express itself, is a necessary condition of health in Church and nation. Where the Church, whether with or without the will of the State, secures a monopoly in any territory so that it is impossible for independent religious bodies to establish themselves successfully, it has always degenerated. Religious uniformity, however achieved, is a sign of death. And the ideal condition is that in which religious communities have a free and unfettered existence so long as their practices are not notoriously and palpably offensive to the public conscience and injurious to the public good. Alone of modern States, the United States of America presents these conditions. "The Federal Constitution contains the following provisions:—

"Art. VI. No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

"Amendment 1. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

"No attempt," says Lord Bryce, "has ever been made to alter or infringe upon these provisions. . . .

"Every State constitution contains provisions generally similar to the above. Most declare that every man may worship God according to his own conscience; or that the free enjoyment of all religious sentiments and forms of worship shall be held sacred; most also provide that no man shall be compelled to support or to attend any Church, some forbid the creation of an established Church, and many the showing of a preference to any particular sect; while many provide that no money shall ever be drawn from the State treasury or from the funds of any municipal body to be applied for the benefit of any church or sectarian institution or denominational school." *

Behind this there is much history. Roger Williams, who seems to have been the first effective apostle of the principle of the complete detachment of Christian communities from the secular power, the Puritan theocracies in New England, the Connecticut Law of 1818, which put all religions on an equal footing—this and very much more would have to be entered in any record of the sequence of events which led to the present position. It is not, however, to be supposed that the religious freedom of the American Commonwealth implies an actual neutrality. On the contrary, the general attitude of the State to religion is one of friendliness and encouragement; and nothing could be farther from the truth than the suggestion that because there is no formal

* Bryce. "The American Commonwealth," II., p. 764.

national recognition of religion, the nation is a godless nation. This is, perhaps, more untrue of the American nation than it is of the great majority of nations which make a public recognition of religion. In point of fact, the public recognition of religion in the form of a State Church or of the State maintenance of clergy makes on the whole for the depression of religious life.

CHAPTER VI: THE STATE CHURCH

THE coming of toleration in England finally dissolved the shadowy tradition of a national Church. It became the State Church—that is, the particular religious communion which is recognised by the State as the official organ of public religion. Alongside of it, within the commonwealth, is a number of religious bodies to which the State has conceded their right to exist as independent communities and to give free public expression to their peculiar witness and ideals of worship. The situation is satisfactory to neither.

I.

The State Church is placed in a position which compromises its liberty and forbids the free development of its genius as a Christian society. In return for State recognition it has to submit to a measure of State control; and situations have arisen in which the decisions of the State are in conflict with the Church's principles. A recent case in point is the position which has arisen in England consequent upon the legalisation of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Now, the Church is within its rights in requiring certain conditions of communion, and it may continue to include among these conditions an archaism such as forbidding marriage with a deceased wife's sister. But if it be a State Church it can only continue to demand this condition, when the State has legalised such marriages, at the cost of

repudiating that State control which is the price of State recognition. Either the State Church must fulfil its contract or dissolve its connection with the State.* It cannot have it both ways. Whether the advantages of State-recognition are worth this sacrifice of liberty it is for the Church itself to determine.

2.

But the trouble cuts even deeper than this. It is a comparatively small thing, after all, whether a particular piece of State enactment is in conflict with an ancient canon of the Church; but it is a matter of the greatest consequence whether the Church's obligation to the State does not permanently depress its perception of the moral requirements entailed by a Christian profession. When Constantine added the Cross to his stock of military emblems he was symbolising in an extreme form the real implications of a union of Church

* The Bishop of Manchester recognises that the price of freedom is Disestablishment: "By Church reform he meant what was sometimes called democratising the Church. At present their powers of self-reform were exceedingly limited. For Prayer Book revision, for parish councils with statutory authority, for wholesale readjustments of incomes, for new ecclesiastical courts, for reform of patronage, for prosecution of heresy, for powers of excommunication, especially since many Churchmen refused to obey existing courts, recourse must be had to Parliament. They also knew perfectly well that they had no intention of trying to pass a number of ecclesiastical by-laws through Parliament, and that they could not if they would. They ought to make up their minds whether they would approach Parliament for self-government, and whether they desired self-government so eagerly that they were prepared to accept it in the form of Disestablishment and Disendowment. For that was the cost which, in his opinion, they would certainly be called upon to pay."—*Manchester Guardian*, October 20, 1916.

and State; and there is no case on record of a State Church which has refused to follow the drum. Wherever there is a State Church, the State can count on a blessing of its arms in any military adventure. In the last resort, the ethic of a State Church will be the ethic of the State.

Now, the ethic of the State, in a democratic community, can never rise above the moral average of the community. The morality of the State at the best reflects the normal moral level of the people as a whole. It is indeed questionable whether it always reaches even that moderate height; and, however plainly in ordinary times the Church may proclaim the Christian moral ideal, its ethical counsel in a time of crisis will always express the immediate requirements of the State. Naturally, it will agree (as it always does) on these occasions that the recognition of the Church by the State invests the State with some kind of religious character; and the acts of the State are accepted as regulative of the moral counsels of the Church. This was what Coleridge saw when he spoke of the function of a "national" Church as that of diffusing "legality" through the people. It is not without significance that Bishop Creighton, when he distinguishes between Church and State, should speak of the latter as the nation's organ for the arrangement of common life, and the former its organ for maintaining the principles on which that life is based.* If British civilisation is a real

* "Oxford House Papers," Series III., p. 31.

embodiment of Christianity, no quarrel with Bishop Creighton's statement is possible. It is, of course, to beg the question to establish the Christian character of a Church or nation on its relation to the creeds of Christendom. "By their fruits shall ye know them"—and there is no modern State or nation which would be recognised as Christian by its ethical practice. In this imperfect world, ethic will always lag behind creed; but the claim to be Christian does at least imply an effort to co-ordinate conduct to creed. But modern States do not ground—and, indeed, do not profess to ground—their conduct on Christian principles, and a study of the proceedings of any State in Christendom would speedily disabuse any fond belief in their acknowledgment of a Christian obligation. Lowell speaks contemptuously of "the patched-up broils of congress, venal, full of meat and wine," and of "laws of cotton texture wove by vulgar men for vulgar ends"; and parliaments still generally behave in much the same way and achieve much the same results. Whatever the voice of the State may be, its speech is not recognisably Christian. It was not mere irony that induced Carlyle to take Emerson to the British House of Commons to convince him of the existence of the devil; and any other legislature would have served as well. That a Church which is to any extent bound to the State as we know it should escape a blunting of its faculty of moral insight is inconceivable; and in the long run it has

to equate its own moral teaching to the requirements of the State.

This is the reason why revivals of religion in a State Church have almost always led to separation and schism. Spirituality bears a close relation to moral sensitiveness and vitality; and a living Christian ethic reveals itself as a creative thing, ever reaching out to "the things which are before," and in all genuine spiritual revivals there is a strong ethical emphasis. This accounts for the almost consistently Puritan character of revivals of this kind. Donatism and Montanism, and to some extent the monastic movement, the Franciscan movement, and English Separatism were all in their measure Puritanical; and one has only to read Wesley's sermons in order to realise how fully his Gospel was charged with ethic. It may be that the Puritanism of such movements as these had a legal basis and was too much concerned with externals; but it was nevertheless a very real witness to the intimacy of the spiritual and moral in the life of men. But, speaking generally, State Churches have found no room for these outbursts of spirituality, and they have been compelled to express themselves "without the gate"; and it is further significant, as to the Christian status of the State Church, that these extruded movements have all stood for a conscious endeavour to return to primitive Christian standards and ways of life.

3.

If we carry the analysis a stage further we shall

find that the limitations of ethical insight and power in a State Church arise from the necessity (entailed by its status) of harmonising incompatibilities. It has been said with truth that the progress of civilisation is registered by the measure in which force disappears from among the sanctions of common life. While it may be granted that in a modern democracy, government by consent is gradually supplanting government by force, force still remains the last resource of the State. In external affairs, the reign of force is not yet modified to any material extent; it is still the ultimate logic of diplomacy. The normal relations of ordinary folk within the commonwealth are governed, it is true, not by physical force but by force in other forms—public opinion, convention, and the like. But the only form of social sanction which the Church, if it be true to itself, can recognise and teach is love. The State opposes force to crime; it is the business of the Church to teach men to overcome social evil with good. The one works by coercion; the other works by conversion. It is impossible to bless or to sanction coercion and at the same time preach love. If the Church chooses to speak half in the speech of Ashdod she must not complain if men fail to recognise her as the true Israel. Here, again, it is impossible to have it both ways. Coercion is the denial of conversion; and no complacent references to the happy English genius for compromise are going to reconcile the contradiction.

The case of the Christian ethic against the practice of the State is peculiarly strong in relation to external affairs. That the State has been influenced in Christian ways, and that much modern legislation reflects an increasing appreciation of the worth of personality (which is the primary Christian contribution to the science and practice of politics), may be conceded. But in external affairs this influence is far less perceptible. It has expressed itself chiefly in international agreements to prevent war or to mitigate its severities (though recent events have shown that this has lagged far behind the modern elaboration of instruments which have multiplied the horrors of war a hundredfold), and in occasional altruistic enterprises in relief of oppressed peoples. But all these taken together make a very inconsiderable offset to the persistent and assertive self-regard of States. The State is in practice self-regarding; it is the doctrine in some countries that it should and must be so. The Christian ethic is the negation of self-regard and the affirmation of the sovereignty of love and service. The normal condition of international affairs is competition, and States have yet hardly learnt to co-operate in anything but in war. The Gospel of the Church is a Gospel of co-operation, of mutual service, of the overcoming of mutual alienation; but the Church actually preaches a Gospel in which these things are overshadowed by the exigencies of a State which is in practice the organisation of national self-interest.

This contradiction is sometimes reconciled by asserting that the Christian ethic is an affair for individuals but not for the State—in which case the Christian ethic has poor prospects in some modern States. For many voices bid us believe that the conduct of the individual must be wholly governed by the requirements of the State. The English Military Service Acts have brought theologians and preachers into the field to uphold the doctrine that the demand of the State is identical with the Christian obligation. But those who tell us that the Christian ethic is not binding on States hardly realise the *impasse* of thought into which they lead themselves. To say that what is right for the State may be wrong for the individual is to predicate an impossible moral dualism. It presupposes two ultimate moral standards opposed to each other—which is to conceive a God divided against Himself, who would be no God at all. There is only one moral order in a moral universe; and both individuals and States must stand or fall by it. Our moral criticism of the State and of individuals must rest on identical ethical grounds. Historically, the State has represented the organised native selfishness of human nature; and it is the business of the Church to convert it. The alliance of the Church with the State has failed to effect that conversion; and the failure is due to the compromise of the moral authority of the Church by its recognition of State control. Probably the Church has influenced the State less than the State has

influenced the Church; and the prevailing religion of State Churches is a polite paganism touched here and there by a Christian grace.*

4.

The present position is no more satisfactory from the standpoint of the tolerated or "free" Churches. For one thing, their legal position has been raised in an acute form for the present generation by the judgment of the House of Lords in the Scottish Churches' case. It is unnecessary to recall the facts of the case beyond saying that it arose out of the question whether a Church had by a majority decision the right to modify its original standards. In this case the Free Church by its union with the United Presbyterians had, so the minority claimed, departed from its original basis. This view the House of Lords sustained, with the result that the entire property of the Free Church was legally handed over to a small and insignificant remnant of dissidents. The result of the judgment in this case was, to quote Dr. Figgis's summary, on the one hand to "deny to a Free Church the power of defining and developing its own doctrines," and, on the other hand, while disclaiming interference in theological matters, the judgment does interfere in them "under the plea of considering the question whether or not the

* Of course, there are plenty of noble personal exceptions, and an occasional group within a State Church of which this is not true.

trust had been violated."* This virtually ties a Free Church up almost as effectually as the State Church; and it is possible for a small dissentient minority to hold up, by recourse to litigation, the proceedings of the majority in any Church if it can be legally demonstrated that such proceedings entail any kind or extent of departure from its trust deeds. Its right to develop its own inherent life is subject to the law of the State, which carries with it that its very right to exist is a concession of the State. This is a position not statedly defined in English law or observed in practice; but it is undoubtedly implied in the Lords' judgment in the Scottish Churches' case. The conception of the Church as a body possessing an inherent life and mind of its own, capable of growth and change, is not recognised in English law; the law regards it as a corporation based upon certain articles of association, from the letter of which it may not depart without losing its identity and therefore its right to retain the property necessary for the conduct of its work. In other words, the Free Churches are anything but free; they are free only within the narrow circle of a palpably inadequate legal interpretation. That the State could ever abolish a Church is inconceivable, because it is impossible; but it might deprive it of its material resources. That would be a hardship; but the deprivation of the property of the Free Church of Scotland only served to bind closer the union out

* "Churches in the Modern State," p. 22.

of which the trouble grew. The life of a religious community was not created by the State, and the State cannot destroy what it did not create. But it does retain the claim to define the conditions of the community's life even in the matter of its most intimate inner existence.

It is, of course, obvious that the holding of material property brings the Church to that extent within the jurisdiction of the State; and it is the business of the State to see that no Church acts in the matter of its property in a way injurious to other communities or to the general good. But it is intolerable that the State should have power to make the retention of its property by the Church conditional upon its own sanction of the Church's proceedings. Some of the Free Churches have taken steps to safeguard themselves and their property from the possibility of alienation or confiscation by the State, but it is highly questionable how far these safeguards are effectual. For the conception of the sovereign authority of the State is deeply embedded in the law of the land; and the claim of the State to interfere in the life of Churches is simply a logical development of the Austinian doctrine of sovereignty. Nothing will ever effectually free the Churches from the authority of the State but a changed doctrine of the State itself. Perhaps that change will come with the recognition of the inherent right of independent religious societies to live and grow within the commonwealth; for this will actually

involve an acceptance of diminished and qualified authority. It will be the end of the Sovereign State, and that event is not far off.

5.

But the precarious standing of the "tolerated" Church is not the only unfavourable element in the existing position. In the past, not in this country alone, the State Church has more or less consistently sought advantages for itself which were denied to other religious communities. It has sought to establish a monopoly or to secure preferential treatment—with varying immediate success, but generally with ultimate injury to itself. That at the present time the State Church in England is beginning to take a more charitable view of its religious neighbours must be freely acknowledged; but we are still burdened with the inheritance of past struggles against the claims and encroachments of the State Church. The attitude of resistance to Mr. Balfour's Education Acts which was evoked in the Free Churches has made for the perpetuation of misunderstanding and the postponement of that mutual knowledge which would have created a very different kind of atmosphere. And, in addition to this, it forced the Free Churches into the arena of political conflict, to their own great injury. To-day it remains the fact that the State Church stands, on the whole, with one political party, while the Free Churches generally support the

rival party. The game of politics as it is played in England is as alien to the genius of the Church as war is; and it has been an unfortunate and disastrous circumstance that over and over again the pulpit has become the platform of a political party, and the Gospel has had to make way for a party catchword. And all this has again led to an ascription of an authority to the State to which even Churches must needs bow. The war of the Churches has been for the support of that superior power which can act as "judge and divider" over them. It has tended to an unwholesome exaltation of the State, which has virtually made the Free Churches into State Churches as well. That this is no exaggeration is sufficiently proved by the almost unanimous voice of the Free Churches in favour of the State in the present war. To them, as to the State Church, the security of the State is a necessity to which the preaching of the Gospel must be postponed.

This tends to depress in the Free Churches the perception of what is involved in the Christian ethic as gravely as in the State Church, though it must be conceded that there are other causes. The Free Churches have also come to regard themselves as corporations with rights to be maintained; and institutionalism has had its own dulling effect upon the keenness of mind and life. The position of affairs which "establishes" one religious community and "tolerates" others is one which will continue to hinder the progress of the Kingdom of

God, unless the anomaly is overcome, not by legislative change but rather as a consequence of the growth of mutual knowledge and goodwill between the communities concerned. And of this consummation there is to-day some ground for hope.

CHAPTER VII: THE ESSENTIAL CHURCH

I.

THE history of the Church shows that it failed to escape the effects of the twofold craving of human nature for security and power. That this craving is natural and legitimate is beyond doubt, but the question remains whether the secular state or the Christian society have conceived security and power rightly, and have in consequence sought them by right and effectual methods. It seems fairly clear that in the case of the secular state the traditional method of armament has been historically a failure; and in so far as we have data for the judgment, it is a reasonable presumption that those societies which have sought security by the method of trusting and dealing fairly with their neighbours have found a better and more effectual way. The history of Pennsylvania seems to be a case in point. Bergson maintains that in the evolution of nature those types which have retained their protective armament—the Crustacea—have been left behind, and that those have had the greater successes who have taken the greatest risks. A similar case might be made with a good deal of weight for human societies. The greatest successes of British politics have been those cases in which apparently enormous risks were taken, such as, for instance, the grant of self-government to the conquered Boer territories of South Africa. It is true that the analogy between Nature and human societies must not be pressed too far. In Nature, security was

sacrificed to mobility, and armaments were discarded in the interests of a larger security. But in human society mobility has not been substituted for but added to armament, and the organ of security has become the organ of aggression. But, further, in human societies greater security has not achieved its end. The establishment of security has generally been followed by a relaxation of moral fibre—the notorious cause of the undoing of great States. It would appear that the full security of human societies is connected with the taking of what seemingly is the infinitely greater risk of trusting to the armament of goodwill. It has yet to be shown that moral sanctions unreinforced by physical armament are inadequate to the business of self-preservation, whether for individuals or for groups. It is no longer in need of demonstration that material and outward defences, however strong and well organised, do not secure the life of human societies, but rather put them in jeopardy every hour. Their real security and true strength lies not in the barricades with which they surround themselves, but in the integrity and goodwill of their inner life.

But so strong is our human confidence in external sanctions that the Church has continuously devised measures to safeguard its life and integrity. It has resorted to organisation, consolidation, definition, centralisation—the orthodox machinery of secular societies which have quite other interests to safeguard. By the beginning of

the second century the unity of the Church was held to be secured by the appointment of bishops, and it was the view of Ignatius that the bishop was the symbol and centre of the Church's unity. In the same spirit, we have seen the effort to safeguard the message by defining it and casting it into formal statements. These measures did indeed make for the security of the Church, but at the cost of substituting for its early fellowship a rigid institutional form. From the worst effects of this process the Church was saved by the opposition of the outer world and the persecution to which it was consequently exposed. But when the temptation of power confronted the Church, its increasing institutionalism enfeebled its resistance to it; and the Church walked into Constantine's parlour. It henceforth possessed security and power of the "worldly" kind—but at the cost of the security and power proper to its own nature.

It is true that the measures which the Church took in the interests of its security and in the acceptance of power and prestige were sincerely intended for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. These seemed to constitute the obvious and swift route to its goal. But the Church's leaders were unable to discern that these measures were wholly contrary to the method imposed on the Church by the nature of its purpose. The security of the Church's message lay not in defining it but in preaching it. To define it was to confine it. The Church's integrity was to be preserved

by the cohesive energy of a love which made formal sanctions superfluous. If it had been on the Christian programme to bring the Kingdom of God by the method of power, why should Jesus have eschewed it for Himself, as He deliberately did in the Temptation? Had the Church remained true to that precedent, it would have remained in the world "the suffering servant" by whose stripes the world might have been healed. Both security and power of the external order are alien to the essential Church. Its task is the high adventure of saving the world by serving it, and suffering by and for it.

2.

Historically the Church has never been quite able to free itself from this evil inheritance. In many ways it has led to an assimilation of a "worldly" scale of values, and its effect has been to divert the Church from its first intention and to entangle it in controversies in which it has been continually (and often effectually) tempted to abandon its own appointed weapons of offence and to belie the spirit of its Lord. It has been drawn into alliances and struggles which have distorted its vision and crippled its ministries. Now it is asserting its authority against the State; at another time it has sought to reinforce it by alliance with the State; in both cases it has had recourse to fleshly weapons and has discarded its own spiritual and immaterial armament. Nothing has been more

disastrous to the Church than its use of the civil arm to enforce conformity with itself and to persecute the dissenter. A conversion by coercion lacks moral reality; and moral reality is of the very essence of authentic religious life.

This subjection to methods incongruous with the nature of its purpose shows itself in many ways. There is, for instance, a pathetic and inveterate faith in the efficacy of mass action. The story of the English Free Church Council is full of it. It has passed numberless resolutions on this topic and that, presuming that what is called "the united voice of the Free Churches" carries authority and materially affects public opinion and governmental action. It is not perceived that the resolution habit is a method of indirect coercion. It is an attempt to influence public policy by the pressure of a mass-opinion. The method has been a conspicuous failure, accomplishing little or nothing because it is not organic to, or congruous with, the essential functions of the Church. The notion of Churches organised into a more or less compact unity, exercising pressure upon Governments, is a denial of the Christian method of transforming the world. Where this pressure is exercised in the maintenance of "rights," that is, in defence of the interests of a particular communion or group of communions, it is not merely futile but self-defeating. The Christian method, and therefore the Church's only way, of overcoming the evil that may be purposed against it is the imperturbable

endurance of ill in the spirit of love. The Church of Christ was never meant to "stand up for its rights." This may seem a strange doctrine for this generation; it is nevertheless a true one, and a little thought in the light of the New Testament should prove it so.

3.

We have observed how the instinctive feeling for security led to the development of institutionalism; and in course of time the Church was overtaken by the peril latent in this movement. One —and perhaps the most obvious—consequence of institutionalism is a dread of innovation. The frontiers have been delimited and they must not be disturbed. Where the intrinsic life of a religious society is strong enough, it will soon or late disregard the frontiers and break through them; but where there is no such strength of the inner life, the society is under sentence of death. The Church has lived because its inner life has been, and is, mightier than all the institutions in which it has from time to time embodied itself. All religions show within themselves two tendencies, which may be roughly described as the priestly and the prophetic. The former is a principle of authority, order, definition. Its instinct is for the institution. The latter is the principle of freedom, and it works with an unexpectedness and a waywardness which to the shallow looks like caprice. The former is prone to suspect the new; the latter is for ever expressing itself in new ways. It is a principle of

growth, the kinetic energy of religion, and the difficulty of harmonising the growing perception of the will of God, of which the prophet is the organ, with the authority and the order of which the priest is the custodian, lies at the root of all the really material controversies in religious history. The problem of the modern Church is the discovery of the way by which these two tendencies may be harmonised. The institution has its place; its danger is to monopolise all the room and crush out the necessary freedom and spontaneity of religious life.

Not only does Christianity possess this prophetic element, but there is also the restless creative quality of the Christian ethic. Christian morality is not a thing of law and codes. It is the reverse of all legalism. It defines no "*terminus ad quem*," which being reached a man may say, "I have attained." On the contrary, a living Christian ethic is essentially creative, for ever seeing new heights to climb, for ever seeking to transcend its own best. Christianity is essentially the religion of the moral pioneer—neither in its spiritual nor ethical aspects does it take kindly to definition and formulation. The formula is well enough as an account of ground already covered, but when it is regarded as an authoritative statement, a precise conformity to which alone justifies a man's title to the Christian name, it becomes a prison and a drag upon the human spirit. But the life of Christianity has not endured any bond in perpetuity. The

Church needs to be as free from itself as it should be free from the State if it is to be an effective organ of the Spirit of God.

It is curious that the Church has never recognised how vulnerable its formal safeguards in time make it. For one thing, authority has a tendency to accumulation and centralisation. The end of the journey on which the Church started when it ascribed authority to a statement or an individual was the doctrine of Papal infallibility. Here authority is claimed over the whole extent of religious life, yet concentrated in one individual. This is a bondage to which the spirit of man cannot long submit; soon or late, at some point or other, it is bound to challenge authority, whether it is ascribed to a document or to a person. The principle of authority has therefore evoked the spirit of revolt, and the Church has been riven and torn in sunder in consequence. Further, the definitions and formulæ which the Church has devised and worked out in the interests of its security have too frequently become the targets of the enemy. It has been reduced again and again to a condition of panic by the assaults which have been made upon its "standards." Because it was tied to a particular dogma of creation it was shaken to its foundation by the theory of evolution; because it was wedded to a particular doctrine of inspiration it has shivered in the face of the higher criticism. It has taken up arms against its assailants with a vehemence which has made religious controversy

proverbial for its uncharitableness. In an age of growing knowledge it has been compelled to take up an apologetic attitude, and apologetic is neither attractive nor redemptive. If the Church's life be not *apologia* enough, then no other will avail anything. In a polemic one argument merely evokes another; it is a region of contradictions and controversies. The confusion of logic is only overcome by life. That the Church has survived is not due to the learning or subtlety of its doctors. On the whole, it has lived its real life in spite of them; and the assaults on it have in the end failed because they did not touch its essential life. They only shook outposts that were already obsolete and doomed to be abandoned.

4.

One result of the institutionalising of the Church has been an excessive preoccupation with itself and its "rights." After the Scottish Churches case many churches spent long in devising means of safeguarding their property. Some "property," in the shape of conveniences for worship, the Church should no doubt possess, but to spend five minutes in devising legal safeguards for it is a waste of time. There is no modern State which would hesitate to over-ride such safeguards if it suited its purpose, and the Church is not called upon to take such steps as these to preserve itself or to secure its property. It should simply go on with its business and take the consequences. Some of the most inspiring

passages in Christian history are those in which, deprived of its property, the Church found a place of worship which had the bare earth for floor and the vault of heaven for ceiling. The Church has a task to accomplish in the world; it is only safe when it is busy with this task and with nothing else. It is never in greater peril than when it begins to be anxious for its security. Indeed, this principle goes a great deal deeper. The Church has built up, under this illusion of needing safeguards, a system of discipline. It is right that it should take thought of its purity; but when it seeks to preserve its purity by a discipline which is a mode of legalism, it is binding itself and committing itself to tepidity and mediocrity. "When Friends began to care more for the purity of Quakerism than for the conversion of the world their chance of universal service was thrown away, and they degenerated into a mere sect."* The only safeguard of the purity of the Church is the intensity of its own missionary passion, which will of itself extrude the alien elements which make for corruption and indifference.

5.

How then is the Church to redeem its failure in the modern world? The issue of our argument is fairly plain. The path of recovery lies in an endeavour to reproduce the primitive type of

* H. T. Hodgkin, "The Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity," p. 149.

Christian fellowship under the conditions of the twentieth century. Reunion is being preached to-day as a panacea for the ills of the Church, but this is to begin at the wrong end. The creation of an ecclesiastical leviathan is really the logical issue of the tendency to centralisation which has been so detrimental to the Church throughout its history. To tie up into a bunch the official machinery of so many religious communions is not to produce Christian unity. The unity of Christendom is not to be secured by the co-ordination of machinery or by a credal uniformity. These have had their day. If there is to be a real unity it must be the unity of Christian folk in love and service. The modern Church has not realised itself effectually as a Christian society, and yet the strength and the effectualness of the Church in the world is directly contingent upon the maintenance and culture of its common life. It is the peculiar privilege and duty of its members to add to the volume and power of this life, each in his own measure. In some ways the most astonishing circumstance in modern Church life has been the casual nature of its members' relation to it, and the meagreness, even the grudgingness, of their contribution to its life. The result has been a singular absence of a real social character in the Church. For the most part it has not been a society but a mob, not a congregation but a crowd. Such social elements as have survived within the Church have been sectional and partial. Class divisions have rent it

and the one thing for which one might look fruitlessly for years in the modern Church is a genuine Christian fellowship—not the worked-up sociableness of an occasional evening, for of this there has been enough and to spare, but that deeper communion of spirits in which men consciously make common cause in the pursuit of holiness, and throw their personal experience of the quest into the common stock for the heartening and enlightening of their fellows. It is the appointed means by which conduct and experience achieve sanity and balance; it is no less the appointed means by which the redemptive purpose of God is made effectual in the world.

6.

For this is no fellowship for its own sake. It is called to a specific ministry, and its work in the world is not fruitful without the collective momentum of a living Christian community. It is entrusted with a Gospel by which a word and a grace of redemption are mediated to the world. Its aim is the willing and lowly return of the soul to God, the reconciliation of God and man. The Christian society is essentially missionary, and its missionary passion is first and last its one real safeguard. It has been said that the Church which ceases to be evangelistic soon ceases to be evangelical; and this is a true saying. The faith will be safe so long as the Gospel is preached by word and by life. There is an old evangelical phrase which the Church needs to recover, though

with a new connotation—"the passion for souls." The word has been in the past too much associated with negative ideas of salvation, the plucking of brands from the burning and the like, as though the end of the Gospel were to provide men with security against perdition. But there is a larger and more positive sense for the phrase. Frederic Myers makes St. Paul say:

> "Only as souls I see the folk thereunder,
> Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings"!

and this is a true definition of the Christian view of man. The final office of the Church is the emancipation and the enthronement of man by the creation in him of the image of the Son of God; and things will not be well with the Church until it recovers a Pauline "passion for souls."

> "Then with a thrill the intolerable craving
> Shivers through me like a trumpet call—
> Oh to save these, to perish for their saving,
> Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

And this realised and understood not as the narrow, yet in its way not unworthy, solicitude that men should escape from the wrath to come, but as deep persuasive love that longs and strives and gives itself freely that man may enter upon his inheritance of kingship and joy and peace, will (and nothing else will) rehabilitate the Church in this generation. But neither the word nor the sacrament by which the gift of God is mediated to men will be effectual save only as they are consciously realised as social trusts. They are vested in a society, and they call for a social presentation.

The preacher and the priest must be really and not formally the organs of the collective prophethood and priesthood of a Christian community; and it is only as the Church is a living fellowship that its ministry is endowed with an authentic social impulse.

7.

It would take us too far afield to inquire into the causes of the comparative obscuration of the Church's missionary function in our time. It is partly due to the supposed need already referred to of maintaining an apologetic attitude in the face of the challenge of the new knowledge. But it is probably to some extent due to the effect upon the propagandist character of the Gospel of the endeavour to harmonise it with the theory of evolution. That evolution is involved in the order of the world no sane person at this time of day would deny; but that the principle has been applied in regions where it is only very partially or doubtfully applicable should be no less obvious. It has in particular led to a view of human progress which will bear neither historical nor ethical criticism. We have come to suppose that we live in a world in which there is an essential bias to improvement. There is a *vis a tergo* which is sending it up a gently inclined slope to the City of God. Some time we shall arrive: there is a golden age awaiting us on the crest of the hill. On this theory Christianity becomes a push by the way to this laborious cosmic climb—a gentle accessory to the evolutionary process,—and the business of the Church is to

propel this obstinate old world up its predestined slope, carefully adjusting its driving force at each stage to what it thinks the world will stand without jibbing. The Church has to accommodate its moral witness and its gospel to the world as it is, not driving it too hard or asking too much from it.

But this is not a world which takes kindly to improvement. On the contrary, it exhibits an inveterate and persistent aversion from the prophet and the reformer. It is only to be improved as it is converted. In nature the characteristic process is creative evolution; in human societies the primary process in all progress is creative revolution. The present war will no doubt introduce great modifications into the evolutionary interpretation of history. For, as a revelation of modern State morality, it tells a tale not of advance but of degeneration. The mitigation of the severities of war, which we hailed as a sign of moral advance, is dwarfed to vanishing point by the newly devised horrors of war. The gift of the Church to the world is not a stimulus to its bias to improvement, but a remedy for its tendency to degeneracy. The Church is an organ not of reformation but of redemption. It was created not to make a better world but a new world. And in these days when we are told on every hand that the only thing that can change the world is a changed temper and a changed way of life, the Church would again find its opportunity, if it could remember that the first word of its Gospel is *Repent*.

The edge of the Church's message has moreover been dulled by the emergence of the idea of moral mass-movement, and this is again a by-product of the evolution hypothesis. And the philosophers have helped us to identify the mass with the State—with so much success, indeed, that the theologians have begun to preach that the State and the Church are the divinely appointed twin organs of the Kingdom of God. The result of this process has been a very perceptible depression in the view of the Christian moral obligation. On this view good churchmanship and good citizenship are co-extensive terms. That the good churchman should be a good citizen is only to say that the greater should include the less. Yet it is not the business of the Church to produce citizens, but saints; it is to create a certain type of moral personality, which is not to be defined by reference to the requirements of the State, but by reference to the personality of Jesus Christ. Its characteristic product is not law-abidingness, but holiness; and there have been times when Christian holiness and conventional good citizenship have been at extreme antipodes. According to the modern theory, the martyr was not merely a fool, but a criminal who deserved all he got. He had no right to allow his own sense of moral obligation to differ from that which the State prescribed.

8.

The recovery of the Church is connected with a frank return to first principles, to a reappropria-

tion of the New Testament outlook. This does not mean that revelation is to be regarded as having ceased at the close of the New Testament canon. On the contrary, we must believe, as Bradford did, that "God has ever more light and truth to break from His holy Word." Nevertheless, all revelation must cohere with the New Testament and be able to prove its ancestry. The modern doctrines of accommodation are not developments from the New Testament position, but look very much like apostacies from it. The thought that justifies the Church in taking "a sub-Christian platform" is a perversion due to misplaced emphasis upon the doctrine of evolution and an exaggerated devotion to the State. The real cry for the Church to-day is *Back to the New Testament.* It may be urged against this view that it is what Dr. Forsyth calls *lay religion* (which apparently means religion unauthorised by theologians), that it takes no account of all that has happened since the first century. It is (it may be asserted) an attempt to step back over the history of nineteen hundred years, and to reproduce the conditions of primitive Christianity, without allowing for the development of thought in the interval. It entails writing off that vast mass of painful theological construction which indicates the advance of speculation into, and experience of, the deep things of God. The answer to the charge is that it is based upon a reading of the wrong history. The true history of Christianity as a life

and a reality of experience is not identical with the external history of Christian institutions. The apostolical succession is an affair of saints and not of hierarchs; and it is only to minds of the legal and doctrinaire type that it is not obvious that the living elements of Christianity have been historically preserved as "lay religion." It is not to be denied that there have been periods in which institutional Christianity has served a certain purpose of conservation; but the institutions have at last become reactionary in effect. And it is only as *lay religion* has succeeded from time to time in disentangling itself from the strangulating meshes of officialism and tradition that Christianity has sustained its continuity through the ages.

We can afford therefore to accept the charge of "lay religion" without misgiving; and to plead guilty gladly to the imputation that we desire to reproduce the conditions of first-century Christianity in the twentieth. Not that we suppose for a moment that we can repeat the external circumstances of that far-off time. What is of more consequence is that the inner experience of Christianity may and can be reproduced, and that if it possesses the peculiar intensity of the primitive experience it will constrain the twentieth century to make room for it. This is very far, however, from a desire to skip the intervening history. On the contrary, this present plea arises directly from the actual historical circumstances of this time, read in the light of the history of the

past. We are looking upon the bankruptcy of the traditional syntheses in Church and State; they are lying in ruins at our feet, and not for the first time recovery is bound up with revolt. The need of the moment is the repudiation of the conventional and orthodox habits of thought which have issued in this present tragedy; and for the Church it means breaking away from the perversions wrought by temporary phases of thought and the pressure of a false politics, to "the faith once delivered to the saints," which is, in substance if not in statement, unchanged, to a gospel which is true to the abiding facts of life and rests upon "a moral order that cannot be repealed."

When St. Paul wrote to the Philippian Church, "We are a colony of heaven," it was with the historical origins of Philippi in mind. The word contained an allusion which every Philippian at once understood. When the Roman statesmen set out to consolidate their conquests into the Empire they settled a community of veterans in the new territory, and they trusted to these colonies to romanise the surrounding country. Every colony was designedly a miniature of the imperial city. It is this circumstance that St. Paul lays hold of in order to illustrate his thought of the Church. Just as Philippi had been, and, indeed, then was, a community planted in a strange land to assimilate it to the Empire, so was the Church, a community of people belonging elsewhere, settled in this place and that to permeate the surrounding world and to

annex it to the Kingdom of God. The peril of the Roman colony was its invasion by the barbarian standards of its neighbours; no less was it the peril of the Church to be poisoned by the entrance of pagan influences from the unregenerate world without. It was a peril which, as we know, frequently overtook the Church. Sir William Ramsay gives us a vivid glimpse of the process in his account of the Nicolaitans:

> Especially it is highly probable that the Nicolaitans either already had or soon would have reached the conclusion that they might justifiably comply with the current test of loyalty, and burn a little incense in honour of the Emperor. The Church was not disloyal; even its most fanatical defenders claimed to be loyal; then why should its members make any difficulty about proving their loyalty by burning a few grains of incense? A little incense was nothing. An excellent and convincing argument can be readily worked out; and then—the whole ritual of the State religion would have followed as a matter of course; Christ and Augustus would have been enthroned side by side as they were in the compromise attempted by the Emperor Alexander Severus more than a century later; and everything which was vital to Christianity would have been lost.*

It is no longer a question of a little incense; the form of the issue has indeed often changed. But this is its substance. Is the Church to retain its "colonial" character or is it to lower its standard the more easily to win the surrounding world? Is it to make a concordat with the State? Does it not by that very compromise lose its propagandist force and sink undistinguished into the general welter of secular life? If the Church is to remain a "colony of heaven," then it must assuredly retain without compromise and preach without reserve its own distinctive gospel and ethic, nor

* Sir W. M. Ramsay: "The Letters to the Seven Churches," pp. 300f.

pause to co-ordinate them to new knowledge or political exigencies. These may be left to adjust themselves rightly in the process of time. And it may be maintained that the Church has survived its secularisation only because in every age a few obscure people have kept the old flag flying—often through bonds and imprisonments—and refused to surrender either to sophistry or to persecution.

Perhaps the greatest miracle of the life of the Church is its seemingly inexhaustible quality of renewal. Not even the most sterile periods of Christianity have been without their hidden centres of life and light. The altar fires have never utterly gone out. Again and again, the Church has seemed to rise out of its ashes, like the phœnix. Whether another such resurrection is imminent, we will not dare predict. It may be, indeed, that the Church has to endure still greater agony of failure and humiliation before the great and notable day of its renewal come. But when it does come, it will be the result of the recovery by some prophetic remnant of the reality of Christian fellowship, and of the primitive missionary passion. That we look to the day of its renewal we gladly affirm. We believe that its existing institutions will not stand the fires of resurrection, that there will be new and unexpected alignments and affiliations, at the same time a widening and a narrowing of its gates. "Long," sang Francis Thompson, "hath been the hour of thy unqueening" but the Bride of Christ may yet be, "a

glorious bride without spot or blemish or any such thing," fit mate and mirror of her Lord, "whose feet are coming to her on the waters," and may show to mankind "the face of Jesus Christ," so that all men may see Him, and seeing, stoop down to kiss the hem of His garment.

CHAPTER VIII: THE CHRISTIAN STATE

I.

IT is as true of the State as it is of the Church that its real history is written not in the record of external events, but in the hidden and largely unrecorded life of the people. This does not mean that the common life of nations has not frequently emerged into the light of history. It has done so again and again, and the great and truly epoch-making passages of recorded history are those which have to do with popular risings. For the rest, the thing that commonly passes for history is largely an irrelevancy so far as the progress of popular culture is concerned; and this in the end is what really matters. That historical accidents and events have again and again entailed changes in national character and outlook must indeed be frankly admitted; but speaking generally, these are minor factors in the real development of humanity. And there have been times when men have deliberately turned away from the State in despair that it would ever do anything for the welfare of the people. Robert Owen preached the doctrine of political indifferentism, and urged the people to work out their own salvation independently of the machinery of State. And this, in point of fact, the people have always done. The history of States is not the history of peoples.

The modern veneration of the State and our faith in its omnicompetence is largely due to the collectivist reaction from the individualism which reigned in the early nineteenth century. In the

form of State socialism this tendency was greatly reinforced; and the logical issue of this development is to be seen to-day in the considerable limitations imposed by the State upon personal initiative and freedom, and in the ludicrous theological apotheosis of the State which bellicose professors in England and Germany have been preaching. But from this extravagance, it is certain that the near future will see a considerable reaction. What we have to secure is the *via media* between the anarchistic negation of the State and the preposterous modern worship of it. There are some grounds for believing that we are on the way to a new political synthesis.

2.

Augustine spoke disrespectfully of the State; the first State, he said, had a fratricide for its founder. But it does not follow that we accept Augustine's summary verdict if we point out that the origin of the State is questionable from the point of view of the Christian ethic. The first impulse to statecraft came from the instinct of self-preservation, the desire to secure the political institutions and property of a group of people. The motive of statecraft is the same as that of creed-making. It is the passion for security. The State is the product of a process of consolidation in the interests of safety; and consequently it has been chiefly concerned with the external relations of the community. It has represented historically

a principle of group-individualism; and it has naturally taken up an attitude of exclusiveness and suspicion towards other States. When its security has been established, the instinct which sought security grows by a natural development into the instinct for power. Nationalism passes over into imperialism, with all that this implies of the aggravation of suspicion, jealousy, and other divisive and war-breeding tempers. Historically the State, while it has made for the consolidation of geographical groups had also made for the disintegration of the human family.

The desire to safeguard political institutions and national territory is itself not unworthy or evil; but a long enough historical perspective will show the futility of the attempt to preserve these things permanently by the traditional methods of States. The atavistic confidence in physical force only survives on the short view. Empires have had no permanence and their stability has been illusory. And the armament of force has had the consistent effect of accentuating the divisive tendencies of State-organisation. The relations of States have been determined by considerations not of right or wrong but of relative strength; and the State has sought as near an approach to omnipotence as possible. This, primarily intended for its external relations, has, however, reacted internally; and the State has generally endeavoured to achieve over its constituent people the same kind of sovereign authority as it has sought over other

nations. The conception of power has dominated it; and it is of the very nature of power that its possession breeds the craving for more. It is the most powerful and demoralising of intoxicants; and it is high time that the Christian consciousness among Western peoples should be awakened to realise the hopeless illusion which the conception of the State as power involves. It is at last not preservative but destructive of the very things it was intended to safeguard. The first contribution which the Christian Church should make to modern nations is to deliver them from the "monstrous regiment" of this barbarism. But if it is to render this ministry, it must itself be delivered from its own illusions about power.

3.

It has been already pointed out that the doctrine of State-absolutism is breaking down before the facts of life. The reaction of the war will stimulate a process which was well under weigh before the war. The Taff Vale and the Scottish Churches judgments, the exploits of M. Combes in France, the apotheosis of the State in Germany (the tragedy of which is before our eyes to-day), all these and other circumstances had led gradually to the assertion of the independent and original life of permanent groups within the commonwealth, and the denial that they owe their right to a corporate existence to the permission of the State. The ferment of thought set up by the European war is most certainly bound to reinforce this conviction

Besides this, the increasing effect of the discovery, which modern historians are helping us to make, that the life of a community is only partially embraced by the State, that indeed the State only expresses one aspect of it, is going to add greatly to the strength of the movement for the destruction of the notion of the sovereign State. It is becoming ever plainer that the structure of society cannot be fruitfully discussed in terms of an abstract individual over against an abstract State; our social life is a complex and many-coloured fabric; it is a luxuriant mass of social forms and shapes, each possessing a spontaneous and independent life of its own, each responding to some specific need of our nature. The task of political philosophy in the days to come is to discover the ways and means not merely of relating the individual to the whole, but of relating rightly both to the individual and the whole, and to one another, the various forms of social organisation in which the life of the community resides. And in such a political philosophy the State will necessarily cease to be unitary and will become federal; and its office will be the co-ordination and adjustment of the outward and material relationships and affairs of the groups and associations which make up the whole. Mr. Ernest Barker, in a review of actual tendencies in modern political thought, tells us that "the new doctrine of the right of groups" . . . "in the sphere of legal theory, assumes the form of insistence on the real personality, the spontaneous

origin (and with some of its exponents) the 'inherent rights' of permanent organisations. In this form, the doctrine has been urged on the one hand by advocates of the rights of Trades Unions, and on the other hand, by the champions of the rights of Churches and ecclesiastical bodies. In both forms it has tended to produce a federalistic theory of the State, whether the State is regarded as a union of guilds or 'a community of communities' which embraces groups not only economic but also ecclesiastical and national. . . . We may need and we may be moving towards a new conception of the State, and more especially a new conception of sovereignty which shall be broad enough to embrace these new ideas. We may have to regard every State, not only the federal State proper, but also the State which professes to be unitary, as in its nature federal; we may have to recognise that sovereignty is not single and indivisible, but multiple and multicellular."*

4.

Whatever the form of the political machinery requisite for the working of the federal State may be, it is obvious that the conception makes larger room for private opinion and freedom of conscience, on the one hand, and gives, on the other, ample safeguards for an order which will be no mere uniformity. The strength of the idea of the sovereign State is that it provides the community

* "Political Thought, from Spencer to To-day," pp. 249f. (1915).

with security against individualism; but it does so at the cost of depressing individuality. It tends to uniformity, and does not (as a wholesome social order should) stimulate the variety which accompanies growing life. The federal State would save us, on the one hand, from the confusion of unchecked individualism, and, on the other, from deadening uniformity. It preserves the only conditions on which liberty and order are adequately and harmoniously maintained, and these are also the only conditions under which moral personality can find room to grow.

In the sovereign State the limitations upon personal freedom and initiative must be to a large extent uniform and mechanical. It draws a line which the individual must necessarily toe. The problem is to discover the means by which personal relations can be adjusted within the commonwealth conformably with the free development of personality. Coercive methods obviously do not satisfy this condition; and it is difficult to see how this problem is to be solved except by recognising the function of the smaller group of freely associated persons within the political order. As things are, where the individual conscience refuses to assent to the requirement of the State the tendency is to anarchy. But it is perfectly clear, human nature being what it is, that conscience must submit itself to a social test. Yet it is of the very nature of the case that the test must be one which the individual conscience itself freely accepts. Our moral in-

tuitions must be put to the proof of the common sense of a group; but the group must be one the common sense of which we are prepared to trust. That is, indeed, one of the reasons why the Church came into being. Our religious instincts need the balance of a social environment. Holiness is essentially a social product. Religious individualism leads to eccentricity and faddiness. The Christian experience can only preserve balance and normality in a social setting. And within the commonwealth the freely associated group will naturally provide those checks and arrests upon individual action which will save it from lawlessness; and it will do so the more effectively as it is done freely and with the consent of the person concerned. It may perhaps be argued that this is true of the State also, since the State represents such a group. But the sufficient answer to this is that the State fails to satisfy these conditions—firstly, because the individual does not stand in a freely chosen relation to it (usually he belongs to it by accident of birth, and is unable to dissociate himself from it); and, secondly, because the State stands in the common mind for the way of coercion, which precludes the possibility of an attitude of affection to it, and therefore of that trust in it which will evoke ready and willing submission to its authority. No one ever loved the State as men have loved their university or their church.

And if groups of freely associated persons have the right to live their own distinctive life within

the commonwealth, personal liberty is safeguarded also. Indeed, a great deal of what has been called the struggle for individual liberty has historically been a struggle for the liberty of small voluntary groups. The struggle for religious liberty in England, for instance, has been coloured throughout by its first phase—the fight for life which the early Separatist communities made. The principle which was at issue was the right of free association, and in England, so far as religion is concerned, little more needs to be secured beyond the full recognition of the autonomy of religious associations, their entire independence of the State as regards their inner life, the State touching them only as their temporalities require adjustment in reference to those of other groups. But the principle requires to be carried a good deal further. The trade unions, the friendly societies, the universities, and all permanent associations should receive the same recognition of their inner freedom, and should have their own place in the formulation of the national polity.* To the clumsy and inadequate geographical constitution of the legislature there should be added the representation of the great permanent human interests which are embodied in the manifold groups in which men are gathered together in the commonwealth. That the groups should satisfy certain broad general conditions before they are thus acknowledged is obvious; but

* That is, as a friend observes, a territorial House of Commons and a "Syndicalist" Upper House.

it is only in some such way as this that the State can be organised so that it shall represent the fulness of the common life.

Moreover, the sovereign State has historically been exclusive and divisive in temper, for ever building and strengthening walls of partition between itself and other States. But a State which recognises itself as intrinsically federal will find it easy to conceive the thought of external federation. The sovereign State which fights for its own hand in the outer world is charged with the temper which sets interests and bodies within itself fighting for their own hands. The struggles of capital and labour, and such deplorable and unhappy episodes as the education controversy in England, belong naturally to a sovereign State. Its constituents regard each other as the State regards other States—predatory enemies *in posse* if not *in esse*. But a federal State in which the intrinsic life of groups is respected, in which the office of the State is the harmonious adjustment of the external relations of the groups, in which a rivalry of service is superseding the fight for rights, will soon evolve a corresponding *ethos* for its relations to other States outside itself. The coming of the federal State will be the greatest step conceivable in the direction of a world commonwealth.

5.

Zechariah's vision of Jerusalem as a city without walls* is a parable for politicians. The young

* Zechariah ii. 1-5.

man who was measuring Jerusalem, surveying it for the building of the walls, is symbolical of the tendency to define, to limit, to enclose, and to exclude. The angel bade him desist, on the ground that the Jerusalem to be would be inhabited as a city without walls, a city so charged with life within that no walls would be able to contain it, a city so charged with friendship that no walls would be required to protect it. Jerusalem was to be unenclosed and unconfined, open and unencumbered, accessible to all who would enter, open to every traffic and influence of good. The vision was virtually a protest against the old traditional exclusiveness and isolation. It was a foretelling of a new State with a policy of inner freedom and unencumbered intercourse with the rest of the world. The old barriers and barricades disappear; there is to be something even better than a polity of open doors—there will be no door, or, rather, it will be *all* door. The city would live by free intercourse, free interchange of ideas and things, free trade, giving as much as it receives.

One wonders how long it will take men to see that free trade is not merely a kind of fiscal policy, but a principle of life. Protection as a remedy for a declining industry is so plausible, so obvious, that the natural mind leaps to it readily and without argument. The case for free trade cannot be fully stated in this rough and ready way, for its strength lies, not in its efficacy as a remedy for

economic distress or as a specific for economic prosperity, but in its character as a symbol of a great and ultimate spiritual fact. The absence of a tariff barrier may bear hard upon this industry or that; but the presence of a tariff wall is a stranglehold upon all industry. For it is symptomatic of a policy of segregation and exclusiveness which must at last prove deadly to all life. Protection flourishes only on the short view. It may mean a great immediate increase of wealth; but it does in the long run make for a very real impoverishment of life. To build tariff walls is to sacrifice life to things. For the free interchange of commodities means the free interchange of much more—of knowledge and thought, of art and culture. The door that is shut on foreign trade shuts at the same time on a score of other things. To no nation alone is given the full complement of life's good; and it is only as each nation pours out its own peculiar share of that good into the common stock that it receives its full measure of the many-coloured wisdom of God and achieves its own destiny. To this view of things the stupid complacencies of war time blind us, and shortsighted politicians are busily planning a policy of partition-walls after the war and introducing an enfeebling and poisonous falsehood into the national outlook. The city of God is a city without walls, and it is the eternal type for all the cities of men. The Samaritans were once a considerable and powerful community; to-day they are a mere handful of

physically degenerate and intellectually contemptible people. They remain to all time the classic instance of the tragedy of isolation, of building walls and keeping within them.

6.

From the federal State, therefore, we may look not only for the welfare of the world but for the real enrichment of the nation. It is no part of our present purpose to attempt to forecast the political machinery of such a State. Our interest in it is that it is the only kind of State in which religion can be truly free, and which can be regarded as Christian in its temper and its *ethos*. The sovereign State involves the denial of a Christian moral order, both within and without, and, whether in conflict or in alliance with it, the Church has suffered grave injury from it. But whatever the political machinery of such a State may turn out to be, the Church should have no formal relation to it save that of assent. For it is in the very nature of things that the State will be chiefly concerned for the exterior and temporal aspects of the affairs of the commonwealth; and of the State the Church will require no more than elbow-room. It should hold so lightly to its temporalities that its concern with the temporal affairs of the commonwealth would be infinitesimal; and, so long as it sedulously eschewed the old illusion of power, it would preserve a relation of so great a mutual goodwill

with the rest of the commonwealth, that its temporalities would never be in danger or be meddled with. And even if the State encroached upon its liberty (which it could only do by seizing some of its temporal possessions or by persecution), then it is its part to submit quietly, in the confidence that no external coercion can affect its inner life or destroy it, and that it will win by the patient ways of endurance rather than by imitating the aggressor. The salvation and the security of the Church is the remembrance of its Master's word, and its acceptance of it as regulative for itself: "I am among you as he that serveth." "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; and His bride must follow in His train. Its ideal is not that of the great and impressive corporation, but that of a lowly handmaiden, grateful for the opportunity to serve. When Dr. Forsyth says that the relation between Church and State is that of "the courtesy of moral peers," he was not only forgetting the history of the State but also the true quality of the Church. Between the modern State and the Church of the New Testament is so great a gulf fixed that even a nodding acquaintance is inconceivable.

7.

The passage from the sovereign State to the federal presupposes a moral revolution. For the sovereign State as we know it chiefly represents the organisation of the self-regarding instincts. It is

the habit of the moment to hold Germany up as the "awful example" of the over-developed State idea; and that unhappy country is the object of much execration at the hands of the self-righteous among its enemies. But these people would do well to look nearer home;—a right understanding of the claims of the State in most European countries might lead to a fairer judgment. The German State has made no greater claim than M. Combes has made on behalf of the French State. The only difference between them is that Germany spoke of the State with a religious fervour which M. Combes's secularism made impossible for him. And if it be fondly supposed that the British State is no such leviathan, its war time performances nevertheless do show that the German doctrine is latent in the British. In Great Britain, however, the claims of the State have always been kept in check by the existence of religious bodies, which in greater or less measure preserved the tradition of the historical struggle for religious liberty and were therefore understood to be ready to oppose any invasion of personal liberties by the State. It has been to the detriment of Germany undoubtedly that it has had no "free churches." But the salt may lose its savour, and in England, when it was found that those bodies were prepared to endorse the restrictive measures which the official mind supposed to be necessary for the purposes of war, it took no long time for the latent Prussianism of the British State to assert itself even to the invasion

of those rights of conscience which before the war the public opinion of the country had deemed to be inviolable. The tragedy of the situation was that these very bodies whose existence was due to the successful assertion of the rights of conscience had nothing to say in criticism of this monstrous performance. A few isolated voices broke the shameful silence; but the Free Churches, as a whole, wrote off their title to existence. All this goes to point out how profound and radical a revolution of moral perception is necessary to deliver us from our still pagan politics. The Church no less than the State needs an evangelical conversion.

8.

And this can only come by the Church's rediscovery of its own *métier*. Its business is the creation of moral personality, the type and exemplar of which is her historical Lord. For this task she is equipped with Word and Sacrament and this will be her supreme contribution to the State and to mankind. There can be no new State apart from the new nature. By the miracle of conversion only will the ethic of self-regard be superseded by the ethic of self-surrender, the policy of competition by the policy of co-operation. It may be a far cry to a wholly Christian State; but it is not too wild a dream that the State should be progressively Christianised. Mr. Hogg, in *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*, draws a valid distinction between those who are "the salt of the earth" and those

who are "salted," that is, between those who have entered upon the reality of a Christian experience and those whose lives have been influenced in a Christian way by the pressure of a Christian environment. The primary task of the Church is the manufacture of "salt," the creation of the characteristic moral personality which will by the process of personal contacts at last induce a Christian direction in the collective will. This involves the abandonment of all those futile hopes of christianising the State by "resolutions upon public questions," and all the "political" methods of mass action which the modern Church has adopted without reference to their appropriateness to its own genius. It may appear to be the longest way round; it is nevertheless the only way there.

The contribution which the Church will make to the State will from the nature of the case be indirect. It is no part of its business to evolve policies and programmes for the commonwealth or to provide formal solutions for its problems, still less to impose its own will upon it. Its gift to the commonwealth is the creation and the multiplication of a type of character which, by being true to itself in everything, will give an increasing Christian bias to the collective will. It has been far too commonly assumed that the "laws" which seem to operate in the realm of economics and politics are fixed, immutable conditions, to which we have to submit with the best possible grace, divine institutes from which there can be no

appeal. But these "laws" are simply statements of the ways in which men habitually act; and if men's habits were changed, then we should soon have to formulate a new set of "laws." It is to this business of changing men's habits that the Church should give itself. It looks upon a world which, left to itself, has again and again plunged into far-flung tragedy. It sees man's social destiny in time frustrated by the strength of his self-regarding instincts. Over against this welter it proclaims a Kingdom of God, the seat of which is in the human spirit. It opposes the will to serve to the will to succeed, the will to love to the will to power. It has power to effect in men that moral revolution which dethrones what St. Paul called "the law in his members," and vests the sovereignty in "the law of the mind." It endows men with a spiritual point of view and a spiritual scale of values. The New Testament antithesis of "flesh" and "spirit" summarises the eternal opposition of the self-regarding and the self-renouncing instincts, the temper and ethic of the superman and those of the Son of Man. It is the mission of the Church to carry men over this gulf and to open to them the Kingdom of God. Its contribution to the commonwealth is not a point of view or a creed or a doctrine, but a character which will bear its own appointed fruit of service and social good within the commonwealth and affect its policies conformably with the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

9.

But this has a corollary. This type of character must express itself in a corresponding type of social existence within the Church. Just, indeed, as the Church stands for an ideal of character, so it should be in itself an experiment in ideal social life. It was the sense of some such obligation that led to the communistic experiment of the Apostolic Church, and later to the bounty which the Apostolic Churches sent to their distressed brethren in Judæa. Uhlhorn has shown the persistency of this feeling through the early history of Christianity. It was perhaps inevitable that there should be an attempt to give an economic embodiment to this new sense of solidarity; it was, however, foredoomed to failure. Economic insulation is an unworkable programme at any time, and every effort to create economic oases in the desert of our social confusion seems soon or late to come to grief. But what underlay the apostolic experiment, the new spirit of social solidarity, was a priceless permanent possession and a new thing in the world. The possibilities of social life were raised to a new plane, and there was a community of men and women who had learnt how to give themselves to each other in a love and service which had no reserve, in which the withholding of anything was a deadly disloyalty. It was the coming of a new quality and intensity of social demand upon the individual; and the demand in its spiritual aspects was infinitely

greater and more exacting than the particular economic obligation which seemed to be entailed by it. "Half the cruelty in the world," said the late John Fiske, "arises out of a stupid incapacity to put ourselves in the places of other people," and the habit of our generation has intensified our ignorance of one another and our imaginative inability to envisage the need of our fellows. We have done our charity by proxy; our human service is vicarious. We lack the love and the courage to come down to the personal business of brotherhood ourselves. But the Church should show the world another order of mutual personal relationship, a fellowship in which the joy and the sorrow of one are the common property of all, in which there is a deep spiritual communism which can be trusted to work out its own economic consequences in due time. What all the world is needing is a new conception and practice of fellowship—a realisation that the solution of our public and social problems is bound up with a revision of personal relationships. We are shocked into a momentary sympathy with the collier when the fire-damp explodes in a mine and a multitude of homes are shattered; we raise public funds to alleviate the consequent sufferings; and then our new kindled sympathy falls asleep until it is reawakened by another catastrophe. In the interval the men whom we have hailed as heroes and martyrs make a demand for a higher wage, and we say dark and stormy things about the rapacity of the workman. This

will not do. What we need is that mutual knowledge which will steady our judgments of each other, and that can only come through a franker and more catholic fellowship than we have ever yet learned. The Church should set the example and be the active focus of such a fellowship, the nucleus of that regenerate human society which is the Kingdom of God.

10.

But the ultimate seat of this Kingdom is within us; and when the Kingdom of God is established in the souls of men, they will shape for themselves a State which shall be an organ of the Kingdom as no State in this world has ever yet been. It will be a State in which the spirit of Christ shall express itself in moral action without let or hindrance; a State which will shape its own life in righteousness and look over its frontiers not in suspicion and fear, but with imperturbable goodwill, and will carry on its affairs in the unassailable security of that spirit which takes away the occasion of wars. But to reach this goal—and let us not imagine that it is not yet far away—we must, as it were, turn again to the beginning of things, reproduce wheresoever the opportunity offers something of the primitive Christian fellowship, and in such fellowship acquire an abundance and an energy of spiritual life which shall set up a contagion of renewal here and there—until throughout the land the dead bones live and a new nation be born. We shall need patience and courage—all the way; and we must be

prepared for disappointments and reverses. But in our hearts we shall cherish and be fortified by the knowledge that we are leading no forlorn hope. "For the greater part of the seeming prosperity of the world," says John Ruskin, "is, so far as our present knowledge extends, vain; wholly useless for any kind of good, but having assigned to it a certain inevitable sequence of destruction and of sorrow. Its stress is only the stress of wandering storm; its beauty, the hectic of plague; and what is called the history of mankind is too often the record of the whirlwind and the map of the spreading of the leprosy. But underneath all that, or in narrow places of dominion in the midst of it, the work of every man, 'qui non accepit in vanitatem animam suam,' endures and prospers. a small remnant or green bud of it prevailing at last over evil. And though faint with sickness, and encumbered in ruin, the true workers redeem inch by inch the wilderness into garden ground; by the help of their joined hands the order of all things is surely sustained and vitally expanded, and although with strange vacillation, in the eyes of the watcher, the morning cometh, and also the night, there is no hour of human existence that does not draw on towards the perfect day."

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