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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Alliance between Church and State

An Examination of "Church and State in England" by the Archbishop of York

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I

THE history of Europe during the last thirty years has been marked by an unceasing conflict over the meaning of human life in society, so that it has become customary and convenient to describe this conflict by the expressive but hideous word *ideological*. Observers of the contemporary scene will not be unaware of the significant fact that in country after country the issues presented in such a conflict of belief have been focussed in the relationship of Church and State to each other. The total revolution inaugurated in Russia in the closing months of the first world war dissolved the traditional relationship between Church and State which had persisted for centuries, not without serious and harmful results for the work and witness of the Russian Church, and subjected many churchmen to a severe and sustained persecution. Liberal minded persons in the West viewed with a qualified approval the overthrow of the antiquated and tyrannical machinery of the czarist régime and were disposed to regard the troubles of the Church after 1917 as the result of its unfortunate and mistaken identification of itself with the fortunes of the now discredited imperial throne. After a generation of Bolshevik rule it has become apparent that this judgment was too facile and superficial, for when every allowance has been made for the intimate connection between the hierarchy and an immoral political and economic order, it is evident that the new Communist masters of Russia would have imposed severe restrictions on any Church, however well ordered and independent it might have been.

Since those days the rise of a new paganism in Germany precipitated another protracted struggle between Church and State, in which all the resources of modern technical civilization were placed at the disposal of a devilish ingenuity in the determined endeavour to narrow the influence of Christianity to an interior and individual piety. There were not lacking German churchmen who were deceived by the plausible arguments which suggested that the Church was in fact being liberated from unworthy entanglements in worldly affairs, to give undivided attention to its spiritual functions and responsibilities. Perhaps a natural apprehension of the probable consequences of a Communist victory in the German political arena disposed many to be content to be deceived by procedures, which at heart they must have known were directed against the integrity of Christian faith. Even so learned, experienced and travelled a person as Bishop Headlam allowed himself to be deceived on the same issue, through confusing his personal prejudices with Christian principles to the extent of denying before the Church Assembly that there had been any persecution in Germany.¹ In Spain the churchman was faced with the

¹ H. H. Henson : *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, Vol. III, pp. 23-4.

necessity of deciding whether or not to support the rule of Franco, widely advertised as a Christian government, and thousands found it impossible to accept this claim. In Eastern Europe since the war the Christian has been confronted with the terrible decision, so fearful in its consequences, between opposition to the Communist governments or an uneasy acceptance of them with the hope of accomplishing from within some radical transformation of their methods and ideals.

This crucial issue has been posed before the conscience of evangelical Europe by Professor Hromadka on the one hand and Professor Emil Brunner on the other, who proclaims totalitarianism in every form the unrelenting enemy of the Gospel, to be resisted with unwavering effort by all Christian people. Further afield, in the Near East and in Asia, Christian minorities have to settle their attitudes to the new and intensely nationalist states which have achieved their independence in the last few years. It is inevitable that such countries should be deeply concerned with the foundations of their national unity and look to the traditional faiths of their peoples, Hinduism, Mohammedanism or Judaism, as supplying the necessary spiritual force to make a united and independent people. In these lands the Christian Church appears as a divisive factor, presenting a threat to national unity. It remains to be seen whether churchmen can be true patriots and also committed, practising Christians in such a situation, or whether it would be better for them to work towards state neutrality in religious affairs.

The tenacious English hold upon traditional customs and ancient forms cannot fail to obscure these urgent issues and to suggest that 'it can never happen here'. The Archbishop of York in his recent book¹ narrates an incident which discloses the intimate connection between Church and State in England and sufficiently indicates the extent to which this connection makes it difficult to take a judicious view of any dispute that may arise in coming years. "At the close of the wedding of Princess Elizabeth in Westminster Abbey, Field Marshal Smuts turned to Mr. Churchill who was sitting next to him, with the remark, 'This has taken me back to the Middle Ages', and Mr. Churchill replied, 'Not to the Middle Ages, but to all the ages.' And if this was true of the wedding, it would have been still more so of the coronation. Then within the space of two hours the pageantry of the past history of Church and State was unrolled and their ideal relationship in all the ages was made manifest."² A natural reluctance to disturb such pageantry or to deny its implications disposes the majority of English churchmen, as well as millions of English citizens who can have no just claim to be called churchmen, to accept the anomalies in the existing relationship of Church and State in this country and to view with apprehension a campaign, however unassailable the logic of its arguments, to vary the terms of that relationship. This grave regard for the past history of his own people, which is part of the heritage of every Englishman in the middle of the twentieth century, receives ample illustration in the pages of this book, for the Archbishop has found himself obliged to adopt an historical approach to the problems of church reform since

¹ *Church and State in England* (Hodder and Stoughton, pp. 320, 15/-).

² *op. cit.*, p. 121.

"the nature and purpose of institutions and customs cannot be understood unless something is known of their historical origin".¹ Readers who are unacquainted with the life of the Church of England, its remote antiquity and its central significance in the slow progress of English history, will find their understanding of contemporary England enlarged and illuminated, although the author disavows his ability to present anything original in the historical discussion. The narrative is lightened in places and its interest quickened by a sparing use of personal reminiscence, appropriate in a writer who has for so long filled positions of eminence and responsibility in the Church. What does impress the reader is that the present position of the Church of England in the two provinces of Canterbury and York is the result of a long and intricate course of historical development, the end of which is not yet in sight, and the book would be a useful contribution to current discussions if it had no other purpose or justification than this.

II

The Archbishop, however, is not an historian, nor does he profess to be writing for historians. His use of a considerable amount of historical material is in order to illustrate and strengthen his argument. The book is designed as a contribution to the discussion, now officially authorised by the Church Assembly, of the position of the English Church in the modern state and is in substance "an argument for some re-adjustment in the existing relationship between Church and State".² Its aim is to enable English churchmen to face the gravity of present issues and to prepare the English Church, by immediate administrative changes, to resist the shock of totalitarian pressure in coming years. It bears some of the characteristics of a manifesto and in view of the high office which Dr. Garbett holds, must be taken as an important pronouncement which will require the close attention and careful scrutiny of all considering churchmen. Any change in the present status of the Church of England, whether or not it were preceded by controversy and conflict, would affect the lives of great numbers of our fellow-citizens, so that proposals which, if implemented, would result in significant changes must receive very careful and deliberate examination, before the nation in its ecclesiastical assemblies and in parliament is asked to pass judgment upon them.

It is precisely in this part of his argument that Dr. Garbett commands the least confidence in his readers. He does not give the impression of having reached conclusions as the result of a prolonged reflection upon the consequences of such proposals as he desires to commend to the Church. The proposals are briefly stated and in themselves scarcely appear to be in agreement with the general assumptions upon which they are based, so that it is difficult to know whether Dr. Garbett really believes that disestablishment is desirable, but acknowledges that in the present mood alike of Church and State is hardly practicable, or whether he is searching for administrative adjustments which show some promise of meeting the unhappiness of many Anglicans when they contemplate certain aspects of the Establishment. The structure of the book itself witnesses to this

¹ *ibid.*, p. 7.

² *ibid.*, p. 5.

uncertainty, for most of the chapters, particularly those which treat of the Establishment, the appointment of Bishops, the revision of Canon Law, the reform of Church Courts, or the reform of the parochial system, have the appearance of independent essays on their particular themes, each containing some interesting information, but the reader is not presented with a close knit argument in which the several aspects of Church reform have been organically related to each other. Dr. Garbett makes frank acknowledgment of the advantages of the present state of affairs and the genuine liberty which is in fact enjoyed at the present moment both by the Church in its corporate capacity and by individual churchmen. It cannot be said that the disadvantages which he tabulates or the dangers which he thinks threaten the well-being of the English Church, outweigh the advantages which he has specified. He presents no convincing argument to lead his fellow churchmen to suppose that they would enjoy greater spiritual liberty if the proposed reforms were adopted. On the contrary the Church of England would probably be more clericalized and less fitted to fulfil its responsible mission to the nation in this perplexing era.

The Archbishop defines the procedure to be adopted as an approach to the State to ask for its help in securing to the Church more liberty and greater independence than it enjoys at present, and goes on to affirm that this "readjustment of the present relationship between Church and State will help the Church in its work of evangelisation ; in its witness to the nation in the cause of truth and righteousness ; in the defence of man's freedom ; in the removal of an obstacle in the way of Christian reunion ; and in making the Church of to-day more after the likeness of the primitive and apostolic church".¹ These are objects which most churchmen would applaud, but too often they are proclaimed as substitutes for serious thinking and responsible action. In the brief section which Dr. Garbett devotes to the evangelisation of England he alleges that this work is hindered by the difficulties which the Church experiences in adjusting its organisation and its worship to the modern situation. But it is hard to take such an assertion very seriously. For one thing a good deal of legislation passed in the Church Assembly during the last ten years and approved by Parliament has put into the hands of Church authorities extensive powers for adapting and supplementing the traditional parochial system to modern conditions. It could be argued, and it would not be an easy argument to refute, that quite enough legislation of this sort is already on the statute book and the Church would be well advised to wait some years before adding to it, until existing legislation had proved its worth. What would be more convincing would be a careful discussion of the assumptions behind these administrative devices for adapting the parochial system to changed conditions. A much more radical investigation of the true pattern of Church life, the present parochial conditions and the structure of modern society, is required before any confident assertions can be made about restrictions on the proper liberty of the Church. Again, there is widespread agreement on the necessity of meeting the difficulties of the casual worshipper who is bewildered by the form of Prayer Book worship, and many experiments

¹ *ibid.*, p. 307.

are being tried in parishes in every part of the country. The state shows no disposition to restrict this liberty, which it is true involves considerable risks if clergymen without taste or knowledge embark on liturgical essays. But if revisions of church services 'for evangelistic purposes' are made by authority there would be much less liberty than at present. It is of the essence of any worth-while experiment in this field that it should not be under official control but be a pioneer effort. The proposal to make the Church of to-day "more after the likeness of the primitive and apostolic church" is a question-begging phrase which cannot be allowed to pass without a much more careful discussion of the extent to which the New Testament presents a pattern of Church life for succeeding ages.

III

It has frequently been remarked that the Church of England lacks an adequate Biblical doctrine of the State, and the change in sentiment during the last half century towards the notion of State recognition of the Church in the Establishment has done much to confirm this contention. The early Tractarians denounced as 'national apostasy' the idea of abandoning the privileged position implied in the Establishment, and in the closing decades of the nineteenth century there was vigorous opposition on the part of churchmen of all traditions to the radical campaigns for disestablishment. Even in the present century thousands of churchmen demonstrated in Hyde Park against the disestablishment of the Church in Wales and paraded the streets with "St. George stands by St. David" on their banners. But after the first world war a new attitude towards establishment became apparent. Many who previously had believed in the spiritual value of the national recognition of religion in one historic church and had firmly resisted any attempt on the part of the State to encroach on the liberties and privileges of establishment, now came to hold a view of the Church-State relationship which beneath its superficial plausibility concealed a near Manichean concept of the State, closely allied to the views of some papal apologists in the middle ages. It cannot be denied that the great majority of those who approved demands for disestablishment in the years between the wars belonged to a "catholic" tradition which could not reasonably be contained within the limits either of the formularies or of the classic traditions of the Church of England. Yet much contemporary experience would disallow the strident assertions of those who speak contemptuously and even offensively of State domination. The experience of the Church of Ireland shows that the necessity of providing a legal constitution after disestablishment may impose a rigidity of structure too narrow for the needs of a living Church.¹ The overseas provinces of the Anglican communion, none of them established churches, despite the laudatory accounts of them which are often put before ill-informed people, do not afford much encouragement to those who value true liberty within the borders of the Church, and there are many more experienced members of some of those churches who would be very content to live under those very conditions which in England are so frequently declared to be intolerable.

¹ Church and State Commission Report, 1935, Vol. II, pp. 214-216.

It is doubtful whether the Christian good of Wales has not suffered more than it has gained by the disestablishment of the Church.¹

It is true that the confident expectations of the early years of this century in the steady development of democratic institutions and liberal ways have been rudely challenged by the emergence of totalitarian governments in country after country, and the watchmen of the Lord do well to remind us of the grave threat which this phenomenon offers to the integrity of Christian faith. Churchmen and citizens alike in this country do well to scrutinize domestic political developments lest by insidious means the same totalitarian claim makes its appearance in this country and puts Christians in a false position. It is this possible development which seems to be the pre-occupation of the Archbishop of York and he is resolved to awaken his fellow churchmen to this menace. Indeed, he shows himself so apprehensive of the likelihood of totalitarian results emerging from the present phase of planning in Britain that he proposes an immediate course of administrative reform to enable the Church to meet such a challenge with much greater success than appears likely in present circumstances. Yet it is difficult for the reader to be satisfied with the conception of the State and its probable development which is implied in this book. The Archbishop seems to share the common Anglican lack of an adequate doctrine of the theological significance of the State and so contemplates it chiefly in the light of an unwelcome intruder upon the proper independence of the Church. Although he avoids the phrase, Dr. Garbett would probably acknowledge that he holds a high doctrine of the Church, but it is a serious weakness that he does not show any awareness of the grave menace there is to civic liberty and full Christian responsibility in the world, when a high doctrine of the Church is unaccompanied by a high doctrine of the State. Church and State alike are treated in this book in too external and institutional a manner and there are many echoes, in the decorous idiom of twentieth century Anglicanism, of the assumptions and arguments of medieval papal lawyers. The discussion is too much dominated by the aims and activities of politicians and bishops and many of the realities of a true Church-State relationship are hardly considered.

In the past, Anglican apologists have perhaps placed too great emphasis upon the theological importance of "God's Englishmen" and the Archbishop quotes with effect the comment of Archbishop Benson on the "thorough conviction" displayed by the House of Lords "of the infallibility of laymen (if not too religious) on all sacred subjects"; but the people of this country have so far shown themselves determined to find a third way through the troubles of our time, between totalitarianism and individualistic libertariansim. It cannot yet be claimed that such a track has been plotted, but neither can the imminence of a totalitarian régime be seriously anticipated in this country. Under the conditions of the middle of the twentieth century, it is inevitable in the interests of true liberty that the State should have extended its powers of control and its range of operations

¹ Vide *Theology*, April 1948, pp. 123-133.

² *ibid.*, p. 102.

to a degree unprecedented in English history. The effect of this development should not lead the Church to gather its skirts tightly around it in the endeavour to avoid possible defilement, but to deepen its sense of responsibility to the State to enable the latter to respond more adequately to its divine calling in the modern world.

The Establishment witnesses, however obscurely, to an awareness on the part of the State of this divine calling, of its inability without help to interpret the concrete meaning of that calling and of its responsibility before the judgment seat of God for the use of power. Dr. Garbett tends to treat Establishment as possessing a limited usefulness for the Church, but as a status which could easily, if not lightly, be renounced. He is ready to admit that disestablishment would be widely regarded as a national repudiation of the Christian religion, but asserts that the demand for it should be kept in reserve by the Church as a weapon to be used "in the last resort, if the State refused all reform and actively interfered with the Church".¹ It is doubtful whether the Church should ever ask for disestablishment under any circumstances (perhaps the attention of Dr. Garbett may respectfully be drawn to the procedure and witness of the Norwegian Church during the German occupation), though it has frequently been obliged in the past to accept it on the initiative of the State. It is still more unlikely that a State which was actively interfering in the affairs of the Church would be prepared to grant such ecclesiastical independence as Dr. Garbett thinks necessary and desirable. A glance at the experience of Christians in Eastern Europe will show that totalitarian governments can condition ecclesiastical groups irrespective of the legal status of the Church. Indeed, a Church which appears to enjoy an independent position is more likely to be the object of hostile attention from the first in a totalitarian régime. Despite the repeated disclaimer of the author, the reader is left with the impression that the logical outcome of the arguments presented is disestablishment.

The truth is that the discussion suffers from the lack of any serious examination of the theological significance of the Establishment. The majority of Anglican writers do no more than estimate the practical advantages, which are neither few nor slight, and the largely theoretical dangers of the Establishment, and so find themselves confronted with certain awkward facts which cannot conveniently be arranged within any logical scheme. What is needed is a sustained wrestling with the Biblical testimony to the significance of Church and State for each other. In the formal terms which define such a relationship there are always likely to be defects which can and ought to be remedied, but unless the principle of the national recognition of religion implied in the Establishment can be expounded as the concrete expression of Biblical insights, it has no justification whatever, and should be swept away at once. If there are reasons for disquiet in the existing relationship of the Church of England to the State, these are grounds not for piecemeal measures of reform but for a patient consideration of what ought to be the true form of that relationship. Unless the Church is to be an insignificant minority more than half out of the world there must be such a relationship, and it involves mutual obligations. Except

¹ *ibid.*, p. 315.

for a brief section towards the end of the volume, there is a distinct lack of emphasis upon the responsibility which the Church must bear towards the State in assisting it to fulfil its divine calling. If it was possible for the apostolic declaration, "the powers that be are ordained of God", to be made without unseemliness when the infant Church dwelt in an alien and hostile environment, it behoves the modern Church to take seriously the assertion that the ruler "is the minister of God to thee for good",¹ even when he opposes ecclesiastical interests and claims.

The historical survey with which the Archbishop prefaces his several demands for a readjustment of conditions goes far to show that at more than one crucial moment of history the State has discharged its responsibility to the Church in enabling it to fulfil more adequately its proper functions. Without the initiative and active participation of the State, it is unlikely that the long overdue reforms of the sixteenth century would ever have been accomplished. In the nineteenth century, the second reformation of the Church of England² (when many of the worst anomalies and abuses which had for so long disfigured ecclesiastical administration were removed) was inaugurated by Sir Robert Peel, who to a greater extent than Keble and Pusey, saved the Church from hostile attack. There is little evidence that ecclesiastics who occupied the chief positions in the Church at either of those periods were able and willing to initiate a radical process of reform. It is much to be desired that churchmen should, by a self-denying ordinance, banish for a period of years the word 'Erastian' from the ecclesiastical vocabulary. Its emotional content is too highly charged for it to be used or understood in a temperate fashion and it commonly serves only to darken counsel and confuse issues. It is enough to label any proceeding Erastian to secure its condemnation in the eyes of many churchmen.

IV

The present method of nominating bishops is, in the deliberate judgment of many, the most offensive aspect of the Establishment and one against which unceasing protest is made. Dr. Garbett, while acknowledging the great merits of the method and the generally wise choices which have been made for many decades, does not scruple to assert that it is intolerable in principle and disadvantageous in practice. It is curious that the frank acknowledgment of the real worth of an existing custom does not lead the author to a more rigorous examination of its procedure and principles to see whether the objections alleged against it are so weighty as they appear. Evidence given before the Archbishops' Commission on Church and State which reported in 1935, from those who had had direct experience of other methods of making episcopal appointments, deserves serious consideration³ and ought to be weighed against the contentions of the Archbishop of York. The existence of monochrome dioceses in many

¹ Romans xiii. 1-6.

² *The Genius of the Church of England*: A. E. J. Rawlinson and C. H. Smyth, p. 37.

³ Vol. II of Report p. 221 (Ireland), pp. 280-82 (Canada), cf. pp. 288-92.

parts of the Anglican communion, so frequently deplored by Anglican writers in this country, is often closely bound up with electoral systems of appointment. The disadvantages of those systems tabulated by Dr. Garbett are very considerable and it ought not to be assumed or implied that churchmen meeting in an electoral college are less influenced by unworthy motives than a prime minister, who even if he is not a churchman or even a Christian is the responsible adviser of a sovereign who is a member of the Church of England. The Holy Spirit can and frequently does use non-ecclesiastical instruments for the furtherance of the divine purpose. A prime minister is extraordinarily well served with information about suitable candidates for ecclesiastical posts in the patronage of the crown, and is probably in a better position for making a good nomination, unswayed by clerical prejudice than any ecclesiastic or ecclesiastical assembly. Dr. Garbett himself records how well-informed Ramsay Macdonald, when Prime Minister, was about men and problems in the church¹ and the Bishop of London has lately emphasised² how extensive is the information available to the Prime Minister and how carefully it is used. A long established tradition forbids a modern prime minister from using his position as the responsible adviser of the sovereign to exploit the Church or learning for political ends.³ This is a tradition which the Church would do well to strengthen in every possible way, rather than by gloomy prognostications cast unworthy suspicions on existing methods of appointment.

When the detailed proposals of the Archbishop of York are scrutinized, it can only be said that they seem to contain the disadvantages both of crown nomination and of independent election. The Archbishop asks that consultations between the Prime Minister and the primate should cease to be informal and that the vacant diocese should be given "a recognised right to be consulted in the choice of a new bishop".⁴ It is not at all evident that the regularization of a valuable informal procedure would bring gain to the Church. It is very rarely that official control can accomplish those purposes which informal consultation does so much to secure. But the precise method proposed by the Archbishop involves such a protracted process of consultation and counter suggestion that all the worst foibles of clerical bodies would be given full opportunity of expression. The Great Chapter of the diocese is to submit three names to the Prime Minister—a difficult enough procedure, but they are to be submitted 'in secrecy'—an impossibility where more than twenty clergy are involved. The reader is not told on what grounds the Great Chapter may be regarded as a competent body to select names for the consideration of the Prime Minister, while the majority of the clergy, and all the laity of the diocese, are excluded from any share in this part of the process of bishop-making. The Prime Minister is not to be under any necessity of submitting one of these names to the crown for approval and "if he thought fit he could refuse even to consider the names". No doubt well intentioned persons already attempt to give the Prime Minister the benefit of their unsolicited advice, but it is

¹ *ibid.*, p. 193.

² *The London Churchman*, May, 1950.

³ *ibid.*, p. 199.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 202.

probable that the good estate of the Church of England demands that he should normally ignore it. Finally when the crown has approved a name, the Chapter is to have the opportunity of discussing it frankly and expressing their views to the Prime Minister—a most unedifying and unsatisfactory procedure. It would not be possible for all the stages of this process to be secret and nothing could be worse than, for certain persons to be known as once having been third string in one diocese or a rejected nomination in another. To give the Archbishop the right to hear objections against a candidate on the ground of heresy when at length his name has been made public, is to open the door to frivolous and unworthy objections. The miserable episode of the objections raised against Hensley Henson in 1917-18 might well be repeated at intervals with scandalous consequences for the well being of the Church. The ultimate safeguard which the Church already possesses of refusal on the part of the archbishop to consecrate an unsuitable nominee is a sufficient defence against heresy or exploitation and its very rare occurrence enforces its real significance. Yet all the complicated procedure now proposed makes no real change, for Dr. Garbett concludes his discussion¹ with the words “nothing in these proposals would take away either the right of the Prime Minister to nominate or the right of the crown to appoint.” It cannot be that those who reject on principle (unlike the medieval or the modern papacy) the nomination of bishops by the head of the State will be satisfied with such exiguous proposals. The disadvantages of the electoral system are plainly evident without the advantages of a properly constituted electoral college. The present system is not perfect but no other system is ever likely to be so. Dr. Garbett has suggested that the proper authority of bishops would be more happily exercised if the bishops knew that the clergy had been given some share ‘in the choice of their chief pastors’.² On the contrary the present method of appointment means that a bishop does not have to take up his duties with the knowledge that many of those with whom he has to deal did their best to get somebody else as their bishop. The grave words of Hooker may be allowed to conclude the discussion of this topic. “He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be shall never want attentive and favourable hearers; because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject, but the secret lets and difficulties which in public proceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgement to consider.”³

The absence of any provision for lay participation in the proposed new method of selecting bishops may suffice to draw attention to a very serious omission in the book—a recognition of the true place and importance of the laity in the Church. The Reformation as Dr. Garbett admits was “a movement on the part of some of its laity against papal and clerical domination”.⁴ The events of the sixteenth and seventeenth century gave to the laity an active and on the whole a dominating share in the government of the Church, including the formulation of doctrine and liturgy. The method of using the

¹ *ibid.*, p. 203.

² *ibid.*, p. 201.

³ *Eccl. Pol.*, I. i. 1.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 69

instrument of civil government was wrong, though no other method would have been possible in those centuries, but the aim was right, to deliver the Church from its over-clericalisation. The Archbishop tends to use the word 'spiritual' in an indiscriminate fashion when often clerical or hierarchical would be the exact word. He admits that the laity must be consulted in some stages of Prayer Book revision, and in the formulation of some of the new canons. But there is no clear indication of what this consultation would involve. If the Archbishop had considered the constitution of most of the provinces of the Anglican communion he would have recalled the important place given to the laity in these synods. The laity of the Church of England ought not to be content merely to accept a passive function, and until some alternative assembly in which the laity have full right of participation from the beginning is devised, English churchmen would be well advised to continue to live under the existing system. To transform the Church Assembly into an effective Synod is a crying need of the present hour. Probably Convocation can continue to serve a useful function as a 'professional' body comparable to the Council of the British Medical Association, but not to possess the sole right to adjudicate on crucial issues. It is also difficult to feel confidence about the constitution of the proposed new final Court of Appeal. The subject to which the Archbishop has devoted his book is very important and needs careful consideration on the part of churchmen everywhere, but the suggestions here proposed do not promise greater liberty and effectiveness of the Church of England. But it would be ungracious to conclude on this note of criticism without acknowledging the service which the Archbishop has rendered to the church in speaking frankly about the issues of the hour and warning his fellow churchmen of possible dangers in coming developments.