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CHURCH AND STATE IN SCOTLAND

I

THE stormy history of Presbyterianism in Scotland with its Secessions and Disruptions has given rise to the jeering comment that schism is of its very nature and essence. Is this due to the comparative simplicity of the Presbyterian Order, which, if not actually democratic, at least does not elevate its ministry and Church Government high above its people? Or is it due to the dourness and intractability of the Scottish character developed as it has been in a poor and hard land? Or finally to the peculiar circumstances of Scottish History since the Reformation, with the Union of the Crowns in 1603, and the Union of the Parliaments in 1707? It might be contended that the modern State (as contrasted with the feudal State) did not emerge in Scotland until it had ceased to be a State properly speaking at all.

At all events, whatever predisposing causes for divisiveness there may have been, the actual divisions have usually been brought about by controversies concerning the relations of Church and State. At first sight these may seem to have been merely practical and parochial, but they have always raised theological issues which it cannot now be pretended are unimportant. Auchterarder is a quiet country town to-day, known only for its proximity to a famous hotel-de-luxe. The appointment of an unknown youth as minister of that parish in 1834 occasioned protracted legal proceedings, the pleadings and judgments in which are remarkable documents not only for Scottish Church History and Principles, but also for the General History of Political ideas. The Free Church Case of 1902 and the judgment of the House of Lords influenced the thought of such eminent political thinkers as Figgis Barker and Laski, as bearing upon the liberties that ought to belong to associations within the State. Political philosophers are not themselves legislators or judges, but their ideas are apt to influence makers and administrators of the Law. At any rate the Church of Scotland

obtained from Parliament in 1921 acceptance of "Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual"; articles which claim all that has ever been claimed by any Church in the matter of Spiritual Freedom, and which form the basis on which the Union of 1929 was achieved.

Now these Articles attracted a considerable amount of interest over a large section of the Christian world. Even in England it was suggested that Scottish happenings might be pointing the way out of difficulties which the Church of England was experiencing, and was to experience still more in the Prayer Book Controversy. With all this unwonted and flattering attention it was perhaps natural for Scotsmen to believe that they had achieved something quite wonderful: something better than the "Free Church in the Free State"; nothing less, maybe, than the perfect and final and permanent solution of the Church-State Problem. That is, of course, absurd. But as the Spiritual Freedom of the Church is an essential element in that problem, and as it has been at the heart of all our contentings and has now at last been attained without forfeiting the position of a National Church, we may suppose that Scottish Church history is of more than local or provincial interest.

Many and varying attempts have been made to characterize the Scottish Reformation, and as it was a rather tumultuous affair, that is not surprising. It was once a commonly accepted view that, in contrast to the monarchical Reformation in England, the Reformation in Scotland was brought about by the people. This is at least inadequate in spite of the respectable authority of Archbishop Parker of Canterbury: "God save us from such a visitation as Knox has attempted in Scotland—the people to be orderers of things." Among literary people it is usual now to credit the Scottish Reformation to rebellious but above all selfish and greedy nobles lusting for the Church properties. That view also must be dismissed as inadequate. A sort of middle view is that of Dr. W. L. Mathieson. He makes a distinction between "The Reformation" of which he approves and "The Reformed Church" into which Knox "infused bodily all the violence and hatred and uncharitableness which might have been useful enough as the fuel of revolution", so ensuring for it a history full of dissentings, abjurings, protestings, and schisms. This he naturally disapproves. "But at least he does

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recognize that was it a real thing. I confess I find his conception of "The Reformation" somewhat nebulous except as a convenient label for the doings of "the rascal multitude" and the greedy Lords and the patriot politicians, all of whom had only the most external relations with Knox or his ideas. Without their help no doubt he would have gone to the stake like Wishart and Hamilton.

It is with the Reformed Church that I am concerned, with which the Church of Scotland in 1929 claims continuity. Dr. Mathieson discerns in it nothing but the nasty qualities of a dissenting sect which he traces to the temperament of Knox, "the father of dissent". But there was something else in it besides, namely the *ideas* of Knox which are too summarily described as "Theocracy": In the Act of 1690 establishing Presbyterianism occurs the curious phrase, repeated in the Act of Union of 1707, which declares that the Church "had been reformed from popery by presbyters". No doubt in 1690 the phrase had a polemical point, while in 1707 it was intended simply as a statement of fact. Fact it presumably is, and as a characterization of the Scottish Reformation it comes very near the truth—only to avoid all question-begging I should prefer to speak of reformation by Preachers—and preachers in that age are inevitably Calvinist preachers. It goes without saying that the Scotsman Knox will have none of the finesse, the balance, the rationality, of the Frenchman Calvin, and his task in Scotland will be vastly more intricate and difficult and irritating than that of Calvin in the city-state of Geneva. But he comes to his task with a Calvinist background. Knox was no diplomat but a man of a single idea, viz. to reform the Church according to the Scriptures as interpreted in the Commentaries and The Institution of Calvin. That means that he will operate with a High-Churchly conception of the Church, the very opposite of the "sectarian" conception.

Luther and Calvin have often been contrasted as Reformers, and nowhere is the contrast more conspicuous than in their views of the Visible Church. Luther's main concern is always for the preaching of the Gospel of Justification by Faith alone, and wherever this is done and the Sacraments are administered, there is the Church Visible. But Luther is quite indifferent to the corporate life of the Church Visible, and allowed its government to slip into the hands of the Territorial Lord. Calvin is truer to

the Bible, New Testament as well as Old, when he sees that Word and Sacraments draw believers together into a fellowship of love, a visible divine society with a corporate life of its own, and a constitution and government of its own. The Lutherans have accused him of "catholicizing". Others find him too much under the influence of Old Testament "Legalism". Still others have held that he profited by the mistakes of Luther and saved Protestantism by giving it a form and order. At any rate it has been truly said, "Calvin led the revolt of the Reformation Church against the Reformation State". If, as we often hear to-day, the function of the Church is to sustain a sort of spiritual tension in the life of communities, this is just what Calvin prepared for the states into which his preachers came. It was the Calvinist type of Church that Knox introduced to Scotland—a Church fully conscious of itself as a Community distinct from the civil community, though ideally coinciding with it, with an orthodox Confession, a firm polity and an austere discipline, all securely founded on the Word or Law of God, and drawing its authority from God alone.

II

The Reformed Church began to "show its face" some time before 1560, the official date of the Reformation, first as "The Congregation", a somewhat motley body on whose petition the Parliament of 1560 passed its anti-papal legislation; but more important still in the "particular kirks" organized in several towns under minister and elders since 1557. Country areas were allotted to the itinerant ministry of Superintendents. So that before August, 1560, the kingdom was covered by at least an outline organization which gradually took firm root among the people.

The driving force behind this was the General Assembly which appears in December, 1560, having no mandate from Parliament and indeed no legal standing at all. Nevertheless, it was a real power, representing, as it claimed, the Universal Kirk of Scotland. When its legality was questioned in 1562 Knox answered in words reminiscent of Eusebius: "Take from us the freedom of assemblies and take from us the Evangel; for without assemblies how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept?" Not even the Regent Morton, who hated it,

attempted to abolish it, and King James did not succeed in doing so until he had ascended the English throne.

The policy of the Kirk is set forth in the First and Second Books of Discipline. The former is on a broader scale, and has been more generally admired, but the latter, if more narrowly conceived, is, I think, more interesting and important as clarifying the principles of the Kirk. The underlying assumption of both is that the Reformed Kirk will embrace all the subjects of the king, i.e. will be national, though the Second Book of Discipline (I, 5) speaks incidentally of Christ's Kirk as His Kirk gadderit, whatever that may imply. At any rate the Kirk is a separate community or at least has a government of its own distinct from and parallel to the civil government. They owe each other mutual support but neither may intermeddle with the other's sphere of competence. Surprisingly little is said about the Christian people. They are "to be reulit and obey", but "na person is to be intrust in ony of the offices of the Kirk, contrarie the will of the congregation to whom they are appointit". The power ecclesiastical is granted to the Kirk by God through Christ, its only King Governor and Head, and is to be exercised in accordance with the Scriptures which are His laws, by a scriptural ministry consisting of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. All these office-bearers should have "their awin particular flokis" over which they are set for doctrine and discipline. Over the particular kirks and their ministries stand provincial assemblies or presbyteries consisting of pastors and elders, and above these again the National or "General Assembly of the haill realm which has the care of all the kirks and should tak heid that the spiritual jurisdiction and civil be not confounded to the hurt of the kirk". Here is a complete scheme of Church government claiming to derive its title from Christ alone, and to be independent of the State in its special sphere of doctrine, administration of sacraments, discipline and management of the patrimony of the kirk, a veritable Christian or ecclesiastical "popular front".

The Second Book of Discipline, like its predecessor, received no Parliamentary sanction, but it was acted upon by the Kirk as far as was possible; and with very considerable success. Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries and Synods began to func- all over the country, with a considerable and growing popular support behind them. Andrew Melville was stating a fact and

no mere theory when he told King James that "There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King and His Kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is and of whose kingdom not a king nor a lord nor a head but a member", a fact, moreover, which required all the energies and astuteness of the king to bring to naught. Here was "tension" with a vengeance; still more tense because the preachers interpreted very liberally their duty to "require the Christian magistrat to minister justice and punish vice" and declined the jurisdiction of the King's Council when it sought to bring them to book for their free and crudely vigorous pulpit criticisms of the King's policy. We may think that the Kirk was an unnecessarily unruly member and that its preachers on occasion exceeded all measure. After all they were fulfilling the now respectable function of His Majesty's Opposition. At least we must admit that they had got hold of a truth about the nature and function of the Church which Lutherans and Anglicans alike had missed. If we do not like the doctrine of the two kingdoms we must find something more satisfactory which will conserve the truth and value it expresses.

But the Kirk cannot ignore the State for theological as well as practical reasons. The Scots Confession has inevitably its chapter "Of the Civil Magistrate" where it is acknowledged that Kingdoms are ordained by God and that rebels fight against God's expressed will. The sword is given to kings to the defence of good men and the punishment of the evil. That is New Testament doctrine. But further the Old Testament contributes its share, "to Kings . . . we affirm that chiefly the reformation of the Religion apperteanes; so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true Religion, and for suppressing idolatry and superstition" like the pious kings of Israel. "Therefore we confess and avow that sick as resist the Supreme power . . . do resist Goddis ordinance". This language has been thought so monstrous in itself though it is based on Scripture and so unlike the practice of Knox and his associates, as to be by some other hand, e.g. Secretary Maitland. And indeed it seems to concede to the Civil Power that "Supremacy in causes spiritual as well as temporal" which was claimed by the Stuart kings and resisted by the Kirk. The Westminster Confession, a much more deliberate document, virtually restates the doctrine, only it makes provision against the

possibility of the magistrate being "an open enemy of the Kirk!" The Scriptures do nothing to delimit the two jurisdictions.

Practical necessities no less demanded an approach to the State. In the first place the new Kirk demanded toleration for itself, and that would have required legislation. But toleration was an idea remote from all minds in the sixteenth century. What was, in fact, sought was the abolition of the "False Kirk" and the recognition of "the True". This was granted by the Parliament of 1560. But the True Kirk was conscious of a call to bring its Gospel and ordinances to every parish in Scotland as also to reorganize education poor relief and other aspects of the cultural life of the people. This demanded financial support, and, in particular, access to the benefices of the False Kirk which continued to be held by its clergy or by noble commendators. This, then, was the second demand, and it was quite inevitable, if only that a territorial ministry might be established throughout the country. In vain did the Kirk claim the ecclesiastical properties as its patrimony. They had been in large measure effectively secularized in the hands of the Crown and the nobility. It is eloquent testimony to the sincerity and enthusiasm of the ministers of the new order that they were able to develop their organization and strengthen their hold upon the people in spite of meagre and grudging support from the State, still more perhaps that they were unwilling to barter the independence of Christ's kingdom, which is the Kirk, for increased support

In one respect our Reformers had their task made easier than it might have been. There was no monarchy of the Tudor type in Scotland; nor apparently any perception of the advantages of strong monarchy. The theorists both before and after the Reformation, e.g. Major and Buchanan, taught the abstract doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. There was no very effective legal system or important lawyer class. The only truly national enterprise had been war with England, and people were beginning to suspect that that was senseless. Mary was absent as Queen of France in 1560 and was hardly fitted to pick up the reins of government on her return. From 1567 to 1578 there was again a series of regencies, always a weakness in Scotland. Not until James VI assumed the government was there any continuity. He has often been laughed at as a foolish pedant, but

he was remarkably successful as King. He had no money and no soldiers, but he had a high notion of his kingly office and, in spite of some bad mistakes, his shrewd kingcraft did succeed in reducing his realm to some order. In him Andrew Melville, as spokesman of the Kirk, met a foeman worthy of his steel.

It was natural that James should have an antipathy to the Kirk, with its preachers who criticized his policies in their sermons and refused to be subject to the King's courts, its General Assembly that rivalled Parliament and exercised an independent jurisdiction, its doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and the *Jus Divinum* of the Kirk. The latter he countered with the *Jus Divinum* of Kings, a theological doctrine also professedly drawn from Scripture, and the former with his claim to supremacy over all persons and causes Spiritual as well as Temporal. The Royal Supremacy was enacted by Parliament in 1584, which likewise abolished ecclesiastical jurisdictions not approved by his Majesty and his three Estates in Parliament "contrare the custom observed in onie uther Christian Kingdome, or weill governed commoun weill". Melville was constrained to take refuge over the Border whence he soon returned to carry on the struggle and indeed to attain at least partial success in 1592, when the Act was passed commonly called The Charter of Presbytery. His accession to the English throne in 1603 enabled the King to turn the tables on his antagonist.

III

The long struggle between King and Kirk which ended in 1688 has many facets. Like every other human struggle it has been reduced to one of economic interests merely! No Popery feeling had something to do with it. On the face of it it bears to be a conflict between Presbytery and Prelacy; between different conceptions of Church Order, such as is still carried on earnestly and on the whole amicably in the Conferences of the Faith and Order Movement. It is true the Second Book of Discipline does implicitly claim that its scheme of ministry is the only Scriptural one. It roundly identifies pastors, ministers, presbyters and bishops as different names of one office. A bishop should be the pastor of one flock and should not have superiority or lordship over his brethren. Moreover, the ministry includes officers other than those who have been

ordained by laying-on of hands. In particular ruling elders are along with teaching elders or pastors "ecclesiastical persons". On the other hand, some of the Laudian Prelates believed in the divine right of Episcopacy, and objected to the participation of "layman" in the government of the Church. But this view was by no means general even under Charles I. The bishops of James VI, before he went to England, were not consecrated, and served him equally well without such grace as consecration might confer. No Bishop No King, was his formula: not No Bishop No Church. Their function was to be the instruments of the royal government of the Church, and they knew it quite well. The fully consecrated prelates of the Restoration obviously owed their positions to the King and traced their ecclesiastical powers not to any *Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy but to the *Jus Divinum* of the King. Conscientiously and very properly they refused the oath of allegiance to William of Orange and passed out of the Church of Scotland. In principle the Episcopate stood for the royal Supremacy in all causes Spiritual as well as Temporal, the re-enactment of which was the regular prelude to a restoration of Episcopacy. The Covenanters stood for the Headship of Christ over the Kirk His Kingdom and the government of the Kirk by its own officers, a very different issue from that between Presbytery and Episcopacy, and one on which Episcopalians and Presbyterians are agreed now when supremacy is claimed not for "the magistrate" or "the King" but for the secularised State.

The Divine Right of Kings, of course, included far more than Supremacy over the Church and, as a doctrine of general application, it was attacked by some of the Covenanters, notably by Rutherford, who in his *Lex Rex* asserted the doctrine of the supremacy of Law over the King. This was all very well so long as Law was conceived as the "Will of God" or "What is right" and as coming down to man as none of his making; when positive laws were regarded as exceptional measures declaratory of the Law or the Right in particular circumstances and not assertions of the will of a human and contemporary legislator. The Stuart claim to divine right did not involve a claim to be above Law so conceived but simply to be its interpreter and minister. The Stuarts were theocrats just as much as Knox or Melville. It was in fact part and parcel of the theological conception of Law for which Divine Law and Natural Law are

of greater import and more universal validity than mere positive laws, which are best kept few and simple. But what when legislation becomes a necessarily important function in the State and when a lawyer class magnifies its office? When the laws of England, e.g., as with Coke, assert themselves over against the Natural Law and the Divine Law? The Revolution swept the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings out of British Politics, and with it the theological conception of Law. It made Law supreme over the King but has it not raised up a new claimant for supremacy over the Church? From now on the phrase comes into official use—The Church as established by law.

Even in 1690 there were some Prebyterians who would not accept the Settlement on the ground that the Covenants had been tacitly dropped. Then in 1711 came Queen Anne's Patronage Act. The right of the congregation to call its own minister had been asserted in the First Book of Discipline, but that could only be a somewhat vain reminiscence of early Church ideas. The Second Book accords it simply the right of assent. It does not like the Medieval word *Benefice* which suggests much else besides a stipend for the actual parish minister. But even in 1578 the finding of funds to support a territorial ministry was a much more pressing question than the rights of the congregation to call its pastor. So benefices and patrons with right to confer them or to retain them on occasion remained. In 1690 the right to nominate the minister was given to the local heritors (being Protestants) and elders, the congregation to have the right of approval or disapproval, and the patrons to be compensated. This last stipulation was not complied with, and very likely that way of calling ministers "occasioned great heats and divisions among those entitled" to do so. But the restoration of patronage by the British Parliament in London without consultation with the Church in Scotland and without its knowledge was not the right way of bringing remedy. If not a breach of the Act of Security, it was at least a piece of pure political jobbery. For years the Church protested against the Act, then came more or less to acquiesce in it, until with the stirring of new life in Church and State in the early years of the nineteenth century and the emergence of a popular evangelical party, the matter became acute and aroused resentment in every parish. But the patronage question was only one element, though doubtless the most generally obvious one, in the Ten-Years-conflict.

The fundamental issue was the extent of the Supremacy of the Law over the Church. Even in the Auchterarder Case, which was one concerning patronage pure and simple, the Act of Queen Anne is but little referred to. The Church based its case on its inherent constitutional rights and powers in matters spiritual. It was these which were debated and judged.

IV

Among the innumerable judgments pronounced let me quote from an Interlocutor of Lord Cunningham. Ministers are public officers with the duty of discharging the statutory powers confided to them. The Church is a "religious establishment" whose "great object and end is to have spiritual ordinances dispensed to the people; but this only in the manner or upon the system which the Legislature thinks fit to prescribe. . . . The Legislature prescribed their creed, fixed the constitution of the ecclesiastical bodies . . . and conferred on Church courts the very limited powers legally possessed by them". "The Lord Ordinary is not aware that the recognized principle that our Saviour is the Great Spiritual Head of the Scottish Presbyterian Church has any practical bearing on the question." Indeed in England Ecclesiastical Courts with professional judges have a more extensive jurisdiction under the King as sole Head of the Church than is accorded to Scottish Ecclesiastical Courts. To allow the Church to place itself above the law "would be to deprive the country of one of the most valuable fruits of the Reformation". "The firm maintenance of the law is indispensably necessary for the preservation of the civil and religious liberties of all classes in the community and for the protection of the people and of the clergy themselves from ecclesiastical tyranny."

Now we must all agree that the Lord Ordinary is right in his contention as to the indispensability of law for the preservation of civil and religious liberties. The firm maintenance of law is perhaps always preferable to anarchy, even though law can destroy liberties as well as preserve them. It is open to doubt whether the Church had taken the right way in seeking mitigation of the felt grievance of patronage. But it was patent nonsense to say that the Legislature prescribed the creed of the Church, or fixed the constitution of the ecclesiastical bodies. It

did, however, sanction the Westminster Confession so giving it one might suppose, even in Statute Law the status of a constitutional document which it already had in Church Law. And there it is declared not only that "Jesus Christ is king and head of his Church" but that "he hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate, with power in councils to set down rules and directions for . . . the government of his Church". This was dismissed as irrelevant, and a series of legal decisions between 1834 and 1843 declared the Church to be a mere religious establishment arbitrarily erected and maintained by the Legislature. Here was the absolute negation of all that the Church had ever taught or asserted as to its own nature and spiritual freedom. The result was the Disruption, the most serious schism that had occurred, and endless bitterness between those who "went out" and those "who stayed in".

In the movement towards reunion this old question of the Church's spiritual freedom was found to be the main obstacle which had to be removed.

As the result of prolonged conference were produced the "Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters Spiritual", which, when accepted by Parliament in 1921, became the basis of the Union of 1929. These Articles declare the Church's Catholicity in faith, its adherence to and continuity with the Scottish Reformation, and its Presbyterian form of government, its distinctive call as a national Church and its inherent freedom from civil interference in matters spiritual. Their main purpose as stated in the Uniting Act is to "set forth in a manner which is in accordance with the convictions of both Churches", "the principles common to both throughout their history, of the National Recognition of Religion and the Spiritual Freedom of the Church under Christ the only King and Head thereof".

To the claim to Spiritual Freedom four out of the nine Articles are devoted. "This Church as part of the Universal Church wherein the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed a government in the hands of Church office-bearers, receives from Him, its Divine King and Head, and from Him alone, the right and power subject to no civil authority, to legislate, and to adjudicate finally, in all matters of doctrine worship and discipline in the Church, including the right to determine all questions concern-

ing membership and office in the Church, the constitution and membership of its courts, and the mode of election of its office-bearers, and to define the boundaries of the spheres of labour of its ministers and other office-bearers. Recognition by civil authority of the separate and independent government and jurisdiction of this Church in matters Spiritual . . . does not in any way affect the character of this government and jurisdiction as derived from the Divine Head of the Church alone, or give to the civil authority any right of interference (Art. IV). This Church has the inherent right to frame, adopt, or modify its subordinate standards (Art. V). Also to unite with other Churches (Art. VII), and finally (Art. VIII) to interpret or modify these Articles. In accepting these Articles, compiled in full view of past difficulties, Parliament would seem to have accorded to the Church exactly what was claimed in the Second Book of Discipline, *jus divinum* and all (without however its reflexions on Episcopacy). That the freedom obtained is not illusory has been put beyond doubt by the recent test case of Kirkmabreck. The Church of Scotland, therefore, would seem to be as free as any purely voluntary Church can be. Moreover, its Articles might claim to have received Oecumenical endorsement at the Oxford Conference on Church Community and State, where an almost exactly similar list of liberties is recognized "as essential conditions necessary to the Church's fulfilment of its primary duty". (Report, pp. 84-85).

V

But it may be asked: Did the State bow itself out of its right to interfere in Church matters because it no longer believed that they were important? Was it a contemptuous abandonment of the Church to its own concerns now felt to be largely irrelevant? I do not think that the Act of 1921 recognizing the Articles was passed in contempt. The Prayer Book debates, whatever may be thought of their result, clearly showed that Parliament and the nation have still a high sense of the importance of religious questions, a sense which events on the Continent of Europe in recent years have done much to sharpen. I believe the Act of 1921 was a National Recognition of Religion and indeed of the essential nature of the Christian Church.

The phrase National Recognition of Religion dates from the Disestablishment campaign of the 1890's when it was used in defence of what their opponents preferred to call "religious establishments" "or privileged sects". The phrase does not occur in the Articles, and all that bears upon it is contained in Article VI: "This Church acknowledges the divine appointment and authority of the civil magistrate within his own sphere (a genuinely antique touch!) and maintains its historic testimony to the duty of the nation acting in its corporate capacity to render homage to God, to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be King over the nations, to obey His laws, to reverence His ordinances, to honour His Church, and to promote in all appropriate ways the Kingdom of God." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the obvious way of achieving all this was to maintain a National Church to which all subjects should be constrained to belong by Acts of Uniformity with penalties for Nonconformity. Such a way is now rightly repugnant to most people. The historic National Churches have broken up into denominations, of which the most important to-day is The Churchless Million, not as yet organized in this country as a militant anti-Christian Church. Fifty years ago it seemed to many that National Recognition of Religion could be best achieved if the State remained neutral as between the many denominations and professed respect for the Christianity that they held in common. That view is not extinct, but is not so widely spread. It is true that the existence of a National Church, however active, is no guarantee of the real Christianity of a nation, but at least it is a symbol not lightly to be discarded or despised; and it secures for Christian ordinances some place in the national life. From a purely practical point of view it might be urged that no denomination or no group of rival denominations could on a voluntary basis bring the ordinances of religion to the whole people. This consideration perhaps more than any other, added urgency to the Movement to Church Union in Scotland: and it is not an ignoble one.

The only reference to a National Church in the Articles we are considering is in Article III: "As a National Church representative of the Christian Faith of the Scottish people" the Church of Scotland "acknowledges its distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry." There is, I think,

no gainsaying the historic claim here made, and the call and duty acknowledged may serve as justification for its continued possession of its ancient patrimony, without which the duty could not be performed.

At all events the possession of its patrimony is in fact the only privilege of consequence now remaining. We have no part or lot in the King's coronation though we have royal chaplains for such simpler ceremonies as take place in Scotland. We have no representatives in the House of Lords. Our existence and peculiarities are barely known in the remote government offices of Whitehall, and the precedence of our leading Church officers is not secure against blundering officials even at Holyrood. We have no special consideration in the administration of Education. If the Church is to make its mark on the life of the people it can only be by the faithful performance of its duty in the parishes of Scotland, and by its testimony in their pulpits and in the Church Courts to the claim of the Lord Jesus Christ to be King over the nation and the nations.

The Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual have solved the juridical problem set by the Reformed Church in this land; not too late, it may be hoped, to be still important. But the achievement of a Church Free and National would be of little moment if it meant only that we were free to organize on a national scale a sort of chaplaincy for those who happen to desire our services: free from the challenge of aggrieved individuals or groups to serve purely ecclesiastical or denominational interests in the way that seems best to majorities in the Church Courts. The only freedom of the Church that matters is that which enables it to be "the ultimate boundary against totalitarian tendencies of every kind" and "a barrier to every attempt to build a common life on a purely secular basis" (Oxford Conference Report, p. 266). And this is always possible even without freedom of jurisdiction. For us the actual problem is how to avoid the Scylla of sentimental complacency with our so-called "Christian Civilization" and the Charybdis of excessive devotion to any of the social and political idealisms that masquerade as schemes for "promoting the Kingdom of God on earth".

A young continental theological student who recently spent a year amongst us went home to report that the Union of 1929 took place because the uniting Churches "had no longer any

Confession". The charge, if true, is indeed serious. Certainly the Basis of Union contains no extended Confessional statement, and references in the Articles to the Westminster Confession are somewhat indefinite and half-hearted. Since the Union there has been a demand for a restatement of the Church's Faith, but it has come from those who may be designated Liberals. It is unlikely that the extreme confessionalism of the Continent will find general favour. Nevertheless it is clearly seen that the Church must have an independent and specifically Christian message if it is to hope to confront successfully the secularism of the time, and to put meaning and reality into its testimony to the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ over the nation and the nations as well as over the Church. We have contended long and earnestly for the latter as understood in the Reformed Confessions. The former must henceforth engage our equally earnest thought and endeavour. Without a new confessionalism we shall be inadequately armed for this battle.

JOHN H. S. BURLEIGH.

University of Edinburgh.