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# THE CHURCH AND THE MODERN STATE

## I. CLASSIC VIEWS

To embark on a discussion of this great subject as though no one in the past had ever thought about it would be foolish. It would be to tear the question from its context, and almost certainly to see it falsely. It would be further to deprive oneself of assistance and help. For however much the question has altered its appearance in modern times, it would be surprising if it had so much altered that no guidance were forthcoming from its earlier consideration.

### (a) *New Testament*

I believe we must first and foremost bear in mind what the New Testament has to say about the State.

On the whole, considering that infant Christianity was faced by a non-Christian temporal power, the New Testament emphasis laid upon the Christian duty of obedience to that temporal power is perhaps surprising. "Submit yourselves to every human authority . . . whether it be to the emperor as supreme; or unto governors as unto them that are deputed by him."<sup>1</sup> "Put (the Christian community) in mind to be subject to their rulers and authorities, to obey magistrates."<sup>2</sup> And again, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, taxes to whom taxes, respect to whom respect, honour to whom honour."<sup>3</sup> But of course this is no exaggerated submission, a kind of early Erastianism. There is good Christian ground for the submission enjoined. There is One by whom "all things were created, both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, including thrones, angelic lords, celestial powers and rulers".<sup>4</sup> "Every tongue" "in heaven, on earth, and underneath the earth" must "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord".<sup>5</sup> Even here and now, Christ wields His Kingship, not only in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 13f. Here and elsewhere, scriptural quotations are taken from the Authorized Version, but I have not scrupled to borrow from Moffatt's translation where it makes the reference to modern times clearer.

<sup>2</sup> Titus iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xiii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Col. i. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. ii. 10.

heaven but on earth, not only over the Church but over the State. Hence it becomes possible, and indeed necessary, to say that "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God".<sup>1</sup> The Christian's duty is then seen in its true light. Because "the powers that be are ordained of God", therefore "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers". Submission must be made "for the Lord's sake".<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament clearly holds that the State is a divinely ordained institution, having a definite part to play in the divine plan of salvation. This is the first cardinal point in the New Testament doctrine of the State.

But, before the New Testament closes, as of course we all know, the State appeared in a new light. The face that had been turned to Christianity, frigid, no doubt, indifferent, and even unfriendly, became hostile and menacing. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns."<sup>3</sup> This beast is given "power" and "great authority". "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them."<sup>4</sup> Rome, the sovereign earthly power, has declared war on the Church.

So side by side in the New Testament, we have Rom. xiii and Rev. xiii. The State is "ordained of God"; it is "the minister of God";<sup>5</sup> but on the other hand, it is "the beast". It may be impossible to show that Paul clearly foresaw that the State would thus modify its attitude towards the Church, that the "minister of God" would become the "beast". It may also be impossible to show that the John of Revelation, enduring the terror of its menace, could have accepted in its entirety what Paul had to say concerning the State. But for us these two divergent views lie side by side in the New Testament, and it is not at all impossible to reconcile them. Even while the State is the "servant of God", demonic forces are at work in the political sphere. The powers "ordained of God" are constantly being perverted and misused. The State is an institution of divine origin; but it has its feet on earth. The seeds of sin are latent within it, and at any time they may bear a bitter crop. When the State takes to itself the "names of blasphemy"<sup>6</sup>—Augustus, Divus, Dominus, the titles in which the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xiii. 1f..

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xiii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. xiii. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. xiii. 1, marg.

Roman Emperors laid claim to divinity—when the “beast” sets up its own “image”, marking those who revere it on hand or brow, and forbidding the right of buying and selling to those unmarked,<sup>1</sup> when, in a word, the State deifies itself, then the “servant of God” becomes the antagonist of God. New Testament doctrine holds that two alternatives always lie open to the State, either in obedience to be an instrument of the gracious rule of God, or in *Selbstvergöttlichung*<sup>2</sup> to be an obstacle.

This New Testament view, seeing the State under a double aspect, is basic for other classical views. They develop out of it, and with development comes also great difference of opinion.

### (b) *Roman Catholicism*

For the Roman Catholic, the State is based fundamentally upon natural law. Man is by nature what Aristotle called him, a *zoon politikon*. Social life is therefore a natural growth, and manifests itself in a number of forms, for example, the family, the clan, and the nation. These forms of community are natural growths from the nature of man. The principle which impels men to build up these forms of community also impels them to look for a supreme authority which will maintain harmony between the different forms of community, while preserving their independence. This benevolent but authoritative guardian is the State.

It must not be supposed that because the State is thus natural, and rooted firmly in a demand of man's nature, that it is therefore not divine. Quite the contrary. Not in spite but because of its naturalness, it is divine. “Man's natural instinct moves him to live in civil society. . . . Hence it is divinely ordained that he should live his life” so. “But as no society can hold together unless someone be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, every civilised community must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has, consequently, God for its author.”<sup>3</sup> Obedience is therefore a clear duty laid upon Christians, even if the State be heathen, provided that it be yet a legitimate authority exercised in the appropriate sphere.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiii. 14ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Oscar Cullmann: *Königsherrschaft Christi und Kirche im Neuen Testament*: Kap. III.

<sup>3</sup> Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, qtd. Nils Ehrenström, *Christian Faith and the Modern State*, 47f.

The State is not merely formal guarantor of harmony between competing social forms. It furthers a positive purpose, which at its lowest level is the promotion of the fundamental natural law of *suum cuique* or justice, and at a higher level is the promotion of "the common good". This "common good" is more than the mere aggregate of individual goods, but is entirely compatible with both the good of individuals and the good of supra-individual social forms. But if the State will, as of course it should, exercise its authority at the highest level of all, and "procure a perfect sufficiency of life",<sup>1</sup> it must reckon with the fact of the supernatural. For man's "perfect sufficiency of life" is indissoluble from the supernatural. So soon as this point is reached, the authority of the State yields to the authority of the Church, which is alone guardian of supernatural truth, and the dispenser of the divine grace which "*non destruit naturam sed supponit et perficit*". Two conclusions follow. In the last resort, the Church is above the State; and second, playing second fiddle to the Church, the State must promote true religion. So serving, the State is a temporal means for guiding man towards his supernatural end.

(c) *Lutheranism*

Imagine a pyramid, its apex uppermost. Imagine that another pyramid inverted is supported from above, and so placed above the first that you can never quite be sure whether the two apices are in effective touch or not. This roughly pictures the Roman Catholic view of the relations between State and Church. At worst, the Church, speaking out the authority conferred by its divine origin, made no effective contact with the State. At best, the contact that it made by being itself and especially through the sacraments, was brought in at too late a point to affect fundamentally the State over which it hung. Romanism was therefore charged with a dualism. It had two moral standards, and two kinds of Christians, one belonging to the earthly pyramid, and the other belonging to the inverted and spiritual pyramid. Lutheranism is charged no less with a dualism, but a dualism of a different kind. It is a dualism not between two storeys, but between two spheres. Each and every man belonged both to the temporal and to the spiritual sphere. Dualism broke out within the man, from whom life demanded action both

<sup>1</sup> Leo XIII, qtd. *ibid.*, 60.

politically and religiously. Lutheranism demanded obedience to the secular authority, but also obedience to a divine command accorded to individuals. Similarly here, one can never quite be sure that the two are compatible, or if compatible whether there is any effective contact between them. How does this dualism come about?

Lutheranism seems to be at one in a certain number of denials.<sup>1</sup> It rejects anarchism, which is the negation of the State; it rejects utopian humanism, which visualises a time when the State is no longer necessary; it rejects romanticism, which envisages the possibility of a Christian State and confuses this idea with the idea of the Kingdom of God; it rejects Romanism, which at the last subordinates the State to the Church; it rejects secularism, which turns the State into an idol. Without wavering, the Lutheran view holds that the State is a divine institution, and is one of the orders by which human life is made possible and furthered. Either the State is an order of creation like other forms of social life, which like them pride and sin can always pervert. Or the State is an order of preservation, its function being to form the dam against the destructive and disruptive effects of evil in the social sphere. As such, the State is an "emergency order". Here Lutheranism has a close affinity to Calvinism, as will later be seen. The State on either view, in spite of the fact that it is sometimes terribly entangled by evil forces, is yet itself a barrier against evil forces, and a manifestation of the fatherly rule of God. Behind the State there is the Father, and the Father is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now while doctrinally Lutheranism is quite sure that the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, in practice it has found difficulty in maintaining His identity with the Creator and Preserver who is behind the State. The sphere of political activity is full of harshness and lovelessness. Lutheranism tends to regard this as inevitable, and the life of pure love is accordingly relegated to the inner world of the individual heart. Luther himself often seems to side with Paul's longing "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better",<sup>2</sup> as when he describes the world as an inn where the devil is "mine host" and calls on the Christian to get away from it as soon as he may. But on the other side, Luther is honest enough to see the necessity

<sup>1</sup> See Nils Ehrenström, *op. cit.*, 150, qtg. Wendland.

<sup>2</sup> *Phil.* i. 23.

of coming to terms with the world other than those of mere retreat and surrender. In his vehement tract, "Against the murdering hordes of Peasants" (1525), he writes: "In the case of an insurgent, every man is both judge and executioner. . . . Such wonderful times are these, that a prince can merit honour better with bloodshed than another with prayer." The venom with which he thus hounds on the German princes reveals all too glaringly the lengths to which Luther would extend submission to and adulation of the State.

Probably what more than anything else lies behind the traditional Lutheran dualism between Church and State is the antipathy to the priestcraft of the Roman Church, in virtue of which the Church in the last resort had the last word in argument with the State. The "priesthood of all believers" shattered the power of the Church at this point. But in doing so, it left the Church without effective power to check the State. The individual became subject to two independent authorities, and the consequent dualism of the individual's life remained unhealed.

#### (d) *Calvinism*

In contrast to the Lutheran tradition, the Calvinist tradition lays immense emphasis on the Christian duty of shaping the political order. Calvinism has always been deeply concerned that Christianity play its part in the political sphere—as might be expected in view of Calvin's own attempt to set up a Christian State in Geneva. Active co-operation in the formation of the State is a Christian duty. "We believe," writes Peter Barth, "that the Divine Command to the Christian Church, the command contained in the Scriptures, lays upon her the responsibility for the formation of the State, in so far as the historical situation gives her any power of action in this respect."<sup>1</sup>

On the Calvinist view, the necessity for the State is based on the fact of sin. "That the Christian affirms the necessity for the State is the correlate of his knowledge of Original Sin."<sup>2</sup> The point is this. For the development of man's life and well-being, certain forms of society have been provided by God, for example, the family, and in general the cultural relationships. These social forms belong to the order of creation, and are supplied to man. But human life does not manifest only the ten-

<sup>1</sup>Qtd. Nils Ehrenström, *op. cit.*, 180.

<sup>2</sup>Brunner, *qtd. op. cit.*, 182.

dency to operate smoothly in certain social forms. On the contrary, disruptive tendencies are at work which menace the social forms. The root of these disruptive tendencies is the inexplicable fact that man asserts his independence of God. Falling out with God, man falls out with himself and his fellows. Immediately all social forms are imperilled. The order of creation is not in itself sufficient to guarantee the existence and persistence of society. Even if society were not entirely wrecked, the centrifugal forces would always be breaking out here and there, and imperilling the whole social fabric. Hence alongside of the order of creation is placed an order of preservation. The State belongs to this order. It therefore stands upon a plane different from and secondary to the plane upon which, for example, the family functions. The purpose of the State is the preservation of society, the prevention of mankind's destruction of itself through anti-social tendencies. "The existence of the State is justified solely and entirely by the fact of sin."<sup>1</sup> The theological *locus* and also the *raison d'être* of the State is sin.

To perform its function of the preservation of society against disruptive influences, the State is armed with a special instrument, namely force. Faced with a situation in which social life is menaced by centrifugal forces, the State has one last arbiter to which it can appeal, the arbiter of might.

It is only right to say at this point, that Calvin himself in the *Institutes* does not go so far as those who followed in the way he set. It is surprising to discover how secondary is the place which force occupies in the relevant portion of that work.<sup>2</sup> By definition the State, while caring for religion, sees to it "that the public tranquillity be not disturbed, that each, safe and unmolested, enjoy his own".<sup>3</sup> Force does not enter into Calvin's definition of the State. But it does so with certain of his followers. Thus Brunner: "The fundamental character of the State is not right but might."<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the State not only has power but is power. Nevertheless, behind the positive function which Calvin believed the State to have, there did lie the *pis aller* of force.

The State, then, is the preserver under God of society, and its instrument is force. It follows that the State is permeated through and through by evil. Force as such is utterly irrecon-

<sup>1</sup> Brunner, qtd. op. cit., 184.

<sup>2</sup> Book IV, Cap. xx.

<sup>3</sup> IV, xx. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Divine Imperative*, 446.

cilable with love, and so is sinful. The State, touching, even using, this pitch, is defiled. It is the enemy of sin, or more exactly of the disruption consequent upon sin, but it is itself sinful. The *de iure* authority of the State is undoubtedly divine; but its *de facto* authority is the sword, whether the sword be actually unsheathed, or its rattling in the scabbard suffice. In either case, appeal is made to a sinful thing.

What is the relation between this curiously equivocal order of preservation, the State, and the Church? Without the State, chaos would resume partial or total sway. Only when the flood-gates are closed against disruptive forces, can the religious life flourish. "The State preserves humanity for its meeting with Christ."<sup>1</sup> It guarantees a field in which the Church can labour. It provides a framework for the life of the Church. The Church has therefore to regard political authority, sin-stained and opposed to the divine law of love as it is, as an instrument of God, used in His providential government of the world. The Church must unambiguously proclaim that the State possesses a sanction which is divine. "Over every State there broods something of the light of the divine creation, and also a sombre cloud of anti-divine forces." But even if the character of the State is ambiguous, its sanction is not ambiguous, but clearly divine. Accordingly the Church has a double task. On the one hand, proclaiming the divine sanction of the State, it must say to the forces of disruption: You may not undermine the State. But divine sanction is neither ground nor excuse for unlimited adulation of the State, but rather the perpetual safeguard against it. Hence on the other hand, to all sinful elements within the State which lead in this direction, the Church must say: You may not deify the State.

#### (e) *Common Elements*

It appears from this brief summary of some of the traditional lines of thought, that a number of tenets are held in common by all Christian opinion.

(i) Above all, it is commonly held that the State is really limited. "The powers that be are ordained of God"—here is a point of agreement among the classical Christian theories. Such divine ordination is the bulwark against all deification. Therefore "be subject unto the higher powers", not because

<sup>1</sup> Nils Ehrenström, *op. cit.*, 188.

they are autonomous and independent, but for just the opposite reason, because they are themselves subject to God. However debased and abused the idea of the Divine Right of Kings has in history been, the Christian view of the State maintains the proper substance of the doctrine, as it also gave rise to it, regarding it as both the ground of the authority of the State, and the limit to its authority.

The pity, of course, is that, while Christian opinion is unanimous in declaring *that* the State is thus limited, the Church finds it by no means easy to declare with unequivocal voice *what* and *where* this limit is. Formally, indeed, the answer to this question is not difficult. When the State makes claims which God alone has any right to make, when the "beast" sets up its image and demands the worship of its subjects, when Caesar becomes Augustus, Divus, Dominus, then the limit of the State has been reached and passed. But the trouble is that already, long before the State stands upon its feet and says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me", it has implicitly been declaring: "I am the Lord thy God", and acting as though it were. Virtual deification takes place long before it is acknowledged or proclaimed. Consequently the greatest embarrassment is experienced by the Church which is not sure whether the limit is still in front or already behind. Take as example the painful case of the Japanese Christian Church, which has been faced by the demand of the State that all its members do Shrine Shinto worship. Protesting against the demand, the Church received the specious reply that Shrine Shinto worship<sup>1</sup> had no religious significance. The question what and where was the limit of the State's authority was raised in an acute form, with all the ambiguity and obscurity which constantly attends such fundamental questions.

(ii) There is general Christian agreement that the primary task of the State is to establish and preserve order within society. Order is not merely a neutral social possession which may be used for good or ill. It is in itself so far good. Men are only human where order is maintained. Men are Christians, and the Church exists, only where it is preserved.

But again, when this statement is further expanded, divergence of opinion sets in. Different estimates are made of the disruptive forces within society. If these are strongly empha-

<sup>1</sup> As distinct from Sect Shinto worship: see John Foster, *Then and Now*, 92.

sized, this primary task of the State is emphasised, if less emphasised then this primary task is accorded less prominence.

(iii) It is generally recognised that the State has a secondary function to perform in the guidance, direction, or control of the other orders of social life, of the family, the economic sphere, culture, and so on. But while the right and duty of the State to exercise some influence in these spheres is generally conceded, the amount of influence which may legitimately be exerted is disputed. Moreover, there is a further complication. In discharging its primary function, the State is sole agent. But in directing the social orders just mentioned, the State is not alone. The Church has a manifest right and duty to play a part in the direction of at least some of them. Wide differences of opinion are possible concerning the relative place of State and Church and their respective functions here.

## II. THE MENACE OF THE MODERN STATE

Besides helping to an understanding of the issues involved when the relations between State and Church are in discussion, what has been said has prepared in another way for what follows. It has shown that if the modern State appears now in a menacing rôle, there is need to be neither surprised nor alarmed. Nothing is more foolish than to raise cries of astonishment as though an entirely new situation had arisen of late, in which the Church, facing the modern State, is without precedent or guidance. It has always been clear to Christian thought that at any moment the paternal benevolence the State showed to the Church, perhaps only as one among many equal communal entities, might pass over almost imperceptibly into hostility whether explicit or implicit. To the reader of Revelation this is manifest. The Roman Catholic never thought that the State, though natural in origin and of divine institution, was free from error. And certainly the Protestant, who saw with all possible clarity the perversion of the State by sin, could not avoid expecting that the State might now and then be overcome by sin—by the very sinful means with which it tried to counter sin's disruption of society. The situation which the Church faces in modern days is neither new nor unexpected, as it confronts the totalitarian State.

(a) *The Totalitarian State*

"The totalitarian State is a State which lays claim to man in the totality of his being; which refuses to recognize the independence in their own sphere of religion, culture, education, and the family; which seeks to impose on all its citizens a particular philosophy of life; and which sets out to create by means of all the agencies of public information and education a particular type of man in accordance with its own understanding of the meaning and end of man's existence."<sup>1</sup> This is the phenomenon by which the Church in modern days is confronted.

(b) *The Rise of the Totalitarian State*

The story of the rise of the totalitarian State is, of course, too long to tell here, even if the present writer were qualified to tell it. But reference must be directed to it, and the attempt made to plot at least approximately the graph of its rise.

(i) This graph passes through three main points. The first point is *secularisation of life*. Before the Reformation, Western society hardly realised what the secular was. Dean Rashdall writes: "In the Dark Ages arithmetic and astronomy found their way into the educational curriculum chiefly because they taught the means of finding Easter."<sup>2</sup> He might have added that Greek and Latin were studied so that the Scriptures might be read. Over the whole spiritual (in the sense of the German *geistlich*) life of men, the Church had oversight and control. The thought that the spiritual life should become subservient to a political party occurred to no one. But the Renaissance saw the beginning of a fundamental change in point of view. Culture, hitherto developed and imparted through the medium of the Church, to which all its products were dedicated, emancipated itself from the tutelage of the Church. Science won its independence, and became a study in and for itself of interest. Then much later, with the industrial revolution, another vast field fought for, won, and declared its independence: economic life emancipated itself. Implicitly and often explicitly, it asserted its independence of control of either Church or State. So vast fields gradually passed from control and secured an independent existence.

(ii) The second point through which the graph passes is the *expansion of the State*. For a long time, these vast spheres

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Oldham, *Church, Community and State*, 9f.

<sup>2</sup> H. Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, I., 35.

were able to maintain their independent existence against all comers. But they have been unable to do so indefinitely. Looking back upon the history of the years since the Reformation, we must judge to be one of the dates of greatest significance that date, seventy years ago, when a State first made education a matter of compulsion. The example once set was rapidly followed in most civilised countries. Ten years later, in Germany, the State made the insurance of workers compulsory.<sup>1</sup> Since then, this too has become an almost universal feature of civilised countries. In more recent times, organised charity, once the function of the Church alone, but for long removed from the direct control of the Church and committed to the care of private societies or individuals, as in the large voluntary hospitals of this country, ceased to be adequate to the need which required to be met under modern conditions. Not only was a wider organisation of charity instituted by the State, in the form of medical services, but to-day, as we know, already existing charitable institutions are more and more looking to the State for assistance and receiving it from this source.

What is happening here? It is the politicising of society and culture. "The modern State is daily extending its control over a wider area of social life, and is taking over functions that were formerly regarded as the province of independent social units such as the family and the Church, or as a sphere for the voluntary activities of private individuals. . . . In the old days the statesman was responsible for the preservation of internal order and the defence of the State against its enemies. To-day he is called upon to deal more and more with questions of a purely sociological character."<sup>2</sup> Education, poverty, control of the birth-rate, and so on, things which, as Christopher Dawson says, "the statesman would formerly no more have dared to meddle with than the course of the seasons or the movements of the stars", are items that regularly appear on the agenda of political debates and programmes.

From the control of these things to the control of news, of art, of science, of the Church, in the interests of the State, is no long step. It is only the final step in a process already begun. But when this final step is taken, a new phase begins.

(iii) The third point through which, or rather into which,

<sup>1</sup> For accident, sickness and unemployment: v. W. R. Dawson, *German Empire*, II, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, 45.

the graph passes is "godless religion", "materialist spirituality", or—call it what you will—at all events a bastard kind of religio-politico-idealism. Men find, when their life has been secularised, however efficiently the State may run their secularised society and organs, that dissatisfaction is not at an end. Even if their economic dissatisfaction is met, and their social dissatisfaction, there still remains a "discontent with human life itself".<sup>1</sup> There is a spiritual revolt against the material secularism in which they live their lives. And since material secularism has taught them the futility of the religion and the God of their fathers, men make gods for themselves. The modern totalitarian State is the culmination of the process of secularism; but it becomes the god of its subjects. It is no longer mere policeman, mere judge, mere lawyer and law-giver. It claims the whole life of its members, as God alone has any right to claim it. So of course the Church is menaced—the Church which faces men, not, indeed, with its own totalitarian claim, but with the totalitarian claim of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."<sup>2</sup> At this point, conflict breaks out between the Church and the modern State.

(c) *The Common Element in all Modern States*

Too many people in this country believe the menace of the modern State is present only on what, in their magnificent insularism, they are pleased to call the Continent. They firmly believe that their own national 'scutcheon is unblotted, that their own house of God is not menaced. This naïve assumption is wholly without foundation. Our own country is part of Western civilisation, and Western civilisation as a whole has set its feet upon the path of secularism and has already travelled far that way. Our country is therefore involved in a tendency which is general.

What is the nature of this general tendency which we call totalitarianism? The essence of totalitarianism is not dictatorship. Neither Germany nor Russia are real dictatorships. Probably the purest example of dictatorship which exists to-day is in a country which is at the time of writing our non-combatant ally—Turkey. "The essence of the totalitarian régime is to

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. xii. 30.

be found not in dictatorship but in . . . mass organization",<sup>1</sup> in which the individual is ruthlessly ignored in the interests of the mass. At this point, there is no absolute distinction between our own country and the States we call totalitarian. In the world-wide lists of the present great conflict, we are not to suppose that the champions of totalitarianism are pitted purely and simply against the antagonists of totalitarianism. To think so would be so to simplify the issues that they bore little relation to the facts. Between those who have become our enemies and ourselves, there is only a difference of degree, the difference, as Christopher Dawson says, "between a Community-State that has made a deliberate breach with the old liberal tradition and is aggressively conscious of its totalitarian character, and a Community-State which has evolved gradually from the Liberal State without any violent cataclysm and which disguises its totalitarian character by a liberal ideology".<sup>2</sup> The so-called totalitarian State makes use of castor-oil and concentration camps, and we in this country do not like it. But there is no necessary and absolute difference between this and a State which relies on free milk and birth-control clinics.<sup>3</sup> To-day collectivism so threatens individuality that it menaces spiritual freedom. And this is happening in all modern States. It can be argued, says Christopher Dawson,<sup>4</sup> that "Communism in Russia, National Socialism in Germany, and Capitalism and Liberal Democracy in the Western countries are really three forms of the same thing, and that they are all moving by different but parallel paths to the same goal, which is the mechanization of human life and the complete subordination of the individual to the state and to the economic process". That Britain, he goes on, continuing further along its path, would become totalitarian, not in a militarist, but in a humanitarian, democratic, and perhaps pacifist sense, will not in the last resort save it from crushing out individualism and spiritual freedom.

It is at this point that the vital interests of the Church are affected. The child who is brought into the world at the instigation of the State, who is fed by the State, clothed by the State, educated by the State, amused by the State, trained by the State, and then used in production for the State—that child

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Beyond Politics*, 68.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 76.

<sup>3</sup> See Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, 108.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, xv.

is become the victim of a mechanism in which his individuality is crushed, not indeed necessarily, but quite certainly unless through the whole process he be instructed concerning man's chief end. It can no longer go unremarked that the increasing interest of the State in the physical training of youth will undoubtedly affect their mental constitution, and similarly that the increasing interest of the State in the mental training of youth is on the way whose end is the determination of their spiritual constitution. The Church which stands guardian of the real and true welfare of men, with a special interest in their spiritual welfare, can remain neither unperturbed nor inactive.

The intention of what is here said is not at all to class all servants of the State as enemies of the Church. In the offices and departments of the State in this country are countless men of the very highest Christian character and intention, and this should never be forgotten. But as the party caucus is apt to be intolerant of the member, so the machine of State is stronger than the individual, and tendency more powerful than intention. There is nothing harder than to observe present tendencies truly. Yet there is nothing more important than that Christians in all walks of life, and certainly not least those who administer the affairs of State, should raise with themselves the question: Whither do the modern tendencies of Statecraft move? Only if the greatest vigilance is exercised in this country, can those further steps towards soul-destroying collectivism be avoided which would be widely and bitterly deplored.

### III. THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

In face of this menace inherent in the modern State, what ought, and what can the Church do? To attempt an answer in detailed concreteness would merely show that the problems have not been properly envisaged. The Church is confronting a general tendency towards the mechanisation of human life and the subordination of the individual to the State. It stands upon a battlefield over which national contours run but which they do not divide. The time has come when the Church must realise the challenge inherent in totalitarianism in all its forms, whether less or more advanced. But the time is not yet come when the Church can clearly know exactly where the issue should be joined with the forces which if not controlled will

certainly threaten its life. To some extent the question must be answered *seriatim* and individually. For the Church faces a developing situation, and the Church has many churches whose situations respectively differ in both minor and major aspects. The Church has been long in waking to the gravity of the threat presented by the modern State. Ways in which it must meet and, if necessary, combat and conquer this threat have not yet been devised. All that can here be attempted is a statement of principle.

It seems to the present writer that the Church must function in three ways. It has an *ideological work* to undertake, a *defensive work*, and a *militant work*.

#### (a) *Ideological Work*

“The Church as the messenger of the Gospel, and as the community in which freedom in God is a living reality, represents the ultimate boundary against totalitarian tendencies of every kind.”<sup>1</sup> The Church has the ideological work and duty to undertake of proclaiming without fear or favour—even at the cost of its establishment: “thou shalt have no other gods before me.” It must declare that the State is limited and dependent. There is no better form in which this declaration can be made than the scriptural formula, that the State is “ordained by God”. This formula is double-edged in that it says two things: first, a proper State may not be dishonoured; and second, no State may be deified. Both edges cut sharp and deep, but there is no doubt that it is the second which will cut sharpest and deepest into the thought and practice of to-day. As has been already said, it is not easy to know just at what point the State becomes divinised. If only the “servant of God” visibly transformed itself into the “beast”, then the Church could read off as from a prepared agenda the points at which the State must be withstood. But it is, of course, never so, and the Church has to exercise all its tact, wisdom, and spiritual discernment to know where it must rise, and in the name of God say: Thus far and no further. It may be, as we shall see in a moment, rather in the realm of the State’s secondary functions and to a threat coming, as it were, from its flank, that opposition has to be offered. But those who care to look will see a warning already in the sky and writing on the wall. The drift, even in this country,

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches Survey their Task*, 266.

is towards a totalitarian scheme of things, and it behoves the Church to be very vigilant.

“Thou shalt have no other gods.”—But the Church is not committed to a merely critical and negative work at this point. It must have, and indeed has, if only it could make it explicit and relevant, a positive ideology or its outline, with which to confront this tendency. “I am the Lord thy God,” and men are His children, formed in His own image. The Church has to stand for the liberty in which God’s children can be children and not mere puppets and dolls controlled by the State.

Here the Church must be on its guard not on one front only but on two. It has to be on its guard both against individualism and against collectivism. In point of fact, if only it had seen further and straighter, the Church should long ago have been upon its feet combating individualism. The liberal doctrine of *laissez faire* has been tried, and it has been found wanting. The Church should long ago have foreseen and predicted that failure, and worked to guide the State away from such a perilous slope. Lord Melbourne, it is said, did not favour frequent meetings of the Cabinet. When it did meet, he used to read the agenda, and having read it, would sigh and say: “Well, gentlemen, what does it all amount to? Must we really *do* anything? Can we not leave things as they are?” That was *laissez faire*, and the Church, knowing man as the light of the Gospel showed him up, should have known it was a disastrous policy. You dare not leave things as they are because men are what they are. Licence does not create individuality but destroys it. Freedom is not opposed to authority but requires it. Unrestricted individualism runs amok, and perishes by its own hand.

To us who live at the fag-end of the age of *laissez faire*, this must surely be obvious. Can it be said that after its long trial, *laissez faire* has made individuals or persons of us all? If one is to answer, Yes, then he must be prepared to explain certain facts, both general and particular, in modern life: the colossal and irresponsible power of Hollywood, by which a tiny group of individuals wield enormous influence on the life and manners of millions of men and women in almost every country, advanced or backward, Western or Eastern, over the whole globe; the colossal and irresponsible power of Capitalism, by which a handful of survivors in the struggle of economic liberalism exercise supreme influence over the welfare, life and death

of their countless employees; the colossal and irresponsible power of the Press, by which a few persons are able to determine the opinions of many, and to influence those of innumerable more. For the right to operate an apparatus like any one of these just mentioned, no credentials are demanded beyond a native talent and business acumen. Lord Beaverbrook's reported summary of his own life is not without significance: he began life at the street corner selling papers, and is still selling them. The influential position he presently occupies was won thus casually. *Laissez faire* has not made individuals of us, but only put us in the power of certain individuals or groups of individuals, whom chance has thrown up and fortune favoured.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that, in the absence of any effective protest from any quarter, for example, from the Church, the State has looked with covetous eyes on these tremendous instruments wielded in a few individuals' hands, and in some cases has bent them to its own use?

Now the pendulum has swung violently to the other extreme. The Church failed to protest effectively against individualism run riot, and it has seen individualism stumble and fall. It has also seen the State lay hold of the instruments of power as they fell from the wearied hands of individualism, and begin to use them to its own ends. Now the Church has to protest against the opposite extreme—against collectivism.

It need not, indeed it may not, be supposed that the interference of the State in fields which individualism thought it had to itself has been wholly deleterious. On the contrary, much of it has been advantageous. One cannot but be grateful, for example, for the factory legislation which put an end to the worst exploitation of men by irresponsible individuals in the latter half of last century. Nor can one be blind to the need for the continual adaptation and even extension of such benevolent legislation to meet a changing situation, and to keep in check the abuse of power still in the hands of individuals. There is a place for the legitimate exercise of State control, and apparently always will be so long as power is wielded by individuals who are at the same time sinful men. But this fact makes it not less, but more, important that the Church realise and declare the risk inherent in State control. The society which indulges in too much State control is apt to find itself upon a slippery slope, and to be unable to stop itself before it reaches the bottom, from where it

will then look up at the sheerly totalitarian State and deplore the path that led it to such a plight.

Where is the line separating enough from too much State control? This is the tragedy: there is none. Upon the secular plane, there is no stopping place between too little, enough, and too much. In all honesty, the State will inevitably think that it must go further along the road it is already travelling, either advancing to or retreating from comprehensive control. And so the pendulum swings between one violent extreme and the other, uneasily, unhappily and blindly—unless perhaps the Church have something to say. It is not enough that the Church should pursue the State, whichever way it happens to be moving, uttering loud protesting cries. The Church has much more to do than to clutch the swinging pendulum and merely throw it into reverse. It has to raise the whole matter above the swing of the pendulum between one pole and another. The swing has to be converted into a dialectic. So that some alternative is offered other than uneasy vacillation between the freedom which goes to the head of the individual and drives him to frenzy, and the authority which debases him into a cog. This other alternative is only to be found in the Gospel. "Saith the Lord God. . . . Behold, all souls are mine."<sup>1</sup> "Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."<sup>2</sup> The ideological work of the Church is to asseverate, with all the insistence and power at its disposal, that men are sons of God. In the light of this principle, it must combat the State that advocates either individualism to the point of the irresponsible tyranny of the few and the victimisation of the many, or collectivism to the point of the depersonalisation of all.

### (b) *Defensive Work*

The second work which the Church must undertake is defensive. Do not be offended by the term. The Church has no other duty, no other command, no other calling than to be itself. Hence it has no more important work to undertake than its own defence. The only Holy War to which the Church can without fear or hesitation commit itself is a crusade in its own defence.

In fact, while defending itself, the Church is actually fighting other battles than its own. Calvin holds that one of

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xviii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> 2. Cor. vi. 18.

the primary duties of the State is "to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, and to defend the constitution of the Church"; or again, that it is to see "that idolatry, sacrilege against the name of God, blasphemies against His truth, and other offences against religion, may not openly appear and be disseminated among the people"; or again, that it is to see "that there be a public form of religion among Christians".<sup>1</sup> How does the State come to have an interest in true religion? Why should the State as such need alongside of it a Church? The answer to these questions is this. If the State will understand itself aright, it must see itself as an *ordinatio et destinatio Dei*. By only one thing can this be pointed out to the State. Above the hum of voices that surrounds the apparatus of the State, voices of adulation and voices of criticism, only one voice rises to tell the State the truth concerning itself.<sup>2</sup> It is the voice of the Church, rising to speak of the divine ordination of the State, and thereby to proclaim that its authority has a real foundation but also a strict limit. When this is not said, the State must misunderstand itself, and, without any guidance, will either hold back its timid hand from all control of the individual, or plunge madly towards the excesses of collectivism. Without the Church, the State goes astray. The Church in defending itself fights a battle for the true State.

The proper State, therefore, provides a place for, and guards the interests of, the Church. But herein lies an objective criterion by which the State may be judged. Take for granted the Protestant doctrine that the Church is true when it rightly preaches the Word, rightly administers the Sacraments, and rightly orders and disciplines itself. The conclusion follows, that where the State places impediments or prohibitions in the way of the Church in any of these three duties, there the State has become false to itself. At once it is known that, whether it explicitly appear or not, the State cherishes secret longings for a place and position which it may not rightly occupy. It will not stand the voice that tells it of its own dependent character; it is already aiming at divinity.

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, IV, xx., 2 and 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Only one voice" in what to-day is called Christendom. The question whether pagan States have a "consciousness of the divinity of their original source" (P. Althaus in *Kirche, Volk und Staat*, 23), as is suggested by Rom. i. 32, ii. 14ff., need not here be judged. In States which enjoy, or have enjoyed, knowledge of Christianity, there is only one voice (see *ib.* 24).

When this happens, the Church knows that the moment has come for defensive action. What that action will be can hardly be determined in advance. If it have legitimate means by which to defend itself, then the Church is in duty bound to use them, seeking to convince the State of its error, and to secure reinstatement in its rightful place. But it may be that means lack, or that they fail. Then the Church must resort again to the catacombs, there to bear silent protest against the State and await its correction, or, through the inherent weakness induced by ignoring its real nature, its collapse.

(c) *Militant Work*

I believe that the Church in the modern State must prepare itself to undertake not only an ideological and defensive task, but also a militant task. Here the distinction between primary and secondary functions of the State is to be borne in mind. The primary functions are both external and internal. Externally, it is a primary function of the State to preserve its own life and that of its citizens against hostile powers. Most people agree that the sword is given to the State in this connection for threat, and in the last resort for use. But of course the State should also play its part in the foundation and maintenance of internal peace. So internally, it is a primary function of the State to preserve order within its own bounds. It has here a policeman's job. In this sphere, besides taking measures to punish and check the ill-doer, the State has also to order the various social and cultural forms, the family, education, and so on, within its bounds. Social justice demands that some order be established.

Here, imperceptibly, the passage is made to the secondary function which the State must discharge. The ordering of these forms involves the moulding of them. So the great question arises: Where is the line to be drawn to separate the legitimate ordering of the family, of the economic sphere, of culture, by the State, and the illegitimate interference on the part of the State in these social forms? To say that it is here, in the sphere of the secondary functions of the State and concerning the nature and extent of legitimate State influence, that the issue between the Church and the modern State will be joined, is on the whole not a very hazardous prophecy. Signs are already apparent in this country, that mark the sphere of education as a possible field of conflict. The State undoubtedly notes with the greatest

of interest the influence wielded by other States within this sphere. On the other hand, the Church is beginning to realise the enormous significance of education. Education in this country to-day is secular. The compulsory periods of Religious Instruction so many times a week make education no more Christian than one or two parties at Christmas time makes a child's life all party. Our secularised education is a no man's land, lying between Church and State. Both are casting covetous eyes upon it. One of the most momentous questions of the day must shortly be decided—the respective parts to be played by Church and State in this sphere.

Here, in education and the other areas belonging to the secondary functions of the State, there are two principles which should, I believe, regulate the work of the Church. (i) *The Church must take its stand over against the State when anything is purposed or done which is an offence to the Christian conscience.* Here questions of alternative suggestions are out of order. If grave and obvious injustice is being done, without having any alternative to offer or propose, the Church must rise in protest to say: This shall not be. With all its strength, it must declare that its own "must" overrides the State's "cannot be altered", that its own "Thou shalt not" takes precedence over the State's "It is expedient."

As examples, we might think of the actual Colour Bar legislation in South Africa, designed as it is to keep Africans in a permanent state of economic and social inferiority; in this country, of the possible popular clamour for "vengeance" on a defeated Germany; and of the unlikely imposition of a British Version of the Nüremberg Anti-Semitic Laws. All these constitute a clear offence to the Christian conscience, and who but the Church is to express the offence and withstand the offending action?

On the whole, the State of this country has in the past been guided by a humanitarian conscience. So long as this continues, there is unlikely to be any large number of occasions on which this first principle must be invoked. At the same time, this humanitarian conscience is likely to prove a wasting asset, unless it be constantly fed from the source from which in a great measure it has historically derived its direction and its power—from living Christian faith. The "natural" inclination of our people towards justice and "fair play", and their

“natural” repulsion to brutality and victimisation, is undoubtedly strong. But it is quite possible to visualise not impossible situations, for example the exigencies of a further crisis during the war, or of our defeat by the Axis powers, in which a strain would be put upon this “natural” inheritance, such as it could not bear, unless fortified by Christian principle and belief. It is also not impossible that the brutalising effects of warfare, or that the drift towards secularism, gradually bring about a similar situation by a process imperceptible to all except an awakened and alert Christian Church. But hitherto, even when a policy inflicted manifest and widespread injustice and much could be said in criticism of it, for example the Means Test, even more could be said in defence of the policy as a whole. The ever present difficulty is to see the issue clearly, when the Church is itself enmeshed in the order of the day. And nothing could impair the influence of the Church more than to move into action on occasions which did not really demand it.

(ii) The second principle is this: *The Church must take its stand over against the State when anything is proposed or done which from special knowledge the Church knows could be proposed or done in a better, that is, more Christian, way.* Here the Church will come forward with a genuine alternative based upon special knowledge which it is, and the State perhaps is not, in a position to have. Here upon level terms, the Church will present its case before the State and win the State’s consent upon the merits of the proposal it makes on the ground of real knowledge.

It need not be feared that there will be endless occasions on which the Church will have to invoke this principle and combat policies advocated by the State. In the nature of modern things and tendencies, the occasions, though they may be vital, will in all probability be few. The whole of modern civilised life has become so complex, that most major problems are the affair of experts. It is difficult for the Church as such to have really expert knowledge in any of them. Nothing could be more disastrous to the proper influence and prestige of the Church than that it should meddle with affairs in which, so far from having special knowledge, it has not even expert knowledge. Here goodness, even godliness, is not enough. One thinks with more pathos than admiration of the naïve Mr. Lansbury, coming back from Berchtesgaden to tell the world: “I have looked into that man’s eyes, and I know he means peace.” The

Church must not allow either enthusiasm or enthusiasts to precipitate it into similar ill-judged action, however noble the motives by which it is suggested. It will often be the case that the Church as such must refrain from action because of its lack of qualifications. When and where this is so, it becomes all the more necessary that individual professing Christians, who happen to be qualified experts, should bear their Christian part. These will act as real though unaccredited representatives of the Church. Yet the Church may not always shelve the responsibility for bringing Christian influence to bear on the civil order upon lone individuals. There are spheres in which the Church has a peculiar interest and responsibility, and has, or with a little pain could acquire, the requisite special knowledge, and into which, when the time came, it could enter, not as fool, but as angel and messenger of God. Education has already been mentioned. To it may be added family life, whose grievous disruption by war-time conditions may at the present time be suffered, but whose rehabilitation must be on no account impeded but rather by every means actively facilitated at the earliest possible moment after these conditions no longer obtain. A sphere calling for even more immediate vigilance than either of these is what we may call welfare of youth. In face of a national emergency, the State has suddenly become alive to the fact that a great proportion of the youth of this country is "adrift so far as the proper utilization of their free moments is concerned, and without interest in bettering themselves by education and training".<sup>1</sup> The State in its plans for the "Welfare of Youth" is only becoming conscious of an individual deterioration and national wastage which many of its citizens have for years deplored, and for whose correction they have long thought national action should be taken. Let it, then, be frankly and right away admitted that State action here opens up immense possibilities of good. But at the same time, it will not do to be blind to the fact that this *is* the totalitarian State in action. Those who lightly acquiesce in the State's action, or who welcome it uncritically, only demonstrate how immersed we all tend to be in the general tendency towards totalitarianism. The State is taking to itself powers to care for those at least of this country's youth whom Church and voluntary agencies have been unable to care for. Is this legitimate State control? It would be hard to

<sup>1</sup> City of Edinburgh: Education Committee, *Report of Welfare of Youth*, 5f.

deny that it is. Where, then, and when will it pass over into State control of an illegitimate kind? Only the most careful scrutiny of the operation of the scheme will find an answer to this question. But one standard, it may be said in advance, by which the question will be answered, is whether it is the widest and highest welfare of youth that is promoted. And of this, in the opinion of the present writer, one *experimentum crucis*, as nearly infallible as may be, is the use to which Sunday is put.

When this second principle is invoked, and the Church rises not only to protest but to protest and offer alternative proposals, it may conceive its duty in three main ways. It may go all out to propose the maximum which its Christian faith demands, with the laudable desire of making the country at the point in question truly Christian. For example, it might demand that really Christian education be given in State schools.

Or second, the Church may despair of achieving much in an increasingly secular country, and may propose itself to set up institutions which, distinct from the parallel State institutions, will be genuinely Christian, and will at least provide a real alternative for those who care to make use of it. It would then, for example, found Christian schools in which exemplary Christian education is given.

Or third, the Church may choose a middle course. It would then exercise a certain necessary *tact des choses possibles*. It would realise that no nation to-day is composed wholly of ardent Christians. It would decline the responsibility of making this country at any point uninhabitable for non-Christians, whether Jews, Hindus or Mohammedans, or those who by conviction believe that Christianity is untrue and Christians are astray, by, say, closing the doors of State schools against them. It would further decline to commit itself to unlimited separatism and the foundation of parallel institutions, for example, schools, which alone would be Christian. It would propose, as it were, a highest common factor, the greatest degree of, say, Christian education compatible with the mixed society in which it is called to live and work. It need hardly be added that such compatibility would be regarded, neither as mere accommodation nor "base compromise", but as the precondition of a leavening process within society, to be furthered as occasion offered by more decisive measures. This third alternative seems to have most to recommend it and would not preclude a limited operation of the second

method alongside of it, if that were thought to be advantageous.

#### IV. EQUIPMENT OF THE CHURCH

This leads to another and final word. If these really are the works which the Church should undertake, no one observing the Church can fail to be impressed by the quite deplorable lack of equipment by which it could make its guidance or, if need arose, its resistance effective. One major if preliminary task that faces the Church to-day is the framing of organs, the forging of weapons, if you like, by means of which it can sensibly influence the counsels of the nation. Unofficially, no doubt, there are agencies which represent the opinions of Church people before the powers that be. But this representation is made by individual Christians or groups of Christians, and not by the Church as such. Officially, the apparatus for the presentation of the views and the exertion of the influence of the Church is meagre. It consists of twenty-four Anglican bishops with seats in the Upper House. Even these speak as individuals and not for the Church as such; and even in this comparatively innocuous assembly not all the Churches of this country "as by law established" are represented: the Church of Scotland has not, say, the proportionate three representatives. The Free Churches are not and cannot expect to be in better case. For the rest, the direct influence of the Church upon the State is limited to interviews with this or that Secretary of State. Here, on a busy man's agenda for the day, after "Deputation from the Iron Workers' Federation", and before "Delegation from the Burgh Council" of some inconsiderable hamlet, will appear this entry: "Delegation from the Christian Church."

The formation of a Church or a Christian political party could never be a solution to the problem. It would certainly raise more difficulties than it would solve, and we should have on our hands all the unfortunate consequences we have observed and deplored in other countries where religious parties entered the political arena. The direct representation of the Christian Church in Parliament might not be impossible in view of the special University representation, but it would not necessarily be the only or best solution. But at least the suggestion is here made that the time has come for the Church to turn its mind to the construction of machinery and organs by which it may

make Christian influence effectively felt, so that the phrases "mere" Assembly deliverance, "mere" Convocation report, may no longer be used as a reproach. It will no doubt be objected that such a course of action is without precedent. But after all, the situation is without any close or recent precedent. If the political trend and tendency in modern States is totalitarian, it carries a menace to Christianity and Christian civilisation, and it behoves the Church, which is the guardian in the world of both, to move while there is time.

To facilitate action of this kind, two corollary duties are manifestly laid upon the Church. At present the Church speaks with an inarticulate voice and with a divided voice. Its voice is inarticulate. The Church to-day has not itself the organs through which informed and qualified opinions could be formed and responsibly uttered. In too great a measure, the Church works to-day with antiquated organs. These were no doubt set up to meet a clamant need. In their day no doubt they met that need. But needs have a habit of changing behind the backs of the Committees set up to investigate them. This is what happens with depressing frequency in Church affairs. Most of the branches of the Church have a Committee on Temperance. How many have some body competent to give all the necessary attention to the to-day infinitely more important problem of Education?—not Education for the Ministry, not even Education of the people in the Christian faith, but the Christian Education of the people, and the parts which State and Church should respectively play there? How can the Church expect to speak articulately unless it keep abreast of the major problems to which modern life gives rise?

And now I have used at last the phrase "the branches of the Church". The voice of the Church is not only inarticulate; it is divided. The modern problems on which the conscience of the Church is aware that it should have some opinion and advice to offer, are not less than national in scope. An individual branch of the Church, even if it be national, cannot hope to make an adequate contribution to their solution. Only concerted action on the part of all Churches can be adequate to the occasion. Hence the need becomes manifest for joint Church action. We can only deplore the divisions which make such joint action so difficult—or rather we must do more than deplore: the Churches must remedy a state of matters which is both disgraceful and

disabling. Nor need they wait until the remote goal of " Church reunion " is attained. Already inter-denominational organs, such as the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility, are in existence. If at present their influence and power seem to be rather in inverse proportion to the number of Churches represented, it may well be hoped that use and development will increase their authority. So that at no distant date the united Churches, if not the united Church, may through appropriate organs, and in the name of the one and only Lord of the Church, play the Christian part they should in the modern State.

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