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

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

A NATIONAL CHURCH.

BY ROBERT STOKES.

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I SHOULD like to begin by saying (1) that what follows does not profess to be a complete theory of the State, but only a few random and eclectic suggestions towards that part of a theory of the State which would concern a national Church; and (2) that I alone am responsible for the views expressed.

The primary emphasis of Evangelicalism has always been rightly laid on personal religion and conduct. But human conduct is not restricted to personal, individual conduct. It includes also group or corporate conduct, and since Evangelicalism professes to be a true presentation of Christianity it must apply to group as well as to individual conduct if Christianity itself so applies. To hold that Christianity does not apply to the whole range of human conduct, but to individual conduct only, involves one in many absurdities, of which a typical example is afforded by the conclusion that it is then impossible, on Christian principles, to condemn corporate evil conduct! Thus if I commit robbery with violence, that is a sin; but if I join with two or three others into a club or gang—provided that the objects of the club are harmless at the moment when I perform the individual act of joining it—and if the club or gang in its corporate capacity commits robbery with violence, that cannot be condemned, on this theory, as in the slightest degree wrong upon Christian principles!

But if we reject such absurdities and hold instead, with the early Evangelical leaders, that Christian principles apply to all human conduct, including group conduct, it follows that they apply to the conduct of the most important group, which is the State. But here arises the question who is to apply them, and this is the supreme and fundamental question in the relations of Church and State. Indeed this question of the relation of the Church to the corporate conduct of the State is far more difficult than the question of the relation of the State to the corporate conduct of the Church, since the interference of the State in that sphere must necessarily be largely limited in practice to (1) the defence of the rights, whether material or spiritual, of the individual citizen, and (2) the self-preservation of the State from adverse action by the Church especially in the international sphere.

The difficulty of answering the question "Who is to apply Christianity to the corporate conduct of the State?" arises from three causes: (a) the complexity of the subject; (b) the fact that both Church and State largely become different entities, according to the prevailing theories as to their nature. For example, in a

period when collectivist thought prevails, the sphere of activity of the State, together with its authority and responsibility within that sphere, are inevitably extended, and similarly with the Church in a period when High Church views are fashionable; and (c) the fact that it is possible to combine in various ways different theories of the Church with different theories of the State.

THEORIES OF THE CHURCH.

Time forbids a detailed discussion of the various theories of the Church, such for example as Calvin's Christocracy, wherein the Church, while acknowledging the Christian State as divine, has a duty to watch its corporate conduct and keep it up to the mark, minister and magistrate being thus partners, but the former acting as a check on the latter; or Luther's first theory, wherein law is a mere corrective made necessary by non-Christian conduct in the world and so of comparatively little direct interest to Christians though the Church accepts the co-operation of the State; or Luther's second theory—after the Peasant War—in which he turned to the divine prerogative of the secular authority to enforce the conditions necessary to the full Christian life and definitely subordinated the minister to the magistrate¹; or the Roman theory in its many forms.

But amid all the theories of the Church we may distinguish two broad tendencies, namely that some of the theories emphasise mainly the international, and others the national aspects of the Church. And inevitably Churches which lean upon the former, are, in so far as they so lean, driven by the sheer logic of their position to withdraw from those phases of national life which conflict with their internationality and to concentrate upon a kind of least common measure of the national life of the various nations. During the Great War the Roman Church had either to pray with both sides for victory, thus stultifying its internationalism, or else by not praying for victory withdraw from close association with what was best in the ideals on both sides and forfeit the confidence of both sides. Nor could it hope to explain the ideals of each to the other, for such explanation would have had to be made through priests of the same nationality, who would be, through that very fact, incapacitated for appreciating the other point of view. During the Great War how many Englishmen could appreciate the German belief that the best and highest future of Europe and indeed of civilisation itself, was bound up with the spread of *Kultur*, that utterly un-English and laughterless amalgam of thoroughness, meticulous scientific accuracy, and self-sacrifice for a mystically idealised conception of the German race-state? Or again, how many Germans could even imagine the Anglo-Saxon conception of liberty ordered by public opinion in an atmosphere of "sportsmanship"? More excusable, perhaps, but no less perplexed, would be their dubious approach to such speculative ideals as "self-determination"

¹ This summary of Luther's and Calvin's doctrines is mainly derived from an article by Bishop E. A. Knox in *THE CHURCHMAN* of October, 1930.

or "a War to end War." Any attempt to explain the parties to each other must merely have involved deep distrust by both, and in fact so little trusted is a thoroughly internationalised religion that the peace efforts of the Vatican were entirely fruitless and indeed only served to rouse irritation and suspicion among the Allies.

This incompatibility of an emphasised international position with the unqualified association of a Church in the hopes and struggles of a nation's inner life, is illustrated again in the new relations now subsisting between Italy and the Papal See. The Fascist ideal of the State is collectivist to the point of being deliberately "totalitarian." Hitherto the applications of this ideal have been on the whole successful and the natural limitations of the ideal will only become plain gradually in practice. But meanwhile this ideal is directly at variance with the Church's conception of her direct responsibility for morals and education. Hence has arisen constant friction. That friction has now been partially reduced by the inconsistent expedients of withdrawing the Church from the State and constituting it a foreign power, and at the same time conceding most of its claims in Italian morals and education. In return the Church is, for the moment, not pressing the unconceded claims, and not advertising the considerable abandonment by Italy of its "totalitarian" ideal. In the end those who most cherish the ideal must be the least satisfied with the Church, and their distrust must progressively increase with the increasing internationalism and de-Italianisation of the Vatican. Thus the State will be weakened, any power for good which the Church may have will be curtailed, and the energies of many of Italy's most idealistic citizens will be increasingly diverted from the ideal of a Christian, to that of a secular, State.

On the other hand, in so far as Churches conceive themselves as national they are free to identify themselves fully with all that is best in every phase of the national life if that national life is Christian; and such full identification should increase the national trust in them and therefore also their influence and opportunities for good. In a word a national Church can very largely achieve the ideal of becoming the conscience of a Christian State.

THEORIES OF THE STATE.

An exhaustive classification of theories of the State is obviously impossible, but there are at least one ancient and four modern theories which contain important elements of truth that must be gathered up into any complete theory and must be recognised by the Church.

(1) Aristotle's theory that the State arose for the sake of life, but continues *for the sake of good life*,¹ definitely extends the legitimate sphere of State action beyond that of mere defence and order, and extends it upon a principle of great elasticity. The importance of this extension lies in its almost universal acceptance to-day, but

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, I, i, 8, 1252b: *γινωμένη μὲν οὖν τοῦ ζῆν ἐνεκεν, οὐσα δὲ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν.*

obviously the principle stands in need of a limiting principle (such perhaps as the inclusion of liberty among the ends comprised in "the good life") to regulate its application. It clearly covers such matters as the compulsory acquisition of lands for railways and some subsequent regulation of the railways; and since the "good life" of the citizens depends on a certain standard of morals, it would appear to confer upon the State responsibility for moral education. Here at once is disclosed a sphere of concurrent jurisdiction with that claimed by the Church and a field of potential direct conflict unless there is a satisfactory demarcation of responsibilities between Church and State. The essential point is that modern thought definitely assigns to the State, upon a principle plausibly if vaguely formulated by this theory, responsibilities within the sphere most directly and categorically claimed by the Church as its own, and even in connection with the Church itself.¹ Therefore in respect of this sphere one must coerce the other, or else Church and State must become or act as one.

(2) The *social contract theory* of the State is generally rejected nowadays as unhistorical, and as in the last resort almost meaningless since there is no consciousness of such a contract. Nevertheless it has often been conceded that this theory contains this element of truth, that the people have a fundamental "right of acquiescence" in government. How very important this right may be is illustrated in the ethical relations of the Government of India with an unworthy Indian Prince. It has been argued that the irresistible British force which supports such a Prince deprives the people of the State of their inherent right to rebel against extreme oppression and that we have therefore not only a legal right but a moral duty to prevent such *extreme* oppression.² Such fundamental moral rights and duties inherent in the relationship of the State to the citizens must be taken into account by any Church which presumes to advise or criticise or support the State, especially in times of revolution. They can be best taken into account by a Church which is intimately associated with the State.

(3) The theory of Hegel and such writers as Bosanquet (derived, through Fichte, from Rousseau), is that the State has an objective

¹ For a good statement of the position which makes this claim see Burke (*On the Petition of the Unitarians*), especially the passage in which he urges that religion is "so far from being out of the province of a Christian magistrate, that it is, and it ought to be, not only his care, but the principal thing in his care. The magistrate, who is a man, and charged with the concerns of men, and to whom very specially nothing human is remote or indifferent, has a right and a duty to watch over it with an unceasing vigilance; to protect, to promote, to forward it by every rational, just and prudent means. It is principally his duty to prevent the abuses which grow out of every strong and efficient principle that actuates the human mind. As religion is one of the bonds of society, he ought not to suffer it to be made the pretext of destroying its peace, order, liberty and security. Above all, he ought strictly to look to it when men begin to form new combinations, to be distinguished by new names and especially when they mingle a political system with their religious opinions, true or false, plausible or implausible."

² See the present writer's *New Imperial Ideals* (Murray, 10s. 6d. net).

existence as embodying the "*general will*" which is something real yet quite distinct both from the average and from the resultant of the individual wills of the citizens. Such a "real general will" has been criticised out of existence by Professor Hobhouse,¹ yet the constant belief of mankind is some reason for believing in the existence of a mystical objective reality of some kind in the State over and above the sum total of the individual citizens. A theory of what this mystical reality is will be put forward later.

(4) The theory which seems to underlie the attack of Gierke and Maitland upon the concession theory of corporations, is that there is a kind of free life inherent in all corporations, including the Church, and that this life owes nothing to the State. While Gierke and Maitland themselves would probably concede an equal measure of life to the State itself, the theory has tended in the hands of their disciples towards a very *mechanical conception* of the State and there is undoubtedly this element of truth in such views, that the actual form of the modern State is largely arbitrary and artificial, a deliberate choice or creation by human wills.

(5) Lastly, seeing that such human will is not merely exercised once for all as in the creation of a machine, but is continuously exercised in all the operations of government, there is some truth also in the view of such a thinker as Bluntschli which emphasises the *organic, psychological* nature of the State.

Before any of these abstract theories can be brought into definite relationship with the Church, they must be brought down from the realm of theory to that of concrete fact. This can best be achieved by a brief survey, from the standpoint of the Church, of some of the main facts of a typical primitive State, and of the differentiae of a modern, developed State.

THE PRIMITIVE STATE.

From the point of view of religion, the important fact about the primitive State is that *it exists principally for the non-moral purpose of mere defence and survival, and therefore that it is in its nature essentially non-moral, and so needs the complementary service of a Church.* This non-moral character becomes very evident if we consider the seven most obvious characteristics of a primitive State.

(1) The first is its *necessity*. Whether the tribe arises through an enlargement of the family or not, its government owes its continued existence to the need for order and safety if the tribe is to survive at all in a ruthless world.

(2) The nature of this government is that it is a source or depository of *authority*.

(3) This authority includes an unlimited *latent power* to meet new circumstances. It is immaterial to the fact of the existence of this latent power in government whether the government is vested in a patriarchal chief or in a tribal assembly. The power is inherent in the tribe's natural right of self-preservation, which

¹ Cf. *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*.

includes the right of self-adaptation to new conditions, both external and internal. It is still by this right that a modern State regulates such new spheres as broadcasting. Here then, it may be suggested, is the answer to the question : " What is the mystical reality in the State ? " It is merely that the State is the depository of the latent power of the community, and this latent power, joined to the power actually in exercise, constitutes both legal and political sovereignty. This latent power in sovereignty is *felt* mystically or instinctively, rather than comprehended by reason ; and since it is at once indefinitely vast and unknown, yet presumably benevolent, it properly evokes both devotion and a respectful awe.

(4) The *organic, psychological* nature of the State is very evident in the personal rule of a primitive chief and in the behaviour of a tribal assembly.

(5) So also is the *artificial or mechanical* nature of the machinery of State. The custom which places important powers in the hands of a Queen Mother in Ashanti is as mechanical in its operation as the customary restriction of power to those who sit on the symbolic Stool, or as a modern franchise.

(6) A sense of *kinship* is an obviously important cohesive element in all tribal life, even helots and slaves sharing in it by a kind of adoption.

(7) The *land* of settled tribes is usually a cohesive tribal bond, but this rarely applies to the hunting or grazing lands of a pastoral tribe, the association of devotion to the land with devotion to the tribe or State being normally a concomitant of the evolution of a nomad into a settled people.

Thus though some of these characteristics may be specially easy to reinforce with religious sanctions, in themselves they are all secular and non-moral. Accordingly, such a non-moral State must stand in a fourfold need of the support and help of religion : (a) to act as its conscience, censoring (and justifying) its conduct ; (b) to reinforce its authority with religious sanctions ; (c) to promote public morals, and (d) to protect the State from religion itself, which may threaten it either by forming an *imperium in imperio* or, in the case of debasing religions or international religions centred abroad, by weakening it.

In view of these needs it is not surprising to observe that the most successful of primitive tribes and States are commonly those which, while controlling religion, most closely associate themselves with it. Such control is necessary lest the paramount end of the State, survival, should be rashly subordinated to internal, or even to mere personal considerations ; but the most successful form of control and association is often such a unity of Church and State as has existed under the priest-kings of Yoruba-land in Southern Nigeria.

THE CIVILISED STATE.

When we turn to the developed or civilised modern State we find two main classes of difference from the primitive State, but in

the nature of the State itself surprisingly little difference except in the extension of its aims so as to include "the good life." The first class of differences comprises differentiation of function in government. The State itself is more definite, as it were. Its activities have multiplied with the increasing complexities of life and most of these activities have been assigned to specific people. It is commonly larger and has passed through stages in which it has had to assimilate unruly sub-chiefs or barons, and to protect itself from powerful associations including in some cases the organised modern Church.

The second class of differences is closely associated with the extension of aims. It comprises the immense number of latent powers which the civilised State has converted into actual powers. A current example of such a development is to be seen in the Town and Country Planning Act. Another, this time in the sphere of pure law, is provided by the Statute of Westminster, which has called forth, from the latent legal potentialities of the Crown, an extraordinary power of formally dividing itself and its Dominions and receiving separate advice from each set of ministers while still retaining a formal theoretical unity. Another on a larger scale is the whole growth of the Dependent Empire, through which the British State has made itself responsible for the protection of vast regions of the East and of Africa, and for the spread of Western civilisation therein. In this latter task it has a choice of three instruments and three principles of government. It can employ its own white agents, upon the principle of trusteeship; or it can use the Princes, Rajahs, Sultans, Paramount Chiefs or other natural rulers, upon the principle of indirect rule; or, finally, on the so-called principle of "self-government," it can employ oligarchies of westernised natives, who will naturally have the real power if sham democratic institutions which only they can work are set up among people incapable of comprehending them. In point of fact all three principles are in operation, the two first on the whole successfully.

We have now reached a point where we can describe the primitive State as the depository of the collective authority, both latent and actual, of the community, a depository which is at once mechanical and psychological, which is based on kinship and sometimes also on land, which exists primarily and mainly for the object of securing the survival of the community, and in which the whole community is associated through acquiescence. With this we can compare the developed State. It is a similar depository, but more differentiated in its structure, and having a vast series of additional objects, which may be comprehended under the general aim of promoting the "good life" of the community, and in the case of some modern states, of protecting vast backward areas of the world and extending to them also the forms of the "good life" known as European civilisation. What then is the nature of this depository itself? In the strictly organic sense of the metaphor it might be described as an "organ" of the community—the community being the natural association in which man must live as a "political

animal" ¹—but inasmuch as the whole community is associated in the depository through acquiescence, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the State is the community in its collective capacity in so far as this is differentiated.

Now in all this it is clear that in the development from the primitive to the modern State, the essential nature of the State is little changed. The ends for which it exists have been extended and now include moral aims, but its essential nature remains primarily non-moral because still primarily concerned with the non-moral aim of mere survival, and it accordingly still needs the moral support and help of the Church in this primary sphere, and for the same four reasons; while in its new sphere of moral responsibilities it needs both a conscience and an adjusted relationship to a Church that takes all moral responsibilities for its province. It can achieve both by making the Church its conscience in this sphere also, and will thereby (a) obviate endless friction that must otherwise weaken both Church and State; (b) strengthen both itself and the Church; and (c) ensure that the judgment of the Church on the conduct of the State is informed and responsible.

How far can religion rightly meet this inherent State need of help and support? I would suggest that this will depend on (a) how far the religion is national and so capable of identifying itself with the life of the nation in all its phases; and (b) how far the State is Christian. If the religion is national or at least if it can sit loosely to its connections abroad, and if the State is professedly Christian, surely it is then the duty of the Church to amalgamate with the State and to become its conscience, not commanding, but exhorting it; the State still remaining fully responsible for the application of Christian standards to its corporate conduct, though guided and exhorted by the Church, for example, through its bishops in the House of Lords. The religion will then be able progressively to purify and ennoble the State's corporate conduct, to reinforce its authority, to promote the morality of its citizens, and to protect it from debasing, weakening or foreign-centred religions. By such amalgamation we may confidently expect the Church's power for good to be enormously enhanced and the State to be strengthened. It is a development to which we may invite the warm adhesion of Evangelicals in the light of the history of both the Lutheran and the Calvinistic traditions, as well as because it is the official position of the Church of England. It should derive support also from the present posture of Imperial affairs.

CHURCH AND EMPIRE.

For the Empire this is a tremendous and fateful age of transition. The Statute of Westminster has severed, at least temporarily and perhaps for ever, the major legal links with the Dominions. Here then is an extraordinary opportunity for a Church that is alive to its Imperial duty, to forge social and spiritual links such as those

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, I, i, 9, 1253a: ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον.

by which the Church once welded the Saxon Heptarchy into the Kingdom of England. Again the race problem in Africa bids fair to become one of the principal problems of the world. Here is a problem having many economic, medical, cultural, anthropological and political aspects, and fundamentally a moral problem that only the Church can solve, but it is one which the Church can only hope to solve with a knowledge of the facts that is only to be acquired in association with the State. An experiment is proposed for India which even its supporters realise *may* play havoc with the happiness of that sub-continent, whose inhabitants form a fifth part of mankind and which is the foundation of all our Empire in Asia. Moreover, the almost world-wide distrust or repudiation of democracy, and the substitution of strong executives cannot but place new strains upon so democratic an Empire.

Surely for these reasons this is emphatically not the time to secularise the Empire by adopting the proposal of an Establishment on Scottish lines that would be little more than merely nominal since outside the sphere of local government it would affect no corporate conduct. The present Establishment of the Church of England affects corporate action in local government, and to this extent it has analogy with that of the Church of Scotland; but the English Establishment has also two far wider applications. It affects the corporate conduct of the United Kingdom and of the Empire as a whole; and how active it can be in this latter regard has been recently illustrated in Kenya.

It has been suggested that there is a mighty task and a mighty duty lying ready to hand for the Church in uniting the Empire itself, and, through its association with the Empire, in working out and applying Christian solutions of the great problems of Asia and Africa. But in the mere association itself there is Christian value as well as Imperial strength, for it is impossible to exaggerate the importance in this increasingly secular world of the continuing witness of the British Empire as a Christian State—through the Establishment of the Church of England—to the truths of Christianity. Severed from each other on Cavour's specious formula of "a free Church in a free State" or on any other formula, both must be weakened beyond telling.

Together the Church and the Empire may go forward to mightier and still mightier achievements in the service of God and of mankind. In such achievements may Almighty God grant that the great coming Evangelical revival of which there are now such abundant signs throughout the country may play a part worthy of those traditions of piety, sound learning, God-given common sense and breadth of outlook upon affairs of State, which have been the glory of Evangelicalism in the past.

School Paths in Africa, by Phyllis L. Garlick (The Highway Press, 1s. net), tells of the growth and success of Missionary schools, both primary and secondary, in the African Missions of the Church.