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CHURCH AND STATE.

BY THE REV. W. LEONARD B. CALEY, M.A.

A Paper read at the Conference of Old Students of St. John's Hall, Highbury, September, 1936.

THE subject of our conference is "Church and State," and we are now asked to consider our present duty as members of the Established Church and as Evangelicals. It is fairly common knowledge that as Evangelicals we believe in the present relationship, but in view of that fact we are compelled to face the responsibility involved. In the first place as Christians.

The purpose of God revealed in the Old Testament and the New Testament is the establishment of "the Kingdom of God." The Fall of Man was revolt against the sovereignty of God. The work of redemption must issue in the re-establishment of that sovereignty. This is revealed in Old Testament history. The call came to Abraham to get out of his country, to leave his kindred and his father's house. Behind that call there lies in the past the fact of the rebellion of the human will against the commands and rule of God, and through obedience to that call there arose a chosen people through whom God reveals His purpose for the world—that the human race should be subject to His sovereignty—a Kingdom of God. Before many generations have passed the desire to be like other nations caused the breakdown of this ideal, but the thought is carried on in a monarchy chosen by God and sanctified by His servant, and in a national constitution in which the worship of God was so linked with national life that it was almost impossible to separate the one from the other. The laws of God dealt with the ordinary affairs of daily life. The chief truth for our purpose in this Old Testament history is that the design of God was that religion and life, Church and State, should be one with God sovereign. The Kingdom of God was the ideal.

Through that race came our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in Whose Person God revealed in fullest measure, and in a new way, Emmanuel, God with us. The purpose of God revealed through the Incarnation was that human life in all its varied aspects should be one with God, so that the Kingdom of God, already foreshadowed in the Old Testament and there shown to deal with questions of common life, should be understood to affect our whole life in Society, so that God should be seen entering into the details of the ordinary work, play, joys and sorrows of men. Our task as Christians is not simply to call men to believe in God, but to believe in God Who has become one with human life. All men therefore come within range of the Christian's hope, and our most frequent prayer must be "Thy Kingdom come." The Kingdom of God is to cover all life, and the Church is the instrument for the bringing in of the Kingdom.

Yet the New Testament revelation differs from the Old. The

Christian Church is not merely occupied in establishing the rule of God, but in the words our Lord taught His first disciples, "Our Father," He reminded them it is to bring men into the family of God. All personal duty, each man's peculiar function, is part of the service rendered in the family life. "In a very real sense the Church is a family." (M. Warren.) The will of the Father is to be Sovereign in human life, not the will of a potentate. It is this fact which our Lord emphasises so continually. He came to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, but He said "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," and it is "The Father that sent Me." "Father, not My Will but Thine be done." "Not what I will but what Thou wilt." Even to the Cross when He could cry, "It is finished." "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." After the Crucifixion and Resurrection He comes to the little band of friends and on the first Easter night says, "As My Father hath sent Me even so send I you," and He sent them forth to proclaim the Good News—the Good News of the Kingdom at hand, the Good News of Emmanuel—God with us—to every creature.

Our Established Church to-day illustrates this message of the Incarnation and carries on the thought of the Kingdom of God in the historic relationship between Church and State.

God and human life are intimately linked, and all life is called to recognise the overruling of God. God touches all life, the ideal being that from the throne to the humblest cottage in the land, from the Houses of Parliament to the smallest Parish Council, God should be seen entering into the details of the ordinary work, play, joys and sorrows of men, and that all life should be linked together by common Prayer and Worship.

The whole discussion in regard to the relationship between Church and State needs to be lifted out of the realm of the controversy of 1928-30, and placed upon the basis of service to the Nation. It is not the rights of the Church that matter but the needs of the Nation. Not to get what we want but to give the Nation what she needs—God. Our Master did not insist on His rights. "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God; but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant." "I am among you as he that serveth" (St. Luke xxii. 27) and St. John exhorts us "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." "Hereby know we the Spirit of God—every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." That is, of God which reveals Him entering into the joys and sorrows of ordinary life. For this reason the unit of the Church of England that matters is the parish, not the diocese. Our present duty in connection with this subject of Church and State is—

1. To remember the parochial system, that wonderful organisation by which, in the ideal, there is no man, woman, boy or girl, you meet, who has not some duly accredited Minister of God to care for his soul. One sometimes hears it said, "The parochial system

has broken down." There is no need for it to have broken down. It may be less efficiently worked with reduced staffs, but it need not break down, e.g. Canon Peter Green says in his *Man of God*: "And so though the whole district is going down, and though good Church families move away to the new housing areas, at the rate of 283 a month, and though the houses are being let in single rooms, yet the number of communions made during the year has steadily risen for the last five years." Our present duty is to make the link between Church and State living, and the parochial clergy have the opportunity of doing this which nobody else has. The parochial system is the link between the things of God and the common life of men. The Church of England emphasises this view in her Book of Common Prayer. Her Morning and Evening Prayer speak of the Church in touch with the daily life of men. Here I sometimes feel the Evangelical has lost his opportunity by the slight emphasis he places on the daily offices. The ideal implied in these offices is to remember the duty of the Church to link the daily round and common task to the things of God—the clergyman's business is to pray for his people. The occasional offices are composed with a view to the ideal, but none are outside them. They represent the Church of England in touch with the family life of men, or, if you like, the Church dealing with ordinary family life in the parishes of England. I value more and more the Occasional Offices. Our present duty is to reveal through them that the Church is here to serve the Nation. In doing so there need to be no denial of the highest ideals of Christian life, but they give a wonderful opportunity of contact and teaching. I must speak from the point of view of the large town parish, for that has been my experience, though I believe the ideals can be more easily carried out in the smaller country one. The National Church touches men's lives at the great moments that matter. There is a good deal of short-sighted criticism of the Occasional Offices, but they offer a wide scope for our ministry and are a wonderful heritage and opportunity. It would be perfectly easy to lose that heritage and perhaps never to regain it.

2. To remember we are not Congregationalists. Our main concern is the parish—the section of the nation committed to our trust. To show Christ in touch with the life of the parish. Let us then consider our present duty in connection with the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. I suppose there are few parochial clergy who have not at one time or other thought deeply on this subject, but the longer my parochial experience the more I valued this link with the homes of the parish. The Church of England is "realist" in the opening exhortation of this service. The majority who come to the fonts of our parish churches are fully conscious of the reality of that opening sentence. Sin is a fact which has affected their own lives, and they know it. To many sin and sorrow are not mere words. They know a need in life, they want the best for the little one they bring, they have a dim idea that God and His Church can give something they cannot. Unless the baby is baptised it will lack something. All very primi-

tive and ignorant! True, but am I wrong in saying so it has been down the generations of English life? Look back at the old registers of your country parishes. How many were brought by godly parents? But this feature of English life has been valuable in the Christian witness of the nation, and it opens the door to a pastoral ministry of unlimited scope and to a Christian education for the child. We need to be careful as far as possible to follow the instructions of the rubrics. This is possible in the spirit, if not in the letter, even in a big town parish. We should build up the tradition of notice being given beforehand. This obviates the idea that parents can come carelessly at any time. How far the service is explained to the congregation round the font must be left to the individual Minister, but what a basis for a few brief words on the Gospel of Christ—the fact of sin and need of cleansing from sin, the call to trust in God as our Father, the Lord Jesus Who died for us, the Holy Spirit, God with us, the call to obedience to God's rules for happiness in life, the emphasis on the need of cleansing by God, and the declaration that those who take these steps are regenerate, born again by the Holy Spirit and received into the family of God.

The problem of godparents is a large one, but I feel this is solved by the Cradle Roll. By this the Church becomes its own godparent, and the child is never lost sight of, but ultimately is brought under Christian instruction in the Sunday School. The cost of £5. or £10 a year is well worth while. It brings the Church into regular touch with the home and is a link between Church and State. Our present duty is to make the link real.

We cannot overestimate also the value of the Marriage Service. From the moment the Banns are put up two homes are brought into touch with the Church in a very intimate way. I believe the ideal is that both should be visited and that if possible the bride and bridegroom should be seen and the service explained. I always feel, however, that this is better done in Church. There we can point out the division of the service. In the first place the family gathering, and the declaration of the interest of the Lord Jesus in the wedding of His two friends, the giving back of the bride to the Minister of God by the father, the giving of her by the Minister of God to the bridegroom, the marriage and the blessing. Then the first act of married life follows when husband and wife walk onwards in the House of God, kneel before His Table where we remember He died for our sins and is coming again, and the first words of married life are "Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come," followed by the thought of the place His Word takes in the home. What a link between Church and State! We underrate the intelligence of our people and the power of the Holy Spirit to teach them. Think of the influence of generations of Christian marriage upon the people of England, and what it has meant through England to the world. Our present duty is to make the link real. A thousand years of English life are sanctified by these things. Our people have a right to expect courtesy from the Vicar, and not to be told that because they are not regular communicants

they have no right to the Ministry of the Church and should go to the Registry Office.

The Burial of the Dead. "I am among you as He that serveth." At the time of death the clergyman's visit will in most cases be expected. Undertakers are very helpful if we explain to them what we have in mind. Every parishioner has a right to have the service in the Parish Church, or at least to have the services of the parish clergy. The going to the cemetery is often a problem, but cycles, and cars provided by the undertaker solve it, and if we do not mind going with the bearers, and even coming back on the hearse ("I am among you as He that serveth"), transport can usually be solved, in these days of motors, much more easily. If we go with the mourners there may be the possibility of prayer and perhaps some word of cheer or sympathy, but the presence of the vicar is often more than words. After the service there comes the opportunity of an invitation to attend church the next Sunday morning—that good old custom—in a big parish there may be funeral parties most Sundays of the year. We can also visit the home a week later. It is our present duty to make the link real. I remember a cemetery chaplain in East London who week by week sent every vicar in the deanery the name and address connected with each funeral he took. This made it possible for the parish clergy to call on the relatives of the deceased and formed a valuable link with many homes.

3. To bring our services into touch with life. Our services should show that the Church is in touch with parish and city, with diocese, nation, and the whole world's needs. We need to remember we live in an artistic age. In the Old Testament beauty and colour were linked with the worship of God, and quite apart from doctrine our worship needs to express the sense of the days in which we live. Times have changed. We none of us dress like our fathers; why should our services be as fifty years ago? They are not—except very occasionally—red, white and black are not the only sacred colours. In the Old Testament blue, purple and gold had their place. Our present duty is to make the worship of the National Church real. At the same time let us value order—within the framework of her formularies we can find great freedom without necessarily breaking the law. One of the great needs is what Mr. Chavasse termed at Oxford "The legalising of common sense." A National Church should express the religion of the Nation and the needs and aspirations of the Nation in this generation. I personally have always found it easy to do this through ordinary Morning and Evening Prayer with but slight deviation, but it is utterly wrong that the Nation should be compelled in 1936 to express her worship in forms suited to 1662, unless she also agrees to serious doctrinal alteration in her Communion Office.

4. To safeguard our Protestant heritage—Church of England—Apostolic—Catholic—Reformed—Protestant. This means that our people have the right of private judgment and we have no right to lord it over God's heritage, over the charge allotted to you (1 Pet.

v. 3). The religion of the English people is fundamentally Protestant. Personally I feel we need never fear the loss of our Protestant heritage, but we need to fear the loss of our people, the severing of the Nation from the Church. It is foolish to force our views on others unless they are ready to accept. Mr. Chavasse reminded us at the Oxford Conference that the National Church must express the religion of the nation. In this connection I would say in passing that we do need to explain to our people the why and wherefore of what we do.

5. To enter fully into the National life. How often we hear of a "clergyman wasting his time in committees"—it depends on the committees. He is not wasting his time on the education committee, Council School Managers', social service, housing, etc. It is surely the ideal that the Church should share in these things and give her contribution. The ideal of the Church of England in the past has been that her clergy, if they were not always theologians, were in touch with life and had often some hobby apart from their ministry.

6. To help our nation to realise the world-wide spiritual responsibilities which are ours. We are living in a strange day of the world's life. In the Providence of God our Anglican Communion has carried the Gospel to almost every quarter of the globe, and branches of our Church are in every land. A hundred years ago Australia was in the Diocese of Calcutta. To-day there are over 150 dioceses overseas. The Church of England is a State Church connected with a world empire, an Empire under the banner of the Cross—and thus we can never be parochial if we carry out our present duty in connection with Church and State.

Our responsibility is to see the relation of Church and State lifted out of the realm of controversy and put on a basis of service to the nation. The Church to-day has a position in our nation hardly recognised. The Bishop of Norwich at Oxford reminded us that Free Church people look with no hostility on the Church of England but rather consider it as the main bulwark against paganism.

To number Israel is not the way to gauge the real position. There is no need to suffer from defeatism, but there is need of faith in God.

Is the parochial outlook narrow and limited? Emphatically no! The Church that is linked with the National life, entering into the homes of England, is strengthening a nation with world-wide responsibilities in a critical day of the world's life. The chief thing we need to fear is a godless England. The Church that touches family life and is strong in her parochial work can alone make possible that true family of nations, for it alone can transform the lives of sinful men.

Our present duty is to use our boundless privilege as parochial clergy to bring glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To remind men of the fact of God in a material age, to remind our people that there is not an unredeemed soul in the parish—"I

believe in God the Father Who made me and *all the world* : I believe in God the Son who redeemed me and *all mankind*”—and to remind our people of the Church of God—called out—*ecclesia*, and that the Church in the parish must be “Holy”—“I believe in the Holy Ghost Who sanctified me and all the elect people of God.” Only so will the Church fulfil her present duty to the nation.

Those who are interested in social and political problems will find *Democracy and Revolution*, by Louis Anderson Fenn (Student Christian Movement Press, 3s. 6d. net), a stimulating challenge. The author states frankly that he is theologically not a Christian, but he values very highly some of the things which Christianity teaches men to esteem, especially spiritual freedom. He was originally a Liberal but passed over to the Labour movement and now discusses democracy from many points of view. He is convinced that a capitalist democracy cannot ultimately prevail, and that in the end we must have a socialistic state. He appeals specially to Christian thinkers as they are believers in spiritual freedom which does not at present exist in the world, and he believes that every Christian must be a revolutionist. To combine fellowship with freedom is the basis of democracy so far as the individual human being is concerned. The Dean of Exeter contributes a Foreword in which he commends the study of the book as an approach to Christian freedom which is after all the only true freedom.

The Student Christian Movement has responded to a widely expressed request by issuing a *Book of Prayers for Schools* (6s. net). While there are many books of Prayers there was felt to be room for one volume that would contain “all the elements which a Head Master or a Head Mistress, House Master, or Chaplain might reasonably require in the conduct of School prayers.” Comprehensiveness is the chief characteristic of the present compilation which combines new and old elements in a well-arranged order. While a considerable part of the book consists of prayers and litanies published for the first time the great treasury of Christian worship has been drawn upon for the most suitable prayers in many previous collections ancient and modern. The range of prayer is so extensive that we have no doubt the volume will be found useful for many other purposes than those for which it is primarily intended, in fact there are few subjects connected with the Christian life in its many aspects that will not be found in this volume. The arrangement is excellent and the index of subjects and of sources adequate.