

The Church Guardian

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Address Correspondence and Communications to the Editor, P.O. Box 504. Exchanges to P.O. Box 1968. For Business announcements See page 14.

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CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER.

Nov. 1st—ALL SAINT'S DAY.

" 2nd—22nd Sunday after Trinity.

" 9th—23rd Sunday after Trinity.

" 16th—24th Sunday after Trinity.

" 23rd—25th Sunday after Trinity.

" 30th—1st Sunday in Advent.

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CHURCH AND STATE.

Paper read at the Hull Congress by the RIGHT REV. ALFRED BARRY, D.D., D.C.L., late Primate of Australia and Tasmania.

'WHAT is the question of 'Church and State'? It starts from the acknowledgment of a real corporate life of humanity under both its supernatural and its natural aspects: it is itself the inquiry how they are related to each other, in themselves, and in the claim of each upon the individual life.

1. Not by accident—not from causes purely ecclesiastical—has the old question at this moment a certain newness of special urgency. Everywhere the current of men's thoughts sets, in some sense, in the same direction. The battle of individualism, which is the battle of liberty and spiritual energy, has, for us at least, been fought and won. But how shall it be rightly harmonized with the life of human society—subordinated without being absorbed or overborne in the corporate power of unity, authority, continuity? This is the great question of these days, which in different tones men are everywhere asking. Difficult enough is the question in any form. Yet to us, as Christians, necessarily realizing both the natural and the supernatural life in humanity, it assumes a greater complexity, because a more complete correspondence with the whole of our complex being. We cannot, if we follow the teaching of our Master, gain an unnatural simplicity by ignoring the spiritual reality of either element of the antithesis—by looking to the State as all in all, and assuming the Church to be absolutely subject to it, a mere voluntary association or set of associations of citizens, more or less likeminded in religious belief—or by realizing spiritual unity only in the Church, and regarding the nation as a body having no moral life,

little more than a joint-stock company, under law and compact for mutual convenience—mainly in material things. To us both the State and the Church, though on different spiritual levels, are at once ordinances of God to rule humanity, and ministers of God to serve humanity—the nation sacred, as historically through the tribe an expansion of the family into which we are born—the Church having a higher sacredness, as the newer family in Christ, into which we are born again. Both, therefore, bear upon the moral life of humanity, in respect of right and duty; both have to claim from the individual some loyalty of reverence and self-sacrifice. As the supernatural never contradicts or ignores, always regenerates and exalts the natural, it is clear that Church and State cannot be antagonistic in idea, and that neither can rightly ignore or enslave the other; they must have some relations of harmony in themselves through which they harmonize their claims upon the individual conscience.

To bring so vast a subject to some extent within grasp, let us look briefly at the various conceptions of these relations only as they concern our own English experience.

2. The old conception of that relation was—as is well known, yet not always remembered—one of distinctness, indeed, of basis and life, but of identity (so to speak) of material. The Church was the *nation* in the *spiritual* relation of all its members to God and to one other. All Englishmen were born into the *State*: all were baptized into the *Church*; it was conceived as equally impossible for them to throw off either their civil or their ecclesiastical loyalty. This view, enunciated clearly, as we know, by Hooker, was no theory of our great divine; it was simply an exposition of what had grown up through the ages in historical fact. As the individual, regenerated to the new life in Christ, yet retains his old personality, as he is the same man in his daily business, his action as a citizen, his spiritual life as a Christian, so was it held to be with the whole community.

That community was indeed far more independent as a nation than as a Church. As a nation, except for a certain international brotherhood of Christendom, to which the grand idea of the Holy Roman Empire vainly sought to give definiteness and headship, it could live its own self-contained life, and develop itself in its own way. As a Church it was but a part of the Catholic Church of Christ. As such its independence was obviously conditioned. The truth of God in Christ, declared in the revelation of Christ Himself, and accepted in the Catholic creeds; the sacraments of Christ, as at once the means of the means of the new life of the individual and as the Divine bond of Church unity—the Ministry of Christ, of Divine appointment and authority from the beginning, and always under His mission perpetuating itself—these things, and the Church law, so far as it rightly embodied and enforced them, a National Church could not make or unmake. They were the conditions of its existence. Before the sixteenth century this Catholic unity was held to be secured by acknowledgment, not wholly unreserved, of the supreme Papal authority. At the Reformation that authority was repudiated as a usurpation, based on falsehood. But declension from the unity of Christendom was expressly disclaimed; and appeal to a General Council showed that—to adapt a modern phrase—free Federation was substituted in the unity of the Church for despotic Empire.

Still, under the sacred authority of these fundamental principles of Church life, the body was the *National Church*, and, as such, claimed a considerable measure of distinctiveness and independence. The royal supremacy, as set forth in the sixteenth century—claiming to be, not the creation of a new jurisdiction, but the vindication of the old—implied no *subordination of the Church*, to a distinct body called the State. The very title of Head, though after-

wards wisely rejected lest, with whatever reservations, it should even seem to trench on the Headship of Christ, and the constant reference to a sacred privilege and mission in the 'Lord's Anointed,' showed that the Sovereign was regarded as (except in the ministrations of the Word and Sacraments) the representative of the National Church. Whatever may have been, in those days of revolution, the abuses and encroachments of that supremacy, its theory was plain enough. Looking to the world without, it was simply the assertion of the qualified independence of the Church as a whole—looking within, it was the assertion of its authority through law over all persons, clergy and laity alike. It was thus virtually a repudiation of any clerical claim to absolute authority of legislation or of government; while yet in both the whole course of events showed that the rights of the clergy as a distinct and sacred Order, and as specially fit to take the initiative in matters of doctrine and discipline, was clearly recognized; and Parliament—then, be it always remembered, a representative assembly of Church laity—claimed, indeed, for the laity a distinct voice, but on the whole, while it frequently took the lead as to temporalities, yet on spiritual matters was satisfied with the privilege of acceptance and of judgment.

Such was the original conception of the relation of Church and State—in principle clear and consistent, involving no proper antagonism or conflict; in practice only liable to the irregularity and difficulty, which are generated in a community, as in an individual, by want of perfect harmony between the temporal and spiritual life. I need not tell you that it is itself gone forever, destroyed, by the disintegrating force of that religious individualism which realizes [as Newman has said] in its intensest moments only two existences, God and our own soul. But it is not a matter of purely speculative and historical interest. For it has left distinct traces of itself in elements of our existing Church system and provisions of our Church law; and many of our difficulties arise, whether we know it or not, from the application of these, under conditions wholly different from that to which alone they properly belong.

3. But if this relation of identity be gone, shall we, must we, go at once to the other extreme of absolute independence—a 'free Church' (or, rather, free Churches) 'in a free State' as has been done for our own English-speaking race in the great American Republic and in almost all our colonies? It is a tempting thing thus to adopt a simple and logical theory, and to cut (as men fancy) the Gordian knot of difficulty and intricacy of relation. I can easily conceive how a State, not only desirous of universal equality before the law, but weary of ecclesiastical disputes and sectarian jealousies, may adopt such a course. I can still more easily conceive how the Church, rather than submit to any infringement of her sacred religious right, and still more sacred religious duty to Her Master and to His people may be ready to accept it or even demand it. But I am convinced, both from theory and from some experience, that only sheer necessity can make it wise and right to take refuge in it.

In complete perfection I think it impossible. The man who is the subject at once of Church and State is one and indivisible; his national and ecclesiastical relations must act upon each other if both are essentially vital and moral; religion and politics in their broad, general principles cannot be kept apart. So long as the Church has temporalities which need the State's protection—so long as ecclesiastical government is liable, as it always will be, to affect a man's civil rights—a Church, however, in theory independent, cannot, as we see every day, be really independent of a State jurisdiction, which may have, moreover, by necessity to