THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

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BY

T. S. ELIOT

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PREFACE

The three lectures which, with some revision and division, are here printed, were delivered in March 1939 at the invitation of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on the Boutwood Foundation. I wish to express my thanks to the Master and Fellows for this honour and privilege. The notes I have added while preparing the lectures for press.

My point of departure has been the suspicion that the current terms in which we discuss international affairs and political theory may only tend to conceal from us the real issues of contemporary civilisation. As I have chosen to consider such a large problem, it should be obvious that the following pages can have but little importance by themselves, and that they can only be of use if taken as an individual contribution to a discussion which must occupy many minds for a long time to come. To aim at originality would be an impertinence: at most, this essay can be only an original arrangement of ideas which did not belong to me before and which must become the property of whoever can use them. I owe a great deal to conversations with certain friends whose minds are engrossed by these and similar problems: to make specific acknowledgement might have the effect of imputing to these friends an inconvenient responsibility for my own faults of reasoning.

But I owe a great deal also to a number of recent books: for instance, to Mr. Christopher Dawson's *Beyond Politics*, to Mr. Middleton Murry's *The Price of Leadership*, and to writings of the Revd. V. A. Demant (whose *Religious Prospect* has appeared too recently for me to have made use of it). And I am deeply indebted to the works of Jacques Maritain, especially his *Humanisme intégral*.

I trust that the reader will understand from the beginning that this book does not make any plea for a 'religious revival' in a sense with which we are already familiar. That is a task for which I am incompetent, and the term seems to me to imply a possible separation of religious feeling from religious thinking which I do not accept—or which I do not find acceptable for our present difficulties. An anonymous writer has recently observed in *The New English Weekly* (July 13, 1939) that

> 'men have lived by spiritual institutions (of some kind) in every society, and also by political institutions and, indubitably, by economic activities. Admittedly, they have, at different periods, tended to put their trust mainly in one of the three as the real cement of society, but at no time have they wholly excluded the others, because it is impossible to do so.'

This is an important, and in its context valuable, distinction; but it should be clear that what I am concerned with here is not spiritual institutions in their separated aspect, but the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems.

THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

I

The fact that a problem will certainly take a long time to solve, and that it will demand the attention of many minds for several generations, is no justification for postponing the study. And, in times of emergency, it may prove in the long run that the problems we have postponed or ignored, rather than those we have failed to attack successfully, will return to plague us. Our difficulties of the moment must always be dealt with somehow: but our permanent difficulties are difficulties of every moment. The subject with which I am concerned in the following pages is one to which I am convinced we ought to turn our attention now, if we hope ever to be relieved of the immediate perplexities that fill our minds. It is urgent because it is fundamental; and its urgency is the reason for a person like myself attempting to address, on a subject beyond his usual scope, that public which is likely to read what he writes on other subjects. This is a subject which I could, no doubt, handle much better were I a profound scholar in any of several fields. But I am not writing for scholars, but for people like myself; some defects may be compensated by some advantages; and what one must be judged by, scholar or no, is not particularised knowledge

but one's total harvest of thinking, feeling, living and observing human beings.

While the practice of poetry need not in itself confer wisdom or accumulate knowledge, it ought at least to train the mind in one habit of universal value: that of analysing the meanings of words: of those that one employs oneself, as well as the words of others. In using the term 'Idea' of a Christian Society I do not mean primarily a concept derived from the study of any societies which we may choose to call Christian; I mean something that can only be found in an understanding of the end to which a Christian Society, to deserve the name, must be directed. I do not limit the application of the term to a perfected Christian Society on earth; and I do not comprehend in it societies merely because some profession of Christian faith, or some vestige of Christian practice, is retained. My concern with contemporary society, accordingly, will not be primarily with specific defects, abuses or injustices but with the question, what —if any—is the 'idea' of the society in which we live? to what end is it arranged?

The Idea of a Christian Society is one which we can accept or reject; but if we are to accept it, we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is our wont; we must treat it as being for the individual a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling. The consequences of such an attitude are too serious to be acceptable to everybody: for when the Christian faith is not only felt, but thought, it has practical results which may be inconvenient. For to see the Christian faith in this way —and to see it in this way is not necessarily to accept

it, but only to understand the real issues—is to see that the difference between the Idea of a Neutral Society (which is that of the society in which we live at present) and the Idea of a Pagan Society (such as the upholders of democracy abominate) is, in the long run, of minor importance. I am not at this moment concerned with the means for bringing a Christian Society into existence; I am not even primarily concerned with making it appear desirable; but I am very much concerned with making clear its difference from the kind of society in which we are now living. Now, to understand the society in which he lives, must be to the interest of every conscious thinking person. The current terms in which we describe our society, the contrasts with other societies by which we—of the 'Western Democracies' —eulogise it, only operate to deceive and stupefy us. To speak of ourselves as a Christian Society, in contrast to that of Germany or Russia, is an abuse of terms. We mean only that we have a society in which no one is penalised for the *formal profession* of Christianity; but we conceal from ourselves the unpleasant knowledge of the real values by which we live. We conceal from ourselves, moreover, the similarity of our society to those which we execrate: for we should have to admit, if we recognised the similarity, that the foreigners do better. I suspect that in our loathing of totalitarianism, there is infused a good deal of admiration for its efficiency.

The political philosopher of the present time, even when he is a Christian himself, is not usually concerned with the possible structure of a Christian state. He is occupied with the possibility of a just State in general, and when he is not

an adherent of one or another secular system, is inclined to accept our present system as one to be improved, but not fundamentally altered. Theological writers have more to say that is relevant to my subject. I am not alluding to those writers who endeavour to infuse a vague, and sometimes debased, Christian spirit into the ordinary conduct of affairs; or to those who endeavour, at moments of emergency, to apply Christian principles to particular political situations. Relevant to my subject are the writings of the Christian sociologists—those writers who criticise our economic system in the light of Christian ethics. Their work consists in proclaiming in general, and demonstrating in particular, the incompatibility of Christian principle and a great deal of our social practice. They appeal to the spirit of justice and humanity with which most of us profess to be inspired; they appeal also to the practical reason, by demonstrating that much in our system is not only iniquitous, but in the long run unworkable and conducive to disaster. Many of the changes which such writers advocate, while deducible from Christian principles, can recommend themselves to any intelligent and disinterested person, and do not require a Christian society to carry them into effect, or Christian belief to render them acceptable: though they are changes which would make it more possible for the individual Christian to live out his Christianity. I am here concerned only secondarily with the changes in economic organisation, and only secondarily with the life of the devout Christian: my primary interest is a change in our social attitude, such a change only as could bring about anything worthy to be called a Christian Society. That such a change would com-

pel changes in our organisation of industry and commerce and financial credit, that it would facilitate, where it now impedes, the life of devotion for those who are capable of it, I feel certain. But my point of departure is different from that of the sociologists and economists; though I depend upon them for enlightenment, and a test of my Christian Society would be that it should bring about such reforms as they propose; and though the kind of 'change of spirit' which can testify for itself by nothing better than a new revivalistic vocabulary, is a danger against which we must be always on guard.

My subject touches also upon that of another class of Christian writer: that of the ecclesiastical controversialists. The subject of Church and State is, again, not my primary concern. It is not, except at moments which lend themselves to newspaper exploitation, a subject in which the general public takes much interest; and at the moments when the public's interest is aroused, the public is never well enough informed to have the right to an opinion. My subject is a preliminary to the problem of Church and State: it involves that problem in its widest terms and in its most general interest. A usual attitude is to take for granted the existing State, and ask: 'What Church?' But before we consider what should be the relation of Church and State, we should first ask: 'What State?' Is there any sense in which we can speak of a 'Christian State', any sense in which the State can be regarded as Christian? for even if the nature of the State be such, that we cannot speak of it in its Idea as either Christian or non-Christian, yet is it obvious that actual States may vary to such an extent that the relation of

the Church to the State may be anything from overt hostility to a more or less harmonious cooperation of different institutions in the same society. What I mean by the Christian State is not any particular political form, but whatever State is suitable to a Christian Society, whatever State a particular Christian Society develops for itself. Many Christians there are, I know, who do not believe that a Church in relation to the State is necessary for a Christian Society; and I shall have to give reasons, in later pages, for believing that it is. The point to be made at this stage is that neither the classical English treatises on Church and State, nor contemporary discussion of the subject, give me the assistance that I need. For the earlier treatises, and indeed all up to the present time, assume the existence of a Christian Society; modern writers sometime assume that what we have is a pagan society: and it is just these assumptions that I wish to question.

Your opinion of what can be done for this country in the future, and incidentally your opinion of what ought to be the relations of Church and State, will depend upon the view you take of the contemporary situation. We can abstract three positive historical points: that at which Christians are a new minority in a society of positive pagan traditions—a position which cannot recur within any future with which we are concerned; the point at which the whole society can be called Christian, whether in one body or in a prior or subsequent stage of division into sects; and finally the point at which practising Christians must be recognised as a minority (whether static or diminishing) in a society which has ceased to be Christian.

Have we reached the third point? Different observers will give different reports; but I would remark that there are two points of view for two contexts. The first is that a society has ceased to be Christian when religious practices have been abandoned, when behaviour ceases to be regulated by reference to Christian principle, and when in effect prosperity in this world for the individual or for the group has become the sole conscious aim. The other point of view, which is less readily apprehended, is that a society has not ceased to be Christian until it has become positively something else. It is my contention that we have to-day a culture which is mainly negative, but which, so far as it is positive, is still Christian. I do not think that it can remain negative, because a negative culture has ceased to be efficient in a world where economic as well as spiritual forces are proving the efficiency of cultures which, even when pagan, are positive; and I believe that the choice before us is between the formation of a new Christian culture, and the acceptance of a pagan one. Both involve radical changes; but I believe that the majority of us, if we could be faced immediately with all the changes which will only be accomplished in several generations, would prefer Christianity.

I do not expect everyone to agree that our present organisation and temper of society—which proved, in its way, highly successful during the nineteenth century—is 'negative': many will maintain that British, French and American civilisation still stands integrally for something positive. And there are others who will insist, that if our culture is negative, then a negative culture is the right thing

to have. There are two distinct arguments to be employed in rebuttal: one, an argument of principle, that such a culture is undesirable; the other, a judgment of fact, that it must disappear anyway. The defenders of the present order fail to perceive either how far it is vestigial of a positive Christianity, or how far it has already advanced towards something else.

There is one class of persons to which one speaks with difficulty, and another to which one speaks in vain. The second, more numerous and obstinate than may at first appear, because it represents a state of mind into which we are all prone through natural sloth to relapse, consists of those people who cannot believe that things will ever be very different from what they are at the moment. From time to time, under the influence perhaps of some persuasive writer or speaker, they may have an instant of disquiet or hope; but an invincible sluggishness of imagination makes them go on behaving as if nothing would ever change. Those to whom one speaks with difficulty, but not perhaps in vain, are the persons who believe that great changes must come, but are not sure either of what is inevitable, or of what is probable, or of what is desirable.

What the Western world has stood for—and by that I mean the terms to which it has attributed sanctity—is 'Liberalism' and 'Democracy'. The two terms are not identical or inseparable. The term 'Liberalism' is the more obviously ambiguous, and is now less in favour; but the term 'Democracy' is at the height of its popularity. When a term has become so universally sanctified as 'democracy' now is, I begin to wonder whether it means anything, in

meaning too many things: it has arrived perhaps at the position of a Merovingian Emperor, and wherever it is invoked, one begins to look for the Major of the Palace. Some persons have gone so far as to affirm, as something self-evident, that democracy is the only régime compatible with Christianity; on the other hand, the word is not abandoned by sympathisers with the government of Germany. If anybody ever attacked democracy, I might discover what the word meant. Certainly there is a sense in which Britain and America are more democratic than Germany; but on the other hand, defenders of the totalitarian system can make out a plausible case for maintaining that what we have is not democracy, but financial oligarchy.

Mr. Christopher Dawson considers that 'what the non-dictatorial States stand for to-day is not Liberalism but Democracy', and goes on to foretell the advent in these States of a kind of totalitarian democracy. I agree with his prediction, but if one is considering, not merely the non-dictatorial States, but the societies to which they belong, his statement does less than justice to the extent to which Liberalism still permeates our minds and affects our attitude towards much of life. That Liberalism may be a tendency towards something very different from itself, is a possibility in its nature. For it is something which tends to release energy rather than accumulate it, to relax, rather than to fortify. It is a movement not so much defined by its end, as by its starting point; away from, rather than towards, something definite. Our point of departure is more real to us than our destination; and the destination is likely to present a very different picture when arrived at, from the

vaguer image formed in imagination. By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of *getting on* to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy, Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.

It must be evident that I am speaking of Liberalism in a sense much wider than any which can be fully exemplified by the history of any political party, and equally in a wider sense than any in which it has been used in ecclesiastical controversy. True, the tendency of Liberalism can be more clearly illustrated in religious history than in politics, where principle is more diluted by necessity, where observation is more confused by detail and distracted by reforms each valid within its own limited reference. In religion, Liberalism may be characterised as a progressive discarding of elements in historical Christianity which appear superfluous or obsolete, confounded with practices and abuses which are legitimate objects of attack. But as its movement is controlled rather by its origin than by any goal, it loses force after a series of rejections, and with nothing to destroy is left with nothing to uphold and with nowhere to go. With religious Liberalism, however, I am no more specifically concerned than with political Liberalism: I am concerned with a state of mind which, in certain circumstances, can become universal and infect opponents as well as defenders.

And I shall have expressed myself very ill if I give the impression that I think of Liberalism as something simply to be rejected and extirpated, as an evil for which there is a simple alternative. It is a necessary negative element; when I have said the worst of it, that worst comes only to this, that a negative element made to serve the purpose of a positive is objectionable. In the sense in which Liberalism is contrasted with Conservatism, both can be equally repellent: if the former can mean chaos, the latter can mean petrifaction. We are always faced both with the question 'what must be destroyed?' and with the question 'what must be preserved?' and neither Liberalism nor Conservatism, which are not philosophies and may be merely habits, is enough to guide us.

In the nineteenth century the Liberal Party had its own conservatism, and the Conservative Party had its own liberalism; neither had a political philosophy. To hold a political philosophy is in fact not the function of a political, that is, a Parliamentary party: a party with a political philosophy is a revolutionary party. The politics of political parties is not my concern. Nor am I concerned with the politics of a revolutionary party. If a revolutionary party attains its true end, its political philosophy will, by a process of growth, become that of a whole culture; if it attains its more facile end, its political philosophy will be that of a dominant class or group, in a society in which the majority will be passive, and the minority oppressed. But a political philosophy is not merely a formalised system set forth by a theorist. The permanent value of such treatises as Aristotle's *Politics* and *Poetics* is found at the opposite extreme to any-

thing that we can call *doctrinaire*. Just as his views on dramatic poetry were derived from a study of the existing works of Attic drama, so his political theory was founded on a perception of the unconscious aims implicit in Athenian democracy at its best. His limitations are the condition of his universality; and instead of ingenious theories spun out of his head, he wrote studies full of universal wisdom. Thus, what I mean by a political philosophy is not merely even the conscious formulation of the ideal aims of a people, but the substratum of collective temperament, ways of behaviour and unconscious values which provides the material for the formulation. What we are seeking is not a programme for a party, but a way of life for a people: it is this which totalitarianism has sought partly to revive, and partly to impose by force upon its peoples. Our choice now is not between one abstract form and another, but between a pagan, and necessarily stunted culture, and a religious, and necessarily imperfect culture.

The attitudes and beliefs of Liberalism are destined to disappear, are already disappearing. They belong to an age of free exploitation which has passed; and our danger now is, that the term may come to signify for us only the disorder the fruits of which we inherit, and not the permanent value of the negative element. Out of Liberalism itself come philosophies which deny it. We do not proceed, from Liberalism to its apparent end of authoritarian democracy, at a uniform pace in every respect. There are so many centres of it—Britain, France, America and the Dominions—that the development of western society must proceed more slowly than that of a compact body like Ger-

many, and its tendencies are less apparent. Furthermore, those who are the most convinced of the necessity of *étatisme* as a control of some activities of life, can be the loudest professors of libertarianism in others, and insist upon the preserves of 'private life' in which each man may obey his own convictions or follow his own whim: while imperceptibly this domain of 'private life' becomes smaller and smaller, and may eventually disappear altogether. It is possible that a wave of terror of the consequences of depopulation might lead to legislation having the effect of compulsory breeding.

If, then, Liberalism disappears from the philosophy of life of a people, what positive is left? We are left only with the term 'democracy', a term which, for the present generation, still has a Liberal connotation of 'freedom'. But totalitarianism can retain the terms 'freedom' and 'democracy' and give them its own meaning: and its right to them is not so easily disproved as minds inflamed by passion suppose. We are in danger of finding ourselves with nothing to stand for except a *dislike* of everything maintained by Germany and/or Russia: a dislike which, being a compost of newspaper sensations and prejudice, can have two results, at the same time, which appear at first incompatible. It may lead us to reject possible improvements, because we should owe them to the example of one or both of these countries; and it may equally well lead us to be mere imitators *à rebours*, in making us adopt uncritically almost any attitude which a foreign nation rejects.

We are living at present in a kind of doldrums between opposing winds of doctrine, in a period in which one poli-

tical philosophy has lost its cogency for behaviour, though it is still the only one in which public speech can be framed. This is very bad for the English language; it is this disorder (for which we are all to blame) and not individual insincerity, which is responsible for the hollowness of many political and ecclesiastical utterances. You have only to examine the mass of newspaper leading articles, the mass of political exhortation, to appreciate the fact that good prose cannot be written by a people without convictions. The fundamental objection to fascist doctrine, the one which we conceal from ourselves because it might condemn ourselves as well, is that it is pagan. There are other objections too, in the political and economic sphere, but they are not objections that we can make with dignity until we set our own affairs in order. There are still other objections, to oppression and violence and cruelty, but however strongly we feel, these are objections to means and not to ends. It is true that we sometimes use the word 'pagan', and in the same context refer to ourselves as 'Christian'. But we always dodge the real issue. Our newspapers have done all they could with the red herring of the 'German national religion', an eccentricity which is after all no odder than some cults held in Anglo-Saxon countries: this 'German national religion' is comforting in that it persuades us that *we* have a Christian civilisation; it helps to disguise the fact that our aims, like Germany's, are materialistic. And the last thing we should like to do would be to examine the 'Christianity' which, in such contexts as this, we say we keep.

If we have got so far as accepting the belief that the only alternative to a progressive and insidious adaptation to

totalitarian worldliness for which the pace is already set, is to aim at a Christian society, we need to consider both what kind of a society we have at this time, and what a Christian society would be like. We should also be quite sure of what we want: if your real ideals are those of materialistic efficiency, then the sooner you know your own mind, and face the consequences, the better. Those who, either complacently or despairingly, suppose that the aim of Christianisation is chimerical, I am not here attempting to convert. To those who realise what a well organised pagan society would mean for us, there is nothing to say. But it is as well to remember that the imposition of a pagan theory of the State does not necessarily mean a wholly pagan society. A compromise between the theory of the State and the tradition of society exists in Italy, a country which is still mainly agricultural and Catholic. The more highly industrialised the country, the more easily a materialistic philosophy will flourish in it, and the more deadly that philosophy will be. Britain has been highly industrialised longer than any other country. And the tendency of unlimited industrialism is to create bodies of men and women—of all classes—detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. And a mob will be no less a mob if it is well fed, well clothed, well housed, and well disciplined.

The Liberal notion that religion was a matter of private belief and of conduct in private life, and that there is no reason why Christians should not be able to accommodate themselves to any world which treats them good-naturedly,

is becoming less and less tenable. This notion would seem to have become accepted gradually, as a false inference from the subdivision of English Christianity into sects, and the happy results of universal toleration. The reason why members of different communions have been able to rub along together, is that in the greater part of the ordinary business of life they have shared the same assumptions about behaviour. When they have been wrong, they have been wrong together. We have less excuse than our ancestors for un-Christian conduct, because the growth of an un-Christian society about us, its more obvious intrusion upon our lives, has been breaking down the comfortable distinction between public and private morality. The problem of leading a Christian life in a non-Christian society is now very present to us, and it is a very different problem from that of the accommodation between an Established Church and dissenters. It is not merely the problem of a minority in a society of *individuals* holding an alien belief. It is the problem constituted by our implication in a network of institutions from which we cannot dissociate ourselves: institutions the operation of which appears no longer neutral, but non-Christian. And as for the Christian who is not conscious of his dilemma—and he is in the majority—he is becoming more and more de-Christianised by all sorts of unconscious pressure: paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space. Anything like Christian traditions transmitted from generation to generation within the family must disappear, and the small body of Christians will consist entirely of adult recruits. I am saying nothing at this point that has not been said before by others, but it is rele-

vant. I am not concerned with the problem of Christians as a persecuted minority. When the Christian is treated as an enemy of the State, his course is very much harder, but it is simpler. I am concerned with the dangers to the tolerated minority; and in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated.

To attempt to make the prospect of a Christian society immediately attractive to those who see no prospect of deriving direct personal benefit from it, would be idle; even the majority of professing Christians may shrink from it. No scheme for a change of society can be made to appear immediately palatable, except by falsehood, until society has become so desperate that it will accept any change. A Christian society only becomes acceptable after you have fairly examined the alternatives. We might, of course, merely sink into an apathetic decline: without faith, and therefore without faith in ourselves; without a philosophy of life, either Christian or pagan; and without art. Or we might get a 'totalitarian democracy', different but having much in common with other pagan societies, because we shall have changed step by step in order to keep pace with them: a state of affairs in which we shall have regimentation and conformity, without respect for the needs of the individual soul; the puritanism of a hygienic morality in the interest of efficiency; uniformity of opinion through propaganda, and art only encouraged when it flatters the official doctrines of the time. To those who can imagine, and are therefore repelled by, such a prospect, one can assert that the only possibility of control and balance is a religious

control and balance; that the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline, inconvenience and discomfort: but here as hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory.

II

My thesis has been, simply, that a liberalised or negative condition of society must either proceed into a gradual decline of which we can see no end, or (whether as a result of catastrophe or not) reform itself into a positive shape which is likely to be effectively secular. We need not assume that this secularism will approximate closely to any system in the past or to any that can now be observed in order to be apprehensive about it: the Anglo-Saxons display a capacity for *diluting* their religion, probably in excess of that of any other race. But unless we are content with the prospect of one or the other of these issues, the only possibility left is that of a positive Christian society. The third will only commend itself to those who agree in their view of the present situation, and who can see that a thoroughgoing secularism would be objectionable, in its consequences, even to those who attach no positive importance to the survival of Christianity for its own sake.

I am not investigating the possible lines of action by which such a Christian society could be brought into being. I shall confine myself to a slight outline of what I conceive to be essential features of this society, bearing in mind that it can neither be mediaeval in form, nor be modelled on the seventeenth century or any previous age. In what sense, if any, can we speak of a 'Christian State'? I would ask to be

allowed to use the following working distinctions: the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians, as elements of the Christian Society.

I conceive then of the Christian State as of the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, public administration, legal tradition, and form. Observe that at this point I am not approaching the problem of Church and State except with the question: with what kind of State can the Church have a relation? By this I mean a relation of the kind which has hitherto obtained in England; which is neither merely reciprocal tolerance, nor a Concordat. The latter seems to me merely a kind of compromise, of doubtful durability, resting on a dubious division of authority, and often a popular division of loyalty; a compromise which implies perhaps a hope on the part of the rulers of the State that their rule will outlast Christianity, and a faith on the part of the Church that it will survive any particular form of secular organisation. A relation between Church and State such as is, I think, implied in our use of the term, implies that the State is in some sense Christian. It must be clear that I do not mean by a Christian State one in which the rulers are chosen because of their qualifications, still less their eminence, as Christians. A regiment of Saints is apt to be too uncomfortable to last. I do not deny that some advantages may accrue from persons in authority, in a Christian State, being Christians. Even in the present conditions, that sometimes happens; but even if, in the present conditions, *all* persons in positions of the highest authority were devout and orthodox Christians, we should not expect to see very much difference in the conduct of

affairs. The Christian and the unbeliever do not, and cannot, behave very differently in the exercise of office; for it is the general ethos of the people they have to govern, not their own piety, that determines the behaviour of politicians. One may even accept F. S. Oliver's affirmation—following Buelow, following Disraeli—that real statesmen are inspired by nothing else than their instinct for power and their love of country. It is not primarily the Christianity of the statesmen that matters, but their being confined, by the temper and traditions of the people which they rule, to a Christian framework within which to realise their ambitions and advance the prosperity and prestige of their country. They may frequently perform un-Christian acts; they must never attempt to defend their actions on un-Christian principles.

The rulers and would-be rulers of modern states may be divided into three kinds, in a classification which cuts across the division of fascism, communism and democracy. There are such as have taken over or adapted some philosophy, as of Marx or Aquinas. There are those who, combining invention with eclecticism have devised their own philosophy—not usually distinguished by either the profundity or the consistency one expects of a philosophy of life—and there are those who pursue their tasks without appearing to have any philosophy at all. I should not expect the rulers of a Christian State to be philosophers, or to be able to keep before their minds at every moment of decision the maxim that the life of virtue is the purpose of human society—*virtuosa . . . vita est congregationis humanae finis;* but they would neither be self-educated, nor have

been submitted in their youth merely to that system of miscellaneous or specialised instruction which passes for education: they would have received a Christian education. The purpose of a Christian education would not be merely to make men and women pious Christians: a system which aimed too rigidly at this end alone would become only obscurantist. A Christian education would primarily train people to be able to think in Christian categories, though it could not compel belief and would not impose the necessity for insincere profession of belief. What the rulers believed, would be less important than the beliefs to which they would be obliged to conform. And a skeptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman obliged to conform to a secular frame. For he would be required to design his policy for the government of a Christian Society.

The relation of the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians, may be looked at in connexion with the problem of *belief*. Among the men of state, you would have as a minimum, conscious conformity of behaviour. In the Christian Community that they ruled, the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour; and it is only from the much smaller number of conscious human beings, the Community of Christians, that one would expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level.

For the great mass of humanity whose attention is occupied mostly by their direct relation to the soil, or the sea, or

the machine, and to a small number of persons, pleasures and duties, two conditions are required. The first is that, as their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small, their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour: both in their customary and periodic religious observances, and in a traditional code of behaviour towards their neighbours. The second is that, while they should have some perception of how far their lives fall short of Christian ideals, their religious and social life should form for them a natural whole, so that the difficulty of behaving as Christians should not impose an intolerable strain. These two conditions are really the same differently stated; they are far from being realised to-day.

The traditional unit of the Christian Community in England is the parish. I am not here concerned with the problem of how radically this system must be modified to suit a future state of things. The parish is certainly in decay, from several causes of which the least cogent is the division into sects: a much more important reason is urbanisation—in which I am including also *sub*-urbanisation, and all the causes and effects of urbanisation. How far the parish must be superseded will depend largely upon our view of the necessity of accepting the causes which tend to destroy it. In any case, the parish will serve my purpose as an example of community unit. For this unit must not be solely religious, and not solely social; nor should the individual be a member of two separate, or even overlapping units, one religious and the other social. The unitary community should be religious-social, and it must be one in which all classes, if you have classes, have their centre of interest.

That is a state of affairs which is no longer wholly realised except in very primitive tribes indeed.

It is a matter of concern not only in this country, but has been mentioned with concern by the late Supreme Pontiff, speaking not of one country but of all civilised countries, that the masses of the people have become increasingly alienated from Christianity. In an industrialised society like that of England, I am surprised that the people retains as much Christianity as it does. For the great majority of the people—and I am not here thinking of social classes, but of intellectual strata—religion must be primarily a matter of behaviour and habit, must be integrated with its social life, with its business and its pleasures; and the specifically religious emotions must be a kind of extension and sanctification of the domestic and social emotions. Even for the most highly developed and conscious individual, living in the world, a consciously Christian direction of thought and feeling can only occur at particular moments during the day and during the week, and these moments themselves recur in consequence of formed habits; to be conscious, without remission, of a Christian and a non-Christian alternative at moments of choice, imposes a very great strain. The mass of the population, in a Christian society, should not be exposed to a way of life in which there is too sharp and frequent a conflict between what is easy for them or what their circumstances dictate and what is Christian. The compulsion to live in such a way that Christian behaviour is only possible in a restricted number of situations, is a very powerful force against Christianity; for behaviour is as potent to affect belief, as belief to affect behaviour.

I am not presenting any idyllic picture of the rural parish, either present or past, in taking as a norm, the idea of a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interests centred in a particular place, with a kind of unity which may be designed, but which also has to grow through generations. It is the idea, or ideal, of a community small enough to consist of a nexus of direct personal relationships, in which all iniquities and turpitudes will take the simple and easily appreciable form of wrong relations between one person and another. But at present not even the smallest community, unless so primitive as to present objectionable features of another kind, is so simplified as this; and I am not advocating any complete reversion to any earlier state of things, real or idealised. The example appears to offer no solution to the problem of industrial, urban and suburban life which is that of the majority of the population. In its religious organisation, we may say that Christendom has remained fixed at the stage of development suitable to a simple agricultural and piscatorial society, and that modern material organisation—or if 'organisation' sounds too complimentary, we will say 'complication'—has produced a world for which Christian social forms are imperfectly adapted. Even if we agree on this point, there are two simplifications of the problem which are suspect. One is to insist that the only salvation for society is to return to a simpler mode of life, scrapping all the constructions of the modern world that we can bring ourselves to dispense with. This is an extreme statement of the neo-Ruskinian view, which was put forward with much vigour by the late A. J. Penty. When one con-

siders the large amount of determination in social structure, this policy appears Utopian: if such a way of life ever comes to pass, it will be—as may well happen in the long run—from natural causes, and not from the moral will of men. The other alternative is to accept the modern world as it is and simply try to adapt Christian social ideals to it. The latter resolves itself into a mere doctrine of expediency; and is a surrender of the faith that Christianity itself can play any part in shaping social forms. And it does not require a Christian attitude to perceive that the modern system of society has a great deal in it that is inherently bad.

We now reach a point from which there is a course that I do not propose to take; and as it is an obvious course, and to some may appear to be the main thoroughfare, I ought to explain as briefly as I can why I do not propose to take it. We are accustomed to make the distinction (though in practice we are frequently confused) between the evil which is present in human nature at all times and in all circumstances, and the evil in particular institutions at particular times and places, and which, though attributable to some individuals rather than others, or traceable to the cumulative deflection of the wills of many individuals throughout several generations, cannot at any moment be fastened upon particular persons. If we make the mistake of assuming that this kind of evil results from causes wholly beyond the human will, then we are liable to believe that only other non-human causes can change it. But we are equally likely to take another line, and to place all our hopes in the replacement of our machinery. Nevertheless, the lines of thought, which I am doing no more than indicate,

for the realisation of a Christian society, must lead us inevitably to face such problems as the hypertrophy of the motive of Profit into a social ideal, the distinction between the *use* of natural resources and their exploitation, the use of labour and its exploitation, the advantages unfairly accruing to the trader in contrast to the primary producer, the misdirection of the financial machine, the iniquity of usury, and other features of a commercialised society which must be scrutinised on Christian principles. In ignoring these problems, I am not taking refuge in a mere admission of incompetence, though the suspicion that I am incompetent might operate against the acceptance of any observations that I made; nor am I simply resigning them to the supposed technical authorities, for that would be a surrender of the primacy of ethics. My point is that, while there is a considerable measure of agreement that certain things are wrong, the question of how they should be put right is so extremely controversial, that any proposal is immediately countered by a dozen others; and in this context, attention would be concentrated on the imperfections of my proposals, and away from my main concern, the end to be attained. I confine myself therefore to the assertion, which I think few will dispute, that a great deal of the machinery of modern life is merely a sanction for un-Christian aims, that it is not only hostile to the conscious pursuit of the Christian life in the world by the few, but to the maintenance of any Christian society *of* the world. We must abandon the notion that the Christian should be content with freedom of cultus, and with suffering no worldy disabilities on account of his faith. However bigoted the

announcement may sound, the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organisation of society—which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians. It would be a society in which the natural end of man—virtue and well-being in community—is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end—beatitude—for those who have the eyes to see it.

I do not wish, however, to abandon my previous point, that a Christian community is one in which there is a unified religious-social code of behaviour. It should not be necessary for the ordinary individual to be wholly conscious of what elements are distinctly religious and Christian, and what are merely social and identified with his religion by no logical implication. I am not requiring that the community should contain more 'good Christians' than one would expect to find under favourable conditions. The religious life of the people would be largely a matter of behaviour and conformity; social customs would take on religious sanctions; there would no doubt be many irrelevant accretions and local emphases and observances—which, if they went too far in eccentricity or superstition, it would be the business of the Church to correct, but which otherwise could make for social tenacity and coherence. The traditional way of life of the community would not be imposed by law, would have no sense of outward constraint, and would not be the result merely of the sum of individual belief and understanding.

The rulers, I have said, will, *qua* rulers, accept Christianity not simply as their own faith to guide their actions, but as the system under which they are to govern. The

people will accept it as a matter of behaviour and habit. In the abstraction which I have erected, it is obvious that the tendency of the State is toward expediency that may become cynical manipulation, the tendency of the people toward intellectual lethargy and superstition. We need therefore what I have called 'the Community of Christians', by which I mean, not local groups, and not the Church in any one of its senses, unless we call it 'the Church within the Church'. These will be the consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority. It will be remarked at once that this category bears some resemblance to what Coleridge has called 'the clerisy'—a term recently revived, and given a somewhat different application, by Mr. Middleton Murry. I think that my 'Community of Christians' is somewhat different from either use of the term 'clerisy'. The content which Coleridge gave to the term, certainly, has been somewhat voided by time. You will remember that Coleridge included in the extension of meaning three classes: the universities and great schools of learning, the parochial pastorate, and the local schoolmasters. Coleridge's conception of the clerical function, and of its relation to education was formed in a world that has since been strangely altered: his insistence that clergy should be 'in the rule married men and heads of families' and his dark references to a foreign ecclesiastical power, now sound merely quaint; and he quite failed to recognise the enormous value which monastic orders can and should have in the community. The term which I use is meant to be at once wider and more restricted. In the field of education

it is obvious that the conformity to Christian belief and the possession of Christian knowledge, can no longer be taken for granted; nor can the supremacy of the theologian be either expected or imposed in the same way. In any future Christian society that I can conceive, the educational system will be formed according to Christian presuppositions of what education—as distinct from mere instruction—is for; but the personnel will inevitably be mixed: one may even hope that the mixture may be a benefit to its intellectual vitality. The mixture will include persons of exceptional ability who may be indifferent or disbelieving; there will be room for a proportion of other persons professing other faiths than Christianity. The limitations imposed upon such persons would be similar to those imposed by social necessity upon the politician who, without being able to believe the Christian faith, yet has abilities to offer in the public service, with which his country could ill dispense.

It would be still more rash of me to embark upon a criticism of the contemporary ideals of education, than it is for me to venture to criticise politics; but it is not impertinent to remark upon the close relationship of educational theory and political theory. One would indeed be surprised to find the educational system and the political system of any country in complete disaccord; and what I have said about the negative character of our political philosophy should suggest a parallel criticism of our education, not as it is found in practice here or there, but in the assumptions about the nature and purpose of education which tend to affect practice throughout the country. And I do not need to re-

mind you that a pagan totalitarian government is hardly likely to leave education to look after itself, or to refrain from interfering with the traditional methods of the oldest institutions: of some of the results abroad of such interference on the most irrelevant grounds we are quite well aware. There is likely to be, everywhere, more and more pressure of circumstance towards adapting educational ideals to political ideals, and in the one as in the other sphere, we have only to choose between a higher and a lower rationalisation. In a Christian Society education must be religious, not in the sense that it will be administered by ecclesiastics, still less in the sense that it will exercise pressure, or attempt to instruct everyone in theology, but in the sense that its aims will be directed by a Christian philosophy of life. It will no longer be merely a term comprehending a variety of unrelated subjects undertaken for special purposes or for none at all.

My Community of Christians, then, in contrast to Coleridge's clerisy, could hardly include the whole of the teaching body. On the other hand, it would include, besides many of the laity engaged in various occupations, many, but not all, of the clergy. A national clergy must of course include individual priests of different intellectual types and levels; and, as I suggested before, belief has a vertical as well as a horizontal measurement: to answer fully the question 'What does *A* believe?' one must know enough about *A* to have some notion of the level on which he is capable of believing anything. The Community of Christians—a body of very nebulous outline—would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts. And it

would include some of those who are ordinarily spoken of, not always with flattering intention, as 'intellectuals'.

That culture and the cultivation of philosophy and the arts should be confined to the cloister would be a decline into a Dark Age that I shudder to contemplate; on the other hand the segregation of lay 'intellectuals' into a world of their own, which very few ecclesiastics or politicians either penetrate or have any curiosity about, is not a progressive situation either. A good deal of waste seems to me to occur through pure ignorance; a great deal of ingenuity is expended on half-baked philosophies, in the absence of any common background of knowledge. We write for our friends—most of whom are also writers—or for our pupils —most of whom are going to be writers; or we aim at a hypothetical popular audience which we do not know and which perhaps does not exist. The result in any case, is apt to be a refined provincial crudity. What are the most fruitful social conditions for the production of works of the first order, philosophical, literary or in the other arts, is perhaps one of those topics of controversy more suitable for conversation than for writing about. There may perhaps be no one set of conditions most suitable for the efflorescence of all these activities; it is equally possible that the necessary conditions may vary from one country and civilisation to another. The régime of Louis XIV or of the Tudors and Stuarts could hardly be called libertarian; on the other hand, the rule of authoritarian governments in our time does not appear conducive to a renascence of the arts. Whether the arts flourish best in a period of growth and expansion, or in one of decay, is a

question that I cannot answer. A strong and even tyrannous government may do no harm, so long as the sphere of its control is strictly limited; so long as it limits itself to restricting the liberties, without attempting to influence the minds, of its subjects; but a régime of unlimited demagogy appears to be stultifying. I must restrict my consideration to the position of the arts in our present society, and to what it should be in such a future society as I envisage.

It may be that the conditions unfavourable to the arts today lie too deep and are too extensive to depend upon the differences between one form of government and another; so that the prospect before us is either of slow continuous decay or of sudden extinction. You cannot, in any scheme for the reformation of society, aim directly at a condition in which the arts will flourish: these activities are probably by-products for which we cannot deliberately arrange the conditions. On the other hand, their decay may always be taken as a symptom of some social ailment to be investigated. The future of art and thought in a democratic society does not appear any brighter than any other, unless democracy is to mean something very different from anything actual. It is not that I would defend a moral censorship: I have always expressed strong objections to the suppression of books possessing, or even laying claim to literary merit. But what is more insidious than any censorship, is the steady influence which operates silently in any mass society organised for profit, for the depression of standards of art and culture. The increasing organisation of advertisement and propaganda—or the influencing of masses of men by any means except through their intelligence—is

all against them. The economic system is against them; the chaos of ideals and confusion of thought in our large scale mass education is against them; and against them also is the disappearance of any class of people who recognise public and private responsibility of patronage of the best that is made and written. At a period in which each nation has less and less 'culture' for its own consumption, all are making furious efforts to export their culture, to impress upon each other their achievements in arts which they are ceasing to cultivate or understand. And just as those who should be the intellectuals regard theology as a special study, like numismatics or heraldry, with which they need not concern themselves, and theologians observe the same indifference to literature and art, as special studies which do not concern *them,* so our political classes regard both fields as territories of which they have no reason to be ashamed of remaining in complete ignorance. Accordingly the more serious authors have a limited, and even provincial audience, and the more popular write for an illiterate and uncritical mob.

You cannot expect continuity and coherence in politics, you cannot expect reliable behaviour on fixed principles persisting through changed situations, unless there is an underlying political philosophy: not of a party, but of the nation. You cannot expect continuity and coherence in literature and the arts, unless you have a certain uniformity of culture, expressed in education by a settled, though not rigid agreement as to what everyone should know to some degree, and a positive distinction—however undemocratic it may sound—between the educated and the uneducated.

I observed in America, that with a very high level of intelligence among undergraduates, progress was impeded by the fact that one could never assume that any two, unless they had been at the same school under the influence of the same masters at the same moment, had studied the same subjects or read the same books, though the number of subjects in which they had been instructed was surprising. Even with a smaller amount of total information, it might have been better if they had read fewer, but the same books. In a negative liberal society you have no agreement as to there being any body of knowledge which any educated person should have acquired at any particular stage: the idea of wisdom disappears, and you get sporadic and unrelated experimentation. A nation's system of education is much more important than its system of government; only a proper system of education can unify the active and the contemplative life, action and speculation, politics and the arts. But 'education', said Coleridge, 'is to be reformed, and defined as synonymous with instruction'. This revolution has been effected: to the populace education *means* instruction. The next step to be taken by the clericalism of secularism, is the inculcation of the political principles approved by the party in power.

I may seem to have wandered from my course, but it seemed necessary to mention the capital responsibility of education in the condition which we find or anticipate: a state secularised, a community turned into a mob, and a clerisy disintegrated. The obvious secularist solution for muddle is to subordinate everything to political power: and in so far as this involves the subordination of the

money-making interests to those of the nation as a whole, it offers some immediate, though perhaps illusory relief: a people feels at least more dignified if its hero is the statesman however unscrupulous, or the warrior however brutal, rather than the financier. But it also means the confinement of the clergy to a more and more restricted field of activity, the subduing of free intellectual speculation, and the debauching of the arts by political criteria. It is only in a society with a religious basis—which is not the same thing as an ecclesiastical despotism—that you can get the proper harmony and tension, for the individual or for the community.

In any Christian society which can be imagined for the future—in what M. Maritain calls a *pluralist* society—my 'Community of Christians' cannot be a body of the definite vocational outline of the 'clerisy' of Coleridge: which, viewed in a hundred years' perspective, appears to approximate to the rigidity of a caste. The Community of Christians is not an organisation, but a body of indefinite outline; composed of both clergy and laity, of the more conscious, more spiritually and intellectually developed of both. It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture, which will enable them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation.

The Spirit descends in different ways, and I cannot foresee any future society in which we could classify Christians and non-Christians simply by their professions of belief, or even, by any rigid code, by their behaviour. In the

present ubiquity of ignorance, one cannot but suspect that many who call themselves Christians do not understand what the word means, and that some who would vigorously repudiate Christianity are more Christian than many who maintain it. And perhaps there will always be individuals who, with great creative gifts of value to mankind, and the sensibility which such gifts imply, will yet remain blind, indifferent, or even hostile. That must not disqualify them from exercising the talents they have been given.

The foregoing sketch of a Christian society, from which are omitted many details that will be considered essential, could not stand even as a rough sketch—an *ébauche*—without some treatment, according to the same economy, of the relation of Church and State in such a society. So far, nothing has suggested the existence of an organised Church at all. But the State would remain under the necessity of respecting Christian principles, only so far as the habits and feelings of the people were not too suddenly affronted or too violently outraged, or so far as it was deterred by any univocal protest of the most influential of the Community of Christians. The State is Christian only negatively; its Christianity is a reflection of the Christianity of the society which it governs. We have no safeguard against its proceeding, from un-Christian acts, to action on implicitly un-Christian principles, and thence to action on avowedly un-Christian principles. We have no safeguard for the purity of our Christianity; for, as the State may pass from expediency to lack of principle, and as the Christian Community may sink into torpor, so the Community of Christians may be debilitated by group or

individual eccentricity and error. So far, we have only a society such that it can have a significant relation to a Church; a relationship which is not of hostility or even of accommodation. And this relation is so important that without discussing it we have not even shown the assembled skeleton of a Christian Society, we have only exposed the unarticulated bones.

III

I have spoken of this essay as being, in one aspect, a kind of preface to the problem of Church and State; it is as well, at this point, to indicate its prefatorial limitations. The problem is one of concern to every Christian country—that is, to every possible form of Christian society. It will take a different form according to the traditions of that society—Roman, Orthodox, or Lutheran. It will take still another form in those countries, obviously the United States of America and the Dominions, where the variety of races and religious communions represented appears to render the problem insoluble. Indeed, for these latter countries the problem might not appear even to exist; these countries might appear to be committed from their origin to a neutral form of society. I am not ignoring the possibility of a neutral society, under such conditions, persisting indefinitely. But I believe that if these countries are to develop a positive culture of their own, and not remain merely derivatives of Europe, they can only proceed either in the direction of a pagan or of a Christian society. I am not suggesting that the latter alternative must lead to the forcible suppression, or to the complete disappearance of dissident sects; still less, I hope, to a superficial union of Churches under an official exterior, a union in which theological differences would be so belittled

that its Christianity might become wholly bogus. But a positive culture must have a positive set of values, and the dissentients must remain marginal, tending to make only marginal contributions.

However dissimilar the local conditions, therefore, this question of Church and State is of importance everywhere. Its actuality in Europe may make it appear all the more remote in America, just as its actuality in England raises a number of considerations remote to the rest of Europe. But if what I say in the following pages has its direct application only in England, it is not because I am thinking of local matters without relation to Christendom as a whole. It is partly that I can only discuss profitably the situations with which I am most familiar, and partly that a more generalised consideration would appear to deal only with figments and fancies. I have therefore limited my field to the possibility of a Christian society in England, and in speaking of Church and State it is the Anglican Church that I have in mind. But it must be remembered that such terms as 'Establishment' and 'Established Church' can have a wider meaning than we ordinarily give them. On the other hand, I only mean such a Church as can claim to represent the traditional form of Christian belief and worship of the great mass of the people of a particular country.

If my outline of a Christian society has commanded the assent of the reader, he will agree that such a society can only be realised when the great majority of the sheep belong to one fold. To those who maintain that unity is a matter of indifference, to those who maintain even that a diversity of theological views is a good thing to an indefinite degree,

I can make no appeal. But if the desirability of unity be admitted, if the idea of a Christian society be grasped and accepted, then it can only be realised, in England, through the Church of England. This is not the place for discussing the theological position of that Church: if in any points it is wrong, inconsistent, or evasive, these are matters for reform within the Church. And I am not overlooking the possibility and hope of eventual reunion or re-integration, on one side and another; I am only affirming that it is this Church which, by reason of its tradition, its organisation, and its relation in the past to the religious-social life of the people, is the one for our purpose—and that no Christianisation of England can take place without it.

The Church of a Christian society, then, should have some relation to the three elements in a Christian society that I have named. It must have a hierarchical organisation in direct and official relation to the State: in which relation it is always in danger of sinking into a mere department of State. It must have an organisation, such as the parochial system, in direct contact with the smallest units of the community and their individual members. And finally, it must have, in the persons of its more intellectual, scholarly and devout officers, its masters of ascetic theology and its men of wider interests, a relation to the Community of Christians. In matters of dogma, matters of faith and morals, it will speak as the final authority within the nation; in more mixed questions it will speak through individuals. At times, it can and should be in conflict with the State, in rebuking derelictions in policy, or in defending itself against encroachments of the temporal power, or in

shielding the community against tyranny and asserting its neglected rights, or in contesting heretical opinion or immoral legislation and administration. At times, the hierarchy of the Church may be under attack from the Community of Christians, or from groups within it: for any organisation is always in danger of corruption and in need of reform from within.

Although I am not here concerned with the means by which a Christian society could be brought about, it is necessary always to consider the idea in relation to particular existing societies; because one does not expect or desire that its constitution would be identical in all Christian countries. I do not assume that the relation of Church and State in England, either as it is or as it might be, is a model for all other communities. Whether an 'Establishment' is the best relation in the abstract, is nowhere my question. Were there no Establishment in England, we should have to examine its desirability. But as we have the Establishment, we must take the situation as we find it, and consider for a moment the merits of the problem of Disestablishment. The advocates of this course, within the Church, have many cogent reasons to expose: the abuses and scandals which such a change might remedy, the inconsistencies which might be removed, and the advantages which might accrue, are too patent to require mention. That abuses and defects of another kind might make their appearance in a disestablished Church, is a possibility which has not perhaps received enough attention. But what is much more to my point is the gravity of the abdication which the Church—whether voluntarily or under

pressure—would be making. Setting aside the anomalies which might be corrected without going to that length, I will admit that an Established Church is exposed to peculiar temptations and compulsions: it has greater advantages and greater difficulties. But we must pause to reflect that a Church, once disestablished, cannot easily be re-established, and that the very act of disestablishment separates it more definitely and irrevocably from the life of the nation than if it had never been established. The effect on the mind of the people of the visible and dramatic withdrawal of the Church from the affairs of the nation, of the deliberate recognition of two standards and ways of life, of the Church's abandonment of all those who are not by their wholehearted profession within the fold—this is incalculable; the risks are so great that such an act can be nothing but a desperate measure. It appears to assume something which I am not yet ready to take for granted: that the division between Christians and non-Christians in this country is already, or is determined to become, so clear that it can be reduced to statistics. But if one believes, as I do, that the great majority of people are neither one thing nor the other, but are living in a no man's land, then the situation looks very different; and disestablishment instead of being the *recognition* of a condition at which we have arrived, would be the *creation* of a condition the results of which we cannot foresee.

With the reform of the Establishment I am not here concerned: the discussion of that requires a familiarity with constitutional, canon, and civil law. But I do not think that the argument from the prosperity of the disestablished

Church of Wales, sometimes brought forward by advocates of disestablishment, is to the point. Apart from the differences of racial temperament which must be taken into account, the full effect of disestablishment cannot be seen from the illustration of a small part of the island; and, if disestablishment were made general, the full effect would not appear at once. And I think that the tendency of the time is opposed to the view that the religious and the secular life of the individual and the community can form two separate and autonomous domains. I know that a theology of the absolute separation of the life of the Spirit and the life of the World has spread from Germany. Such a doctrine appears more plausible, when the Church's position is wholly defensive, when it is subject to daily persecution, when its spiritual claims are questioned and when its immediate necessity is to keep itself alive and to keep its doctrine pure. But this theology is incompatible with the assumptions underlying everything that I have been saying. The increasing complexity of modern life renders it unacceptable, for, as I have already said, we are faced with vital problems arising not merely out of the necessity of co-operating with non-Christians, but out of our unescapeable implication in non-Christian institutions and systems. And finally, the totalitarian tendency is against it, for the tendency of totalitarianism is to re-affirm, on a lower level, the religious-social nature of society. And I am convinced that you cannot have a national Christian society, a religious-social community, a society with a political philosophy founded upon the Christian faith, if it is constituted as a mere congeries of private and independent sects. The

national faith must have an official recognition by the State, as well as an accepted status in the community and a basis of conviction in the heart of the individual.

Heresy is often defined as an insistence upon one half of the truth; it can also be an attempt to simplify the truth, by reducing it to the limits of our ordinary understanding, instead of enlarging our reason to the apprehension of truth. Monotheism or tritheism is easier to grasp than trinitarianism. We have observed the lamentable results of the attempt to isolate the Church from the World; there are also instances of the failure of the attempt to integrate the World in the Church; we must also be on guard against the attempt to integrate the Church in the World. A permanent danger of an established Church is Erastianism: we do not need to refer to the eighteenth century, or to pre-war Russia, to remind ourselves of that. Deplorable as such a situation is, it is not so much the immediate and manifest scandals but the ultimate consequences of Erastianism that are the most serious offences. By alienating the mass of the people from orthodox Christianity, by leading them to identify the Church with the actual hierarchy and to suspect it of being an instrument of oligarchy or class, it leaves men's minds exposed to varieties of irresponsible and irreflective enthusiasm followed by a second crop of paganism.

The danger of a National Church becoming a class Church, is not one that concerns us immediately to-day; for now that it is possible to be respectable without being a member of the Church of England, or a Christian of any kind, it is also possible to be a member of the Church of

England without being—in that sense—respectable. The danger that a National Church might become also a nationalistic Church is one to which our predecessors theorising about Church and State could hardly have been expected to devote attention, since the danger of nationalism itself, and the danger of the supersession of every form of Christianity, could not have been very present to their minds. Yet the danger was always there: and, for some persons still, Rome is associated with the Armada and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* For a National Church tends to reflect only the religious-social habits of the nation; and its members, in so far as they are isolated from the Christian communities of other nations, may tend to lose all criteria by which to distinguish, in their own religious-social complex, between what is universal and what is local, accidental, and erratic. Within limits, the cultus of the universal Church may quite properly vary according to the racial temperaments and cultural traditions of each nation. Roman Catholicism is not quite the same thing (to the eye of the sociologist, if not to that of the theologian) in Spain, France, Ireland and the United States of America, and but for central authority it would differ much more widely. The tendency to differ may be as strong among bodies of the same communion in different countries, as among various sects within the same country; and, indeed, the sects within one country may be expected to show traits in common, which none of them will share with the same communion abroad.

The evils of nationalistic Christianity have, in the past, been mitigated by the relative weakness of national con-

sciousness and the strength of Christian tradition. They have not been wholly absent: missionaries have sometimes been accused of propagating (through ignorance, not through cunning) the customs and attitudes of the social groups to which they have belonged, rather than giving the natives the essentials of the Christian faith in such a way that they might harmonise their own culture with it. On the other hand, I think that some events during the last twenty-five years have led to an increasing recognition of the supra-national Christian society: for if that is not marked by such conferences as those of Lausanne, Stockholm, Oxford, Edinburgh—and also Malines—then I do not know of what use these conferences have been. The purpose of the labours involved in arranging intercommunion between the official Churches of certain countries is not merely to provide reciprocal sacramental advantages for travellers, but to affirm the Universal Church on earth. Certainly, no one to-day can defend the idea of a National Church, without balancing it with the idea of the Universal Church, and without keeping in mind that truth is one and that theology has no frontiers.

I think that the dangers to which a National Church is exposed, when the Universal Church is no more than a pious ideal, are so obvious that only to mention them is to command assent. Completely identified with a particular people, the National Church may at all times, but especially at moments of excitement, become no more than the voice of that people's prejudice, passion or interest. But there is another danger, not quite so easily identified. I have maintained that the idea of a Christian society implies, for me,

the existence of one Church which shall *aim at* comprehending the whole nation. Unless it has this aim, we relapse into that conflict between citizenship and church-membership, between public and private morality, which to-day makes moral life so difficult for everyone, and which in turn provokes that craving for a simplified, monistic solution of statism or racism which the National Church can only combat if it recognises its position as a part of the Universal Church. But if we allowed ourselves to entertain for Europe (to confine our attention to that continent) the ideal merely of a kind of society of Christian societies, we might tend unconsciously to treat the idea of the Universal Church as only the idea of a supernatural League of Nations. The direct allegiance of the individual would be to his National Church alone, and the Universal Church would remain an abstraction or become a cockpit for conflicting national interests. But the difference between the Universal Church and a perfected League of Nations is this, that the allegiance of the individual to his own Church is secondary to his allegiance to the Universal Church. Unless the National Church is a part of the whole, it has no claim upon me: but a League of Nations which could have a claim upon the devotion of the individual, prior to the claim of his country, is a chimaera which very few persons can even have endeavoured to picture to themselves. I have spoken more than once of the intolerable position of those who try to lead a Christian life in a non-Christian world. But it must be kept in mind that even in a Christian society as well organised as we can conceive possible in this world, the limit would be that our temporal and spiritual life should

be harmonised: the temporal and spiritual would never be identified. There would always remain a dual allegiance, to the State and to the Church, to one's countrymen and to one's fellow-Christians everywhere, and the latter would always have the primacy. There would always be a tension; and this tension is essential to the idea of a Christian society, and is a distinguishing mark between a Christian and a pagan society.

IV

It should be obvious that the form of political organisation of a Christian State does not come within the scope of this discussion. To identify any particular form of government with Christianity is a dangerous error: for it confounds the permanent with the transitory, the absolute with the contingent. Forms of government, and of social organisation, are in constant process of change, and their operation may be very different from the theory which they are supposed to exemplify. A theory of the State may be, explicitly or implicitly, anti-Christian: it may arrogate rights which only the Church is entitled to claim, or pretend to decide moral questions on which only the Church is qualified to pronounce. On the other hand, a régime may in practice claim either more or less than it professes, and we have to examine its working as well as its constitution. We have no assurance that a democratic régime might not be as inimical to Christianity in practice, as another might be in theory: and the best government must be relative to the character and the stage of intelligence and education of a particular people in a particular place at a particular time. Those who consider that a discussion of the nature of a Christian society should conclude by supporting a particular form of political organisation, should ask themselves whether they really believe our form of government to be

more important than our Christianity; and those who are convinced that the present form of government of Britain is the one most suitable for any Christian people, should ask themselves whether they are confusing a Christian society with a society in which individual Christianity is tolerated.

This essay is not intended to be either an anti-communist or an anti-fascist manifesto; the reader may by this time have forgotten what I said at the beginning, to the effect that I was less concerned with the more superficial, though important differences between the regiment of different nations, than with the more profound differences between pagan and Christian society. Our preoccupation with foreign politics during the last few years has induced a surface complacency rather than a consistent attempt at self-examination of conscience. Sometimes we are almost persuaded that we are getting on very nicely, with a reform here and a reform there, and would have been getting on still better, if only foreign governments did not insist upon breaking all the rules and playing what is really a different game. What is more depressing still is the thought that only fear or jealousy of foreign success can alarm us about the health of our own nation; that only through this anxiety can we see such things as depopulation, mal-nutrition, moral deterioration, the decay of agriculture, as evils at all. And what is worst of all is to advocate Christianity, not because it is true, but because it might be beneficial. Towards the end of 1938 we experienced a wave of revivalism which should teach us that folly is not the prerogative of any one political party or any one religious communion, and that hysteria is not the privilege of the uneducated. The Chris-

tianity expressed has been vague, the religious fervour has been a fervour for democracy. It may engender nothing better than a disguised and peculiarly sanctimonious nationalism, accelerating our progress towards the paganism which we say we abhor. To justify Christianity because it provides a foundation of morality, instead of showing the necessity of Christian morality from the truth of Christianity, is a very dangerous inversion; and we may reflect, that a good deal of the attention of totalitarian states has been devoted, with a steadiness of purpose not always found in democracies, to providing their national life with a foundation of morality—the wrong kind perhaps, but a good deal more of it. It is not enthusiasm, but dogma, that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society.

I have tried to restrict my ambition of a Christian society to a social minimum: to picture, not a society of saints, but of ordinary men, of men whose Christianity is communal before being individual. It is very easy for speculation on a possible Christian order in the future to tend to come to rest in a kind of apocalyptic vision of a golden age of virtue. But we have to remember that the Kingdom of Christ on earth will never be realised, and also that it is always being realised; we must remember that whatever reform or revolution we carry out, the result will always be a sordid travesty of what human society should be—though the world is never left wholly without glory. In such a society as I imagine, as in any that is not petrified, there will be innumerable seeds of decay. Any human scheme for society is realised only when the great mass of humanity has become adapted to it; but this adaptation becomes also, in-

sensibly, an adaptation of the scheme itself to the mass on which it operates: the overwhelming pressure of mediocrity, sluggish and indomitable as a glacier, will mitigate the most violent, and depress the most exalted revolution, and what is realised is so unlike the end that enthusiasm conceived, that foresight would weaken the effort. A wholly Christian society might be a society for the most part on a low level; it would engage the cooperation of many whose Christianity was spectral or superstitious or feigned, and of many whose motives were primarily worldly and selfish. It would require constant reform.

I should not like it to be thought, however, that I considered the presence of the higher forms of devotional life to be a matter of minor importance for such a society. I have, it is true, insisted upon the communal, rather than the individual aspect: a community of men and women, not individually better than they are now, except for the capital difference of holding the Christian faith. But their holding the Christian faith would give them something else which they lack: a *respect* for the religious life, for the life of prayer and contemplation, and for those who attempt to practise it. In this I am asking no more of the British Christian, than is characteristic of the ordinary Moslem or Hindu. But the ordinary man would need the opportunity to know that the religious life existed, that it was given its due place, would need to recognise the profession of those who have abandoned the world, as he recognises the professions practised in it. I cannot conceive a Christian society without religious orders, even purely contemplative orders, even enclosed orders. And, incidentally, I should not like

the 'Community of Christians' of which I have spoken, to be thought of as merely the nicest, most intelligent and public-spirited of the upper middle class—it is not to be conceived on that analogy.

We may say that religion, as distinguished from modern paganism, implies a life in conformity with nature. It may be observed that the natural life and the supernatural life have a conformity to each other which neither has with the mechanistic life: but so far has our notion of what is natural become distorted, that people who consider it 'unnatural' and therefore repugnant, that a person of either sex should elect a life of celibacy, consider it perfectly 'natural' that families should be limited to one or two children. It would perhaps be more natural, as well as in better conformity with the Will of God, if there were more celibates and if those who were married had larger families. But I am thinking of 'conformity to nature' in a wider sense than this. We are being made aware that the organisation of society on the principle of private profit, as well as public destruction, is leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated industrialism, and to the exhaustion of natural resources, and that a good deal of our material progress is a progress for which succeeding generations may have to pay dearly. I need only mention, as an instance now very much before the public eye, the results of 'soil-erosion'—the exploitation of the earth, on a vast scale for two generations, for commercial profit: immediate benefits leading to dearth and desert. I would not have it thought that I condemn a society because of its material ruin, for that would be to make its material success a sufficient test of

its excellence; I mean only that a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and that the consequence is an inevitable doom. For a long enough time we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanised, commercialised, urbanised way of life: it would be as well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet. And without sentimentalising the life of the savage, we might practise the humility to observe, in some of the societies upon which we look down as primitive or backward, the operation of a social-religious-artistic complex which we should emulate upon a higher plane. We have been accustomed to regard 'progress' as always integral; and have yet to learn that it is only by an effort and a discipline, greater than society has yet seen the need of imposing upon itself, that material knowledge and power is gained without loss of spiritual knowledge and power. The struggle to recover the sense of relation to nature and to God, the recognition that even the most primitive feelings should be part of our heritage, seems to me to be the explanation and justification of the life of D. H. Lawrence, and the excuse for his aberrations. But we need not only to learn how to look at the world with the eyes of a Mexican Indian—and I hardly think that Lawrence succeeded—and we certainly cannot afford to stop there. We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge, to our own situation. We need to recover the sense of religious fear, so that it may be overcome by religious hope.

I should not like to leave the reader supposing that I have attempted to contribute one more amateur sketch of an abstract and impracticable future: the blue-print from which the doctrinaire criticises the piecemeal day to day efforts of political men. These latter efforts have to go on; but unless we can find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place, we are only likely to go on complicating chaos. So long, for instance, as we consider finance, industry, trade, agriculture merely as competing interests to be reconciled from time to time as best they may, so long as we consider 'education' as a good in itself of which everyone has a right to the utmost, without any ideal of the good life for society or for the individual, we shall move from one uneasy compromise to another. To the quick and simple organisation of society for ends which, being only material and worldly, must be as ephemeral as worldly success, there is only one alternative. As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation which will not, to its ultimate destruction, ignore some essential aspect of reality. The term 'democracy', as I have said again and again, does not contain enough positive content to stand alone against the forces that you dislike—it can easily be transformed by them. If you will not have God (and He is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin.

I believe that there must be many persons who, like myself, were deeply shaken by the events of September 1938, in a way from which one does not recover; persons to

whom that month brought a profounder realisation of a general plight. It was not a disturbance of the understanding: the events themselves were not surprising. Nor, as became increasingly evident, was our distress due merely to disagreement with the policy and behaviour of the moment. The feeling which was new and unexpected was a feeling of humiliation, which seemed to demand an act of personal contrition, of humility, repentance and amendment; what had happened was something in which one was deeply implicated and responsible. It was not, I repeat, a criticism of the government, but a doubt of the validity of a civilisation. We could not match conviction with conviction, we had no ideas with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us. Was our society, which had always been so assured of its superiority and rectitude, so confident of its unexamined premisses, assembled round anything more permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries, and had it any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends? Such thoughts as these formed the starting point, and must remain the excuse, for saying what I have had to say.

September 6th, 1939. The whole of this book, with Preface and Notes, was completed before it was known that we should be at war. But the possibility of war, which has now been realised, was always present to my mind, and the only additional observations which I feel called upon to make are these: first, that the alignment of forces which has now revealed itself should bring more clearly to our

consciousness the alternative of Christianity or paganism; and, second, that we cannot afford to defer our constructive thinking to the conclusion of hostilities—a moment when, as we should know from experience, good counsel is liable to be obscured.

NOTES

Page 8. In using the term 'Idea' I have of course had in mind the definition given by Coleridge, when he lays down at the beginning of his *Church and State* that: 'By an idea I mean (in this instance) that conception of a thing, which is not abstracted from any particular state, form or mode, in which the thing may happen to exist at this or that time; nor yet generalised from any number or succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of its ultimate aim'.

P. 10. Christian sociologists. I am deeply indebted to several Christian economists and sociologists, both in England and elsewhere, and notably to R. H. Tawney. My difference of approach in these pages need not be further elaborated, but it is interesting to compare the treatment of the problem of Church and State by V. A. Demant in his very valuable *Christian Polity*, p. 120 ff. and p. 135 ff. Fr. Demant observes that the authority of the Church 'cannot now be claimed on the ground that it represents all citizens'. But while the Church does not represent all citizens in the sense in which a Member of Parliament may be said to 'represent' his constituents, even those who vote consistently against him, yet its function seems to me wider than only to 'safeguard the individual in his right to pursue

certain purposes which are not political purposes'; what I am primarily concerned with throughout is not the responsibility of the Church towards the individual but towards the community. The relation of the Church with the State may be one of checks and balances, but the background and justification of this relation is the Church's relation to *Society*. Fr. Demant gives a very good account of the forces tending towards acceptance of the absolutist State, and remarks truly that: 'This fact of the secularisation of human life does not arise mainly from the extension of the State's powers. This is rather the effort of the State to recover significance in the life of a people which has become disintegrated through the confusion of social means and ends which is its secularisation.'

One of the causes of the totalitarian State is an effort of the State to supply a function which the Church has ceased to serve; to enter into a relation to the community which the Church has failed to maintain; which leads to the recognition as full citizens only of those who are prepared to accept it in this relation.

I agree cordially with Fr. Demant's observation that: 'The fact which renders most of our theories of Church and State irrelevant is the domination of politics by economics and finance; and this is most true in democratic states. The subservience of politics to plutocracy is the main fact about the State confronting the Church to-day.'

Fr. Demant is concerned with the reform of this situation, in a secular society; and with the right position of the Church in a secular society. But unless I have misunderstood him, he appears to me to take this secularisation for

granted. Assuming that our present society is neutral rather than non-Christian, I am concerned with enquiring what it might be like if it took the Christian direction.

P. 19. 'Totalitarianism can retain the terms 'freedom' and 'democracy' and give them its own meaning'. A letter appeared in *The Times* (April 24, 1939) from General J. F. C. Fuller, who, as *The Times* had previously stated, was one of the two British visitors invited to Herr Hitler's birthday celebrations. General Fuller states that he is 'a firm believer in the democracy of Mazzini, because he places duty to the nation before individual rights'. General Fuller calls himself a 'British Fascist', and believes that Britain 'must swim with the out-flowing tide of this great political change' (i.e. to a fascist system of government).

From my point of view, General Fuller has as good a title to call himself a 'believer in democracy' as anyone else.

P. 19. Imitation *à rebours.* A column in the *Evening Standard* of May 10, 1939, headed *'Back to the Kitchen' Creed Denounced*, reported the annual conference of the Civil Service Clerical Association.

'Miss Bower of the Ministry of Transport, who moved that the association should take steps to obtain the removal of the ban (i.e. against married women Civil Servants) said it was wise to abolish an institution which embodied one of the main tenets of the Nazi creed—the relegation of women to the sphere of the kitchen, the children and the church'.

The report, by its abbreviation, may do less than justice to Miss Bower, but I do not think that I am unfair to the report, in finding the implication that what is Nazi is wrong,

and need not be discussed on its own merits. Incidentally, the term 'relegation of women' prejudices the issue. Might one suggest that the kitchen, the children and the church could be considered to have a claim upon the attention of married women? or that no normal married woman would prefer to be a wage-earner if she could help it? What is miserable is a system that makes the dual wage necessary.

P. 20. Fascist doctrine. I mean only such doctrine as asserts the absolute authority of the state, or the infallibility of a ruler. 'The corporative state', recommended by *Quadragesimo Anno,* is not in question. The economic organisation of totalitarian states is not in question. The ordinary person does not object to fascism because it is pagan, but because he is fearful of authority, even when it is pagan.

P. 20. The red herring of the German national religion. I cannot hold such a low opinion of German intelligence as to accept any stories of the revival of pre-Christian cults. I can, however, believe that the kind of religion expounded by Professor Wilhelm Hauer is really in existence—and I am very sorry to believe it. I rely upon the essay contributed by Dr. Hauer to a very interesting volume, *Germany's New Religion* (Allen and Unwin, 1937), in which orthodox Lutheranism is defended by Karl Heim, and Catholicism by Karl Adam.

The religion of Hauer is deistic, claiming to 'worship a more than human God'. He believes it to be 'an eruption from the biological and spiritual depths of the German nation', and unless one is prepared to deny that the German

nation has such depths, I do not see that the statement can be ridiculed. He believes that 'each new age must mold its own religious forms'—alas, many persons in Anglo-Saxon countries hold the same belief. He professes himself to be particularly a disciple of Eckhart; and whether or not one believes that the doctrines condemned by the Church were what Eckhart strove to propagate, it is certainly the condemned doctrine that Hauer holds. He considers that the 'revolt of the German from Christianity reached its culmination in Nietzsche': many people would not limit that revolt to the German. He advocates tolerance. He objects to Christianity because 'it claims to possess the absolute truth, and with this claim is bound up the idea that men can only achieve salvation in one way, through Christ, and that it must send to the stake those whose faith and life do not conform, or pray for them till they quit the error of their ways for the kingdom of God'. Thousands of people in Western countries would agree with this attitude. He objects to sacramental religion, because 'everyone has an immediate relation to God, is, in fact, in the depths of his heart one with the eternal Ground of the world'. Faith comes not from revelation but from 'personal experience'. He is not interested in 'the mass of intellectuals', but in the 'multitudes of ordinary people' who are looking for 'Life'. 'We believe', he says, 'that God has laid a great task on our nation, and that he has therefore revealed himself specially in its history and will continue to do so'. To my ear, such phrases have a not altogether unfamiliar ring. Hauer believes also in something very popular in this country, the religion of the blue sky, the grass and flowers. He believes

that Jesus (even if he was wholly Semitic on both sides) is one of the 'great figures who soar above the centuries'.

I have quoted so much, in order to let Professor Hauer declare himself for what he is: the end product of German Liberal Protestantism, a nationalistic Unitarian. Translated into English terms, he might be made to appear as simply a patriotic Modernist. The German National Religion, as Hauer expounds it, turns out to be something with which we are already familiar. So, if the German Religion is also your religion, the sooner you realise the fact the better.

P. 23. 'Hygienic morality'. M. Denis de Rougemont, in his remarkable book *L'Amour et l'occident,* has this sentence (p. 269) which is to the point: 'L'anarchie des mœurs et l'hygiène autoritaire agissent à peu près dans le même sens: elles déçoivent le besoin de passion, héréditaire ou acquis par la culture; elles détendent ses ressorts intimes et personnels.'

P. 24. It may be opportune at this point to say a word about the attitude of a Christian Society towards Pacifism. I am not concerned with rationalistic pacifism, or with humanitarian pacifism, but with Christian pacifism—that which asserts that all warfare is categorically forbidden to followers of Our Lord. This absolute Christian pacifism should be distinguished again from another: that which would assert that only a *Christian* society is worth fighting for, and that a particular society may fall so far short, or may be so positively anti-Christian, that no Christian will be justified or excused for fighting for it. With this relative Christian pacifism I cannot be concerned, because my

hypothesis is that of a Christian society. In such a society, what will be the place of the Christian pacifist?

Such a person would continue to exist, as sects and individual vagaries would probably continue to exist; and it would be the duty of the Christian who was not a pacifist to treat the pacifist with consideration and respect. It would also be the duty of the State to treat him with consideration and respect, having assured itself of his sincerity. The man who believes that a particular war in which his country proposes to engage is an aggressive war, who believes that his country could refuse to take part in it without its legitimate interests being imperilled, and without failing in its duty to God and its neighbours, would be wrong to remain silent (the attitude of the late Charles Eliot Norton in regard to the Spanish-American War of 1898 is to the point). But I cannot but believe that the man who maintains that war is in all circumstances wrong, is in some way repudiating an obligation towards society; and in so far as the society is a Christian society the obligation is so much the more serious. Even if each particular war proves in turn to have been unjustified, yet the idea of a Christian society seems incompatible with the idea of absolute pacifism; for pacifism can only continue to flourish so long as the majority of persons forming a society are not pacifists; just as sectarianism can only flourish against the background of orthodoxy. The notion of communal responsibility, of the responsibility of every individual for the sins of the society to which he belongs, is one that needs to be more firmly apprehended; and if I share the guilt of my society in time of 'peace', I do not see how I can absolve myself

from it in time of war, by abstaining from the common action.

P. 26. The Community of Christians. This term is perhaps open to objection. I did not wish to employ Coleridge's term 'clerisy' while altering its meaning, but I assume that the reader is familiar with 'clerisy' in his *Church and State*, and with Mr. Middleton Murry's use of the same word. Perhaps the term 'Community of Christians' may connote to some a kind of esoteric *chapelle* or fraternity of the self-appointed, but I hope that what is said later in this chapter may prevent that inference. I wished to avoid excessive emphasis on nominal function, as it seemed to me that Coleridge's 'clerisy' might tend to become merely a brahminical *caste*.

I should add, as a note on the use of the phrase 'superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts' (p. 20), that the possession of intellectual or spiritual gifts does not necessarily confer that intellectual understanding of spiritual issues which is the qualification for exerting the kind of influence here required. Nor is the person who possesses this qualification necessarily a 'better Christian' in his private life than the man whose insight is less profound; nor is he necessarily exempt from doctrinal error. I prefer that the definition should be, provisionally, too comprehensive rather than too narrow.

P. 36. Christian Education. This note, as well as that on 'The Community of Christians', is elicited by a searching comment by Bro. George Every, S.S.M., who has been so kind as to read this book in proof. Those who have read a

paper called 'Modern Education and the Classics', written in a different context, and published in a volume entitled *Essays Ancient and Modern*, may assume that what I have in mind is simply the 'classical education' of earlier times. The problem of Education is too large to be considered in a brief book like this, and the question of the best curriculum is not here raised. I limit myself to the assertion that the miscellaneous curriculum will not do, and that education must be something more than the acquisition of information, technical competence, or superficial culture. Furthermore, I am not here concerned with what must occupy the mind of anyone approaching the subject of Education directly, that is the question of what should be done *now*. The point upon which all who are dissatisfied with contemporary Education can agree, is the necessity for criteria and values. But one must start by expelling from one's mind any mere prejudice or sentiment in favour of any previous system of education, and recognising the differences between the society for which we have to legislate, and any form of society which we have known in the past.

P. 40. Uniformity of culture. In an important passage in *Beyond Politics* (pp. 23–31) Mr. Christopher Dawson discusses the possibility of an 'organisation of culture'. He recognises that it is impossible to do this 'by any kind of philosophic or scientific dictatorship', or by a return 'to the old humanist discipline of letters, for that is inseparable from the aristocratic ideal of a privileged caste of scholars'. He asserts that 'a democratic society must find a correspondingly democratic organisation of culture'; and finds

that 'the form of organisation appropriate to our society in the field of culture as well as in that of politics is the party—that is to say, a voluntary organisation for common ends based on a common "ideology" '.

I think that I am in close sympathy with Mr. Dawson's aims, and yet I find it difficult to apprehend the meaning of this 'culture' which will have no philosophy (for philosophy, he reminds us, has lost its ancient prestige) and which will not be specifically religious. What, in the kind of society to which we are approximating, will be a 'democratic organisation of culture'? To substitute for 'democratic' a term which for me has greater concreteness, I should say that the society which is coming into existence, and which is advancing in every country whether 'democratic' or 'totalitarian', is a lower middle class society: I should expect the culture of the twentieth century to belong to the lower middle class as that of the Victorian age belonged to the upper middle class or commercial aristocracy. If then for Mr. Dawson's phrase we substitute the words 'a lower middle class society must find a correspondingly lower middle class organisation of culture' we have something which seems to me to possess more meaning, though it leaves us in greater perplexity. And if Mr. Dawson's Culture Party—about which, however, our information is still meagre—is to be representative of this future society, is it likely to provide anything more important than, for example, a lower middle class Royal Academy instead of one supplying portrait painters for aldermen?

It may be that I have wholly failed to understand what Mr. Dawson is after: if so, I can only hope that he will let

us have a fuller exposition of his ideas. Unless some useful analogy can be given from the past, I cannot understand the 'organisation of culture', which appears to be without precedent, and in isolating culture from religion, politics and philosophy we seem to be left with something no more apprehensible than the scent of last year's roses. When we speak of culture, I suppose that we have in mind the existence of two classes of people the producers and the consumers of culture—the existence of men who can create new thought and new art (with middlemen who can teach the consumers to like it) and the existence of a cultivated society to enjoy and patronise it. The former you can only encourage, the latter you can only educate.

I would not belittle the importance, in a period of transition, of the rearguard action; of such institutions, in their various special ways, as the National Trust, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, even the National Society. We ought not to cut down old trees until we have learned to plant new ones. But Mr. Dawson is concerned with something more important than the preservation of relics of former culture. My provisional view can only be that 'culture' is a by-product, and that those who sympathise with Mr. Dawson in resenting the tyranny of politics, must direct their attention to the problem of Education, and of how, in the lower middle class society of the future, to provide for the training of an élite of thought, conduct and taste.

When I speak of a probable 'lower middle class society' I do not anticipate—short of some at present unpredictable revolution—the rise in Britain of a lower middle class

political hierarchy, though our ruling class will have to cultivate, in its dealings with foreign countries, an understanding of that mentality. Britain will presumably continue to be governed by the same mercantile and financial class which, with a continual change of personnel, has been increasingly important since the fifteenth century. I mean by a 'lower middle class society' one in which the standard man legislated for and catered for, the man whose passions must be manipulated, whose prejudices must be humoured, whose tastes must be gratified, will be the lower middle class man. He is the most numerous, the one most necessary to flatter. I am not necessarily implying that this is either a good or a bad thing: that depends upon what lower middle class Man does to himself, and what is done to him.

P. 48. Advocates of Disestablishment. It is interesting to compare Bishop Hensley Henson's vigorous defence of the Establishment, *Cui Bono?*, published more than forty years ago, with his more recent *Disestablishment,* in which he took a contrary view, but too great importance could be attached, by one side or the other, to this recantation. The argument for Establishment in the early essay, and the argument against it in the later, are both well presented, and both deserve study. What has happened seems to me to be simply that Bishop Hensley Henson has come to take a different view of the tendencies of modern society; and the changes since the end of the last century are great enough to excuse such a change of opinion. His early argument is not invalidated; he might say that the situation is now such that it cannot be applied.

I must take this occasion for calling attention to the great excellence of Bishop Hensley Henson's prose, whether it is employed in a volume prepared at leisure, or in an occasional letter to *The Times*. For vigour and purity of controversial English, he has no superior to-day, and his writings should long continue to be studied by those who aspire to write well.

P. 51. The dangers of a nationalistic Church. Doubts about the doctrinal security of a national Church must come to the mind of any reader of Mr. Middleton Murry's *The Price of Leadership*. The first part of this book I read with the warmest admiration, and I can support all that Mr. Murry says in favour of a National Church against sectarianism and private Christianity. But at the point at which Mr. Murry allies himself with Dr. Thomas Arnold I begin to hesitate. I have no first hand acquaintance with the doctrines of Dr. Arnold, and must rely upon Mr. Murry's exposition of them. But Mr. Murry does not engage my complete confidence in Arnold; nor do the citations of Arnold reassure me about the orthodoxy of Mr. Murry. Mr. Murry holds that 'the real conflict that is preparing is the conflict between Christianity and anti-Christian nationalism': but surely a nationalism which is overtly antagonistic to Christianity is a less dangerous menace for us than a nationalism which professes a Christianity from which all Christian content has been evacuated. That the Church in England should be identical with the nation—a view which Mr. Murry believes he has found in Arnold and before him in Coleridge, and which

Mr. Murry himself accepts—is a laudable aim so long as we keep in mind that we are speaking of one aspect of the Church; but unless this is balanced by the idea of the relation of the Church in England to the Universal Church, I see no safeguard for the purity or the catholicity of its doctrine. I am not even sure that Mr. Murry desires such a safeguard. He quotes, with apparent approval, this sentence by Matthew Arnold: 'Will there never arise among Catholics some great soul, to perceive that the eternity and universality, which is vainly claimed for Catholic dogma and the ultramontane system, might really be possible for Catholic worship?'

Well! if eternity and universality is to be found, not in dogma, but in worship—that means, in a common form of worship which will mean to the worshippers anything that they like to fancy, then the result seems to me to be likely to be the most corrupt form of ritualism. What does Mr. Murry mean by Christianity in his National Church, except whatever the nation as such may decide to call Christianity, and what is to prevent the Christianity from being degraded to the nationalism, rather than the nationalism being raised to Christianity?

Mr. Murry holds that Dr. Arnold introduced a new Christian spirit into the public schools. I would not deny to Dr. Arnold the honour of having reformed and improved the moral standards inculcated by public schools, or dispute the assertion that to him and to his son 'we owe the tradition of disinterested public service'. But at what price? Mr. Murry believes that the ideals of Dr. Arnold have been degraded and adulterated by a subsequent generation: I

would like to be sure that the results were not implicit in the principles. To me there appear to be further possible results. Mr. Murry says 'The main organ of this new national and Christian society is the state; the state is, indeed, the organ indispensable to its manifestation. For this reason it is inevitable that in the new national society, if it is to be in some real sense a Christian society, the Church and the state should draw together. On the nature of this drawing together of Church and state, everything depends.'

This paragraph, especially in conjunction with Mr. Murry's suggestion that the public schools should be taken over by the state, makes me suspect that Mr. Murry is ready to go a long way towards totalitarianism; and without any explicit statement on his part about the Christian beliefs which are necessary for salvation, or about the supernatural reality of the Church, we might even conclude that he would go some way in the direction of an English National Religion, the formulation of which would be taken in hand by the moral re-armament manufacturers.

Mr. Murry appears (p. 111) to follow Dr. Arnold in attaching little importance to the apostolical succession. With regard to the position of Matthew Arnold, he says (p. 125) 'In this situation no mere revival of Christian piety could possibly avail: not even a rebirth of Christian saintliness (such as he admired in Newman) could be efficacious against it.' It is only a short step from employing the adjective *mere* to ignoring Christian piety. He continues 'What was required was a renovation of Christian understanding, an enlarged conception of the spiritual life itself.'

How such an enlargement of the conception of the spiritual life is to take place without spiritual masters, without the rebirth of saintliness, I cannot conceive.

P. 58. Wave of revivalism. 'Moral re-armament' has been competently and authoritatively analysed from the theological point of view by Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., in the April 1939 issue of *Blackfriars*, and by Professor H. A. Hodges in the May issue of *Theology*. But I feel that everything that remains of clear thinking in this country should be summoned to protest against this abuse of Christianity and of English. A reading of Mr. H. W. Austin's compilation *Moral Re-Armament* suggests several lines of thought. Our immediate reflection is upon the extraordinary facility with which men of the greatest eminence will lend their names to any public appeal, however obscure or ambiguous. Another thought is that the kind of mental activity exposed by these letters must have a very demoralising effect upon the language. Coleridge remarked that 'in a language like ours, where so many words are derived from other languages, there are few modes of instruction more useful or more amusing than that of accustoming young people to seek for the etymology, or primary meaning, of the words they use. There are cases, in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word, than by the history of a campaign.' For instance, in a letter to *The Times* reprinted in Mr. Austin's pamphlet, it is said that 'national security at home and abroad can only be gained through moral regeneration'. Even allowing that '*moral* regeneration' is intended to represent some

milder form of parturition than *regeneration*, it is a very striking adaptation of the words of the Gospel to declare that unless a nation be born again it cannot achieve national security. The word *regeneration* appears to have degenerated. In the next paragraph 'regeneration' has been replaced by 're-armament'. I do not doubt that the term 'moral and spiritual re-armament' was originally coined merely as a striking reminder that we need something more than material equipment, but it has quickly shrunk to imply another kind of equipment *on the same plane*: that is, for ends which need be no better than worldly.

In spite of the fervour which tinges the whole correspondence, I cannot find anything to suggest that *Christianity* is needed. Some of the signers, at least, I know to be Christians, but the movement in itself, to judge by this pamphlet, is no more essentially Christian than the German National Religion of Professor Hauer. I have no first-hand experience of the Buchmanite Movement, by which this pamphlet appears to be inspired, but I have never seen any evidence that to be a Buchmanite it was necessary to hold the Christian Faith according to the Creeds, and until I have seen a statement to that effect, I shall continue to doubt whether there is any reason to call Buchmanism a Christian movement.

I am alarmed, by what are not necessary implications, but are certainly possibilities, and to my mind probabilities, of further development of this kind. It is the possibility of gradually adapting our religion to fit our secular aims—*some* of which may be worthy aims, but none of which will be criticised by a supernatural measure. Moral re-arma-

ment in my opinion may easily lead to a progressive Germanisation of our society. We observe the efficiency of the German machine, and we perceive that we cannot emulate it without a kind of religious enthusiasm. Moral re-armament will provide the enthusiasm, and be the most useful kind of political drug—that is to say, having the potency at once of a stimulant and a narcotic: but it will supply this function to the detriment of our religion.

'There is a tendency, especially among the English-speaking Protestant peoples, to treat religion as a kind of social tonic that can be used in times of national emergency in order to extract a further degree of moral effort from the people. But apart from the Pelagian conception of religion that this view implies, it is not wholly sound from the psychological point of view, since it merely heightens the amount of moral tension without increasing the sources of spiritual vitality or resolving the psychological conflicts from which the society suffers.'

Christopher Dawson: *Beyond Politics*, p. 21.

'While the humanistic religious sentiment which expresses itself by the catch in the throat at the last Evensong in the old School Chapel, the community singing of *Abide with me* at a torchlight tattoo, and the standing to attention during the Two Minutes' Silence, can be utilised by totalitarianism, a religion which speaks of redemption by the incarnate Son of God, which offers mankind the sacramental means of union with the eternal life of the God-Man Jesus Christ, and which makes the perpetual representation of His atoning Sacrifice its essential act of worship

must be the declared enemy of all who see in the state the be-all and end-all of man's life.'

Humphrey Beevor: *Peace and Pacifism*, p. 207.

P. 64. I have permission to reprint, from *The Times* of October 5, 1938, the following letter, which might serve either as prologue or epilogue to all that I have said, and which provided the immediate stimulus for the lectures which form this book.

3rd October, 1938.

Sir,

The lessons which are being drawn from the unforgettable experiences through which we have lived during the past few days do not for the most part seem to me to go deep enough. The period of grace that has been given us may be no more than a postponement of the day of reckoning unless we make up our minds to seek a radical cure. Our civilisation can recover only if we are determined to root out the cancerous growths which have brought it to the verge of complete collapse. Whether truth and justice or caprice and violence are to prevail in human affairs is a question on which the fate of mankind depends. But to equate the conflict between these opposing forces with the contrast between democracies and dictatorships, real and profound as is this difference, is a dangerous simplification of the problem. To focus our attention on evil in others is a way of escape from the painful struggle of eradicating it from our own hearts and lives and an evasion of our real responsibilities.

The basal truth is that the spiritual foundations of western

civilisation have been undermined. The systems which are in the ascendant on the continent may be regarded from one point of view as convulsive attempts to arrest the process of disintegration. What clear alternative have we in this country? The mind of England is confused and uncertain. Is it possible that a simple question, an affirmative answer to which is for many a matter of course and for many others an idle dream or sheer lunacy, might in these circumstances become a live and serious issue? May our salvation lie in an attempt to recover our Christian heritage, not in the sense of going back to the past but of discovering in the central affirmations and insights of the Christian faith new spiritual energies to regenerate and vitalise our sick society? Does not the public repudiation of the whole Christian scheme of life in a large part of what was once known as Christendom force to the front the question whether the path of wisdom is not rather to attempt to work out a Christian doctrine of modern society and to order our national life in accordance with it?

Those who would give a quick, easy or confident answer to this question have failed to understand it. It cannot even be seriously considered without a profound awareness of the extent to which Christian ideas have lost their hold over, or faded from the consciousness of, large sections of the population; of the far-reaching changes that would be called for in the structure, institutions and activities of existing society, which is in many of its features a complete denial of the Christian understanding of the meaning and end of man's existence; and of the stupendous and costly spiritual, moral and intellectual effort that any genuine

attempt to order the national life in accordance with the Christian understanding of life would demand. Realistically viewed the task is so far beyond the present capacity of our British Christianity that I write as a fool. But if the will were there, I believe that the first steps to be taken are fairly clear. The presupposition of all else, however, is the recognition that nothing short of a really heroic effort will avail to save mankind from its present evils and the destruction which must follow in their train.

I am, Sir,

Yours etc.

(Signed) J. H. OLDHAM

POSTSCRIPT

A distinguished theologian, who has been so kind as to read the proofs of this book, has made criticisms of which I should have liked to avail myself by a thorough revision of the text. He has allowed me to quote the following passage from his criticism, which the reader may find helpful in correcting some of the defects of my presentation:

'The main theses of this book seem to me so important, and their application so urgently necessary, that I want to call attention to two points which I think need further emphasis, lest the point of the argument should be missed.

'A main part of the problem, as regards the actual Church and its existing members, is the defective realisation among us of the fundamental fact that Christianity is primarily a Gospel-message, a dogma, a belief about God

and the world and man, which demands of man a response of faith and repentance. The common failure lies in putting the human response first, and so thinking of Christianity as primarily a *religion*. Consequently there is among us a tendency to view the problems of the day in the light of what is practically possible, rather than in the light of what is imposed by the principles of that truth to which the Church is set to bear witness.

'Secondly, there is a general vagueness about "the Community of Christians". I fear the phrase will be interpreted to mean nice Christianly-minded people of the upper middle class (p. 61). But the Community of Christians ought to mean those who are gathered into unity in the sacramental life of the visible Church: and this community in the life of faith ought to be producing something of a common mind about the questions of the day. It cannot indeed be assumed that the mind of the Community of Christians is truly reflected in the ecclesiastical pronouncements which from time to time appear: that mind does not form itself quickly, in these matters in which it is so hard to see the way. There ought however to be, and to some real extent there is now, in the minds of Christian people a sense of the proportion of things and a spirit of discipline, which are direct fruits of the life of faith: and it is these that need to be brought to bear if the questions are to be answered in the light of Christian principles.'

APPENDIX

The following broadcast talk, delivered in February 1937 in a series on 'Church, Community and State', and printed in 'The Listener', has some relevance to the matter of the preceding pages of this book.

APPENDIX

That there is an antithesis between the Church and the World is a belief we derive from the highest authority. We know also from our reading of history, that a certain tension between Church and State is desirable. When Church and State fall out completely, it is ill with the commonwealth; and when Church and State get on too well together, there is something wrong with the Church. But the distinction between the Church and the World is not so easy to draw as that between Church and State. Here we mean not any one communion or ecclesiastical organisation but the whole number of Christians as Christians; and we mean not any particular State, but the whole of society, the world over, in its secular aspect. The antithesis is not simply between two opposed groups of individuals: every individual is himself a field in which the forces of the Church and the world struggle.

By 'the Church's message to the World' you might think that what was meant was only the business of the Church to go on talking. I should like to make it more urgent by expanding the title to 'the Church's business to interfere with the World'. What is often assumed, and it is a principle that I wish to oppose, is the principle of live-and-let-live. It is assumed that if the State leaves the Church

alone, and to some extent protects it from molestation, then the Church has no right to interfere with the organisation of society, or with the conduct of those who deny its beliefs. It is assumed that any such interference would be the oppression of the majority by a minority. Christians must take a very different view of their duty. But before suggesting *how* the Church should interfere with the World, we must try to answer the question: *why* should it interfere with the World?

It must be said bluntly that between the Church and the World there is no permanent *modus vivendi* possible. We may unconsciously draw a false analogy between the position of the Church in a secular society and the position of a dissenting sect in a Christian society. The situation is very different. A dissenting minority in a Christian society can persist because of the fundamental beliefs it has in common with that society, because of a common morality and of common grounds of Christian action. Where there is a different morality there is conflict. I do not mean that the Church exists primarily for the propagation of Christian morality: morality is a means and not an end. The Church exists for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls: Christian morality is part of the means by which these ends are to be attained. But because Christian morals are based on fixed beliefs which cannot change they also are essentially unchanging: while the beliefs and in consequence the morality of the secular world can change from individual to individual, or from generation to generation, or from nation to nation. To accept two ways of life in the same society, one for the Christian and another for the rest,

would be for the Church to abandon its task of evangelising the world. For the more alien the non-Christian world becomes, the more difficult becomes its conversion.

The Church is not merely for the elect—in other words, those whose temperament brings them to that belief and that behaviour. Nor does it allow us to be Christian in some social relations and non-Christian in others. It wants everybody, and it wants each individual as a whole. It therefore must struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives, and the maximum of opportunity for others to become Christians. It maintains the paradox that while we are each responsible for our own souls, we are all responsible for all other souls, who are, like us, on their way to a future state of heaven or hell. And—another paradox—as the Christian attitude towards peace, happiness and well-being of peoples is that they are a means and not and end in themselves, Christians are more deeply committed to realising these ideals than are those who regard them as ends in themselves.

Now, *how* is the Church to interfere in the World? I do not propose to take up the rest of my time by denouncing Fascism and Communism. This task has been more ably performed by others, and the conclusions may be taken for granted. By pursuing this charge, I might obtain from you a kind of approval that I do not want. I suspect that a good deal of the dislike of these philosophies in this country is due to the wrong reasons as well as the right, and is coloured with complacency and sanctimony. It is easy, safe and

pleasant to criticise foreigners; and it has the advantage of distracting attention from the evils of our own society. We must distinguish also between our opposition to *ideas* and our disapproval of *practices*. Both Fascism and Communism have fundamental ideas which are incompatible with Christianity. But in practice, a Fascist or a Communist State might realise its idea more or less, and it might be more or less tolerable. And on the other hand, the practices, or others equally objectionable, might easily intrude themselves into a society nominally attached to quite different principles. We need not assume that our form of constitutional democracy is the only one suitable for a Christian people, or that it is in itself a guarantee against an anti-Christian world. Instead of merely condemning Fascism and Communism, therefore, we might do well to consider that we also live in a mass-civilisation following many wrong ambitions and wrong desires, and that if our society renounces completely its obedience to God, it will become no better, and possible worse, than some of those abroad which are popularly execrated.

By 'the world', then, I mean for my present purpose particularly the world in this island. The influence of the Church can be exerted in several ways. It may oppose, or it may support, particular actions at particular times. It is acclaimed when it supports any cause that is already assured of a good deal of secular support: it is attacked, quite naturally, when it opposes anything that people think they want. Whether people say that the Church ought to interfere, or whether they say it ought to mind its own business, depends mostly on whether they agree or dis-

agree with its attitude upon the issue of the moment. A very difficult problem arises whenever there is occasion for the Church to resist any innovation—either in legislation or in social practice—which is contrary to Christian principles. To those who deny, or do not fully accept, Christian doctrine, or who wish to interpret it according to their private lights such resistance often appears oppressive. To the unreasoning mind the Church can often be made to appear to be the enemy of progress and enlightenment. The Church may not always be strong enough to resist successfully: but I do not see how it can ever accept as a permanent settlement one law for itself and another for the world.

I do not wish, however, to pursue the question of the kinds of issue which may arise from time to time. I want to suggest that a task for the Church in our age is a more profound scrutiny of our society, which shall start from the question: to what depth is the foundation of our society not merely neutral but positively anti-Christian?

It ought not to be necessary for me to insist that the final aims of the churchman, and the aims of the secular reformer, are very different. So far as the aims of the latter are for true social justice, they ought to be comprehended in those of the former. But one reason why the lot of the secular reformer or revolutionist seems to me to be the easier is this: that for the most part he conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself. They are thought of either as completely impersonal, so that there is nothing to alter but machinery; or if there is evil *incarnate*, it is always incarnate in the *other people*—a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth

—never in oneself. There are individual exceptions: but so far as a man sees the need for converting *himself* as well as the World, he is approximating to the religious point of view. But for most people, to be able to simplify issues so as to see only the definite external enemy, is extremely exhilarating, and brings about the bright eye and the springy step that go so well with the political uniform. This is an exhilaration that the Christian must deny himself. It comes from an artificial stimulant bound to have bad after-affects. It causes pride, either individual or collective, and pride brings its own doom. For only in humility, charity and purity—and most of all perhaps humility—can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain.

It is not enough simply to see the evil and injustice and suffering of this world, and precipitate oneself into action. We must know, what only theology can tell us, why these things are wrong. Otherwise, we may right some wrongs at the cost of creating new ones. If this is a world in which I, and the majority of my fellow-beings, live in that perpetual distraction from God which exposes us to the one great peril, that of final and complete alienation from God after death, there is some wrong that I must try to help to put right. If there is any profound immorality to which we are all committed as a condition of living in society at all, that is a matter of the gravest concern to the Church. I am neither a sociologist nor an economist, and in any case it would be inappropriate, in this context, to produce any formula for setting the world right. It is much more the

business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, than to propose particular schemes of improvement. What is right enters the realm of the *expedient* and is contingent upon place and time, the degree of culture, the temperament of a people. But the Church can say what is always and everywhere *wrong*. And without this firm assurance of first principles which it is the business of the Church to repeat in and out of season, the World will constantly confuse the *right* with the expedient. In a society based on the use of slave labour men tried to prove from the Bible that slavery was something ordained by God. For most people, the actual constitution of Society, or that which their more generous passions wish to bring about, is right, and Christianity must be adapted to it. But the Church cannot be, in any political sense, either conservative, or liberal, or revolutionary. Conservatism is too often conservation of the wrong things; liberalism a relaxation of discipline; revolution a denial of the permanent things.

Perhaps the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, will be proved to be Avarice. Surely there is something wrong in our attitude towards money. The acquisitive, rather than the creative and spiritual instincts, are encouraged. The fact that money is always forthcoming for the purpose of making more money, whilst it is so difficult to obtain for purposes of exchange, and for the needs of the most needy, is disturbing to those who are not economists. I am by no means sure that it is right for me to improve my income by investing in the shares of a company, making I know not what, operating perhaps

thousands of miles away, and in the control of which I have no effective voice—but which is recommended as a sound investment. I am still less sure of the morality of my being a moneylender: that is, of investing in bonds and debentures. I know that it is wrong for me to speculate: but where the line is to be drawn between speculation and what is called legitimate investment is by no means clear. I seem to be a petty usurer in a world manipulated largely by big usurers. And I know that the Church once condemned these things. And I believe that modern war is chiefly caused by some immorality of competition which is always with us in times of 'peace'; and that until this evil is cured, no leagues or disarmaments or collective security or conferences or conventions or treaties will suffice to prevent it.

Any machinery, however beautiful to look at and however wonderful a product of brains and skill, can be used for bad purposes as well as good: and this is as true of social machinery as of constructions of steel. I think that, more important than the invention of a new machine, is the creation of a temper of mind in people such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly. More important still at the moment would be the diffusion of knowledge of what is wrong—*morally* wrong—and of *why* it is wrong. We are all dissatisfied with the way in which the world is conducted: some believe that it is a misconduct in which we all have some complicity; some believe that if we trust ourselves entirely to politics, sociology or economics we shall only shuffle from one makeshift to another. And here is the perpetual message of the Church: to affirm, to teach and to

apply, true theology. We cannot be satisfied to be Christians at our devotions and merely secular reformers all the rest of the week, for there is one question that we need to ask ourselves every day and about whatever business. The Church has perpetually to answer this question: to what purpose were we born? What is the end of Man?