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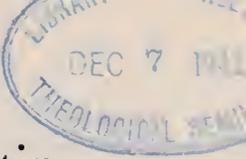
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No. 1

THE PRINCETON INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY

WE laid our plans for it with mingled hopes and fears. As to the need for such an Institute as we projected there could be no doubt. Neither was there any doubt in our minds that by mobilizing the resources of our Faculty and by inviting the collaboration of some carefully selected preachers and scholars from outside our Seminary family, we could present an unusually strong body of lecturers. But was this an opportune year to begin? We reasoned thus: If the need is real, the best time to begin an enterprise for God and His Church is always when circumstances are most difficult and the problems greatest. So we trusted God, made our plans, drafted the program, and carried the project through.

The response surpassed all our expectations. We had expected that about a hundred people might attend, and we would have felt that the Institute was worthwhile if that number came. The final registration was over one hundred and eighty, representing sixteen denominations and eighteen states, including the Dominion of Canada. The time spent together in the classrooms of Stuart Hall, at worship in Miller Chapel, in fellowship beneath the maples, in the dormitories, and at meals, was unforgettably rich. There came to us new insights into divine truth and human need, and fresh inspirations to gird ourselves for the service of our Lord. It was the feeling of everybody that something had been begun of great significance for the religious life and thought of the Church. Expressions of desire were heard on all hands that the Institute of Theology might become an annual event.

It was clear that we had acted wisely in deciding to have an *Institute* rather than a conference. The conference, in which those who register attend one meeting after another for instruction or inspiration, is no longer adequate to meet the present-day needs of ministers and Christian workers. The contemporary situation in the Church and in the world is so baffling that the presuppositions of thought and life need close scrutiny. Many who are engaged in the work of the Church are so confused and disheartened that something is needed which shall combine the intellectual atmosphere of the school with the inspirational features of the Christian workers' summer conference at its best. Some felt that the fare was too rich and that the variety of courses offered was unnecessarily great. On the other hand, some of these courses may be repeated at intervals in cycles of adequate duration. But

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE LIGHT OF THE REFORMED FAITH*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER

I DEEPLY appreciate the honor and privilege of having a place on your program. The subject assigned me seems rather too spacious for the time at my disposal, but it certainly is a most timely one. It brings us face to face with some of the most important aspects of what has again become our fundamental social problem—the preservation of our freedoms.

Confessedly, the world we are living in today is not only sadly disillusioned but also utterly bewildered. In whatever direction we may look, we find men baffled by their difficulties and their distresses; nations in sheer fright of one another taking counsel of despair and forging arms and armaments as never before; states changing their governments with kaleidoscopic swiftness; and society, if not everywhere, yet in shockingly many instances, casting aside its time-honored conventions, its cultural standards of many generations, its priceless spiritual heritage, in favor of an unabashed paganism. All that we have proudly labelled “our modern Western civilization” is in the melting pot. The old order is crumbling before our eyes, and who among us will venture to forecast what the new may be? Quite obviously, we are standing at one of the great turning points in the history of the race.

There are, of course, many angles from which the momentous happenings of our time may, and indeed must, be discussed; but at a gathering like this it is a comfort to remember that one does not need to argue the fact that back of all our economic, social, and political questions there is always the primary consideration of the moral requisites involved in the attainment of any truly worthy ends. We here are of one mind that in the final analysis it

still holds true: the improvement of the soul is the soul of all improvement. We believe that it is only in the light of our Christian faith that we can see our real need and find our only adequate help. In one of the last articles that came from his gifted pen President Woodrow Wilson concluded with the statement: “The sum of the matter is this, that our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated by the spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices which spring from that spirit.” It is from this standpoint that I invite you to consider the subject of Church and State with special reference to the application of Christian, and particularly Calvinistic, principles to those powerful secular forces that today in so many lands are molding national life and international relationships.

The Modern Totalitarian State

The modern state—to come at once to the heart of the matter—has been expanding its functions to an unparalleled extent. In many respects, no doubt, this development has been both desirable and necessary. For as our communal life grows more complex it becomes expedient to delegate more power alike in legislation and in administration to the proper civil authority, be it that of the city, the state, or the national government. I remember that when I first became a resident of the little town in which I live, I could safely

* An address delivered in Atlantic City on February 10, 1942, at the annual meeting of the Western Section of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System.

cross the main street at any moment I chose; but in these days of automobiles I do so at my peril if I disregard the red light. And this is typical of many other salutary changes that have been taking place in our whole scheme of orderly living. Some municipal services like water, gas, and electricity may perhaps still be furnished as efficiently and economically by private as by public enterprise; but certainly in such fields as transportation, industry and trade, and especially foreign affairs, the enlarged jurisdiction and activity of the national government are quite indispensable.

But many a modern state is going far beyond these wholesome limits. It is practicing something for which a new word has been coined, though the thing itself is in its essence as old as the most ancient autocracy. I mean totalitarianism. This is the doctrine that the state has the right to dominate the entire life of every citizen and of every group of which he is a member; to control the most intimate relationships that he sustains in the family, the school, the club, the business association, the professional circle. Indeed, it challenges claims far more august than its own by daring to regulate the worship, the work, and the witness of the Church of Christ. It is an excessive nationalism that does not hesitate to destroy some of the most sacred rights of personality. It appears in various forms in different countries, but the underlying principle is always the ruthless subordination of the individual in the totality of his being to the absolute authority of the state. In Russia, the development took the form of Communism, the avowed purpose of which is—or at any rate was—to annihilate the Christian religion in favor of Marx's materialistic conception of man and society. In Italy, Fascism in like manner denies any even relative independence to any other sphere of life, according to the dictum of *Il Duce*: "Nothing against

the state; nothing outside the state; everything for the state." In Germany, Nazidom reveals the same connection between this arrogant nationalism and a thoroughgoing dictatorship that controls the radio, the press, the cinema, and all educational agencies and means of propaganda, and in turn receives an adulation that virtually makes Herr Hitler rank with the ancient Caesars to whom divine honor was given. In Japan, the same absolutistic ideas are shaping national policies. Thus in the Far East, as in our Western World, mighty secular forces are working for the triumph of an utterly anti-Christian interpretation of the meaning of human personality and of all our social institutes. This paganism is, to be sure, no new phenomenon in history. Time and again it has pitted its energies in a life-and-death struggle against revealed religion; but it is today an unprecedented danger because of the more highly organized forms of our civilization, with their vastly increased interdependence on one another, and with the ever-present possibility that a few able, determined, and unscrupulous leaders, by monopolizing the new scientific facilities for the communication of ideas, can make their anti-Christian conceptions a bulwark for the totalitarian state.

In emphasizing the menace of these extreme types of modern nationalism I do not forget that, to a considerable extent, they have been due to a natural and justifiable reaction against an unwarranted tyranny of a quite different kind. I refer to the despotism of the Church in the heyday of her worldly power and achievement. Scarcely had she won her epoch-making victory over the Roman Empire, when she promulgated her amazing doctrine of the papacy as the theocratic state, with the pope as the vicegerent of God invested with supreme authority over all other earthly potentates and human interests. It was, indeed, a magnificent imperialism. Nor was it an unmitigated evil.

Ever and again its resources were devoted to charitable enterprises as vast as they were worthy. But often enough the record reminds one that a totalitarian Church can outdo even a totalitarian state in diabolical wickedness. And so the time came when judgment had to begin at the house of God. The Crusades began to level European society. The Renaissance brought a measure of freedom from the oppressions to which the human spirit for centuries had been subjected. In that glorious springtide three new worlds were opened to men's eager scrutinies: the geographical world from the Indies of the East to the Americas of the West; the classical Graeco-Roman world with its rediscovered treasures of art and letters; and the psychological world, the inner realm of man's spirit, the study of which was bound to yield a truer appreciation of the worth of the individual and of the possibilities of the present life as distinguished from the glories promised him by the Church for his celestial future. One by one the more progressive nations began to cast off the papal yoke, asserting their autonomy, first of all, in temporal affairs. Then came the Reformation with its deeper insight into the religious needs of the age and with its deliverance from the spiritual dominion of Rome. But alas! Luther, under the stress of the Peasants' War, lost faith in the common man and committed his Church to the tender mercies—such as they were—of the territorial rulers. Nor could any other of the original Reformers fully realize his ideal of ecclesiastical independence. Long and hard was the struggle for religious freedom, and many a noble victory was won; but too often the Church purchased a partial security by surrendering to the civil authorities the very palladium of her God-given rights and liberties. No wonder that her unfaithfulness gave rise to a nationalism that has scant understanding of, and no love for, the Christian Church.

Calvinistic Principles

We have thus far been considering the totalitarian state simply as a characteristic development of our time. Let us now look at it in the light of our Reformed faith.

Our Calvinistic tradition is here as elsewhere specially valuable just because it most fully and most consistently carried out the evangelical principles of the Reformation. For this reason it became, in the domain of political life, the creator and preserver of civil liberty and constitutional government. As Troeltsch reminds us: "All the Calvinistic peoples are characterized by individualism and democracy, combined with a strong bias towards authority and a sense of the unchangeable nature of law. It is this combination which makes a conservative democracy possible, whereas in Lutheran and Catholic countries, as a matter of course, democracy is forced into an aggressive and revolutionary attitude." How are we to account for this notable difference? We must, I am sure, trace it to the organizing idea of the Calvinistic system—the sovereignty of God over every realm of created being—and to the influence of this majestic truth upon the three fundamental relations of human existence: our relation to God, our relation to our fellow man, and our relation to the world.

God is the one and only Sovereign in the absolute sense. But in his condescending goodness he has been pleased to establish, for the comfort and welfare of mankind, various subordinate authorities, each with a measure of autonomy, but each strictly accountable to himself and fulfilling its divinely appointed function only in so far as it promotes his glory. By his particular or special grace he kindles spiritual life in his elect, making them members of the body of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the faithful. And by his common grace he endows all men, including the unregenerate with manifold gifts and talents, restrains

the power of sin in their hearts and in the world about them, and enables them to form associations of many sorts for the advancement of their common interests. Of the Church I shall speak later, but here I wish to emphasize the epochal significance of this Calvinistic doctrine of common grace. In general, it once for all set aside that erroneous and mischievous teaching of the papacy, that everything beyond the sacramental touch of the hierarchy is under a divine curse. And in particular, it made possible a high and noble conception of the state. Calvin went the length of saying that "civil magistracy is a calling not only holy and legitimate, but far the most sacred and honorable in human life." No doubt, he was often too eager to have the Geneva council take his interpretation of a biblical text as the only possible revelation of the divine will, the result being that time and again he had to endure what he could not cure. Nor could he altogether abandon the baleful practice of a thousand years by which the civil government had to "preserve the pure doctrine of religion" and even inflict capital punishment on archheretics. And though in the decisive issue—that concerning the spiritual freedom of the Church—he was ready to lay down his life rather than let the civil authority determine the proper qualifications for communicant membership, he nevertheless insisted that the state in its own sphere as the guardian of public law and order is supreme.

But this Calvinistic doctrine of common grace had blessings to bestow upon many other social spheres besides the state. It is our Calvinists that have had most to do with the smashing of the equation: the state is the community. They have insisted that history is much more than past politics and that politics is not all there is in present history. The community with all its cultural interests is something more than the state. The state is only one of the many organs that the community employs to realize its varied aims. We are not to minimize

the achievements of our military and naval heroes and our great political leaders, but we must insist that man is not only, in the famous phrase of Aristotle, "a political animal," but also an intellectual, an aesthetic, a social, a moral, and a religious being, and that in all these aspects of his nature he develops special interests for the promotion of which he finds it expedient to fashion all sorts of associations—in athletics, in education, in business, in professional life, in music and art, in literature and science, in philanthropic and religious activities. This theory rightly holds that the community—in the totality of the cultural values represented by these associations—is the central and all-comprehending social sphere; that the community deserves our primary loyalty, so that in case of a conflict we may even have to overthrow the state in order to protect our highest communal interests; and that the community flourishes best when the state most perfectly performs its one and only but indispensable task of serving the community by securing and maintaining the external conditions of social order.

To discharge this function the state must have coercive power. By divine as well as by human law the magistrate must punish evildoers. In the purely internal affairs of the state this truth is so obvious that only in exceptional cases can there be any room for debate. So long as sin continues to make our social relationships abnormal, we shall need our police, our courts, our jails. When capital or labor or any other organized groups adopt violent measures to gain their partisan ends, the community—which after all is the chief sufferer in such cases—may properly insist that the state should intervene for the sake of the injured majority. But more and more we are realizing that mere force cannot of itself rectify the conditions that lead to strife and that it can never clothe the state with omnicompetence. Let us take a few illustrations. The state may order teachers in its schools to refrain from

inciting students to acts of rebellion against its lawful authority; but it cannot, without destroying freedom of thought, forbid all discussion of such subjects as, let us say, socialism and communism. Colleges and universities, the press and the forum must be permitted to maintain their sovereignties in their special spheres, lest knowledge perish from the earth. The state may, and it alone can, control the property rights of a local church; but it goes beyond its legitimate realm when it undertakes to tell men how they are to worship God, or the clergy how they are to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments. For the Church has her own God-given privileges and duties, and the true Christian will do all he can to maintain the sovereignty of the Church in the interests of religious freedom. The state may establish museums for the exhibition of masterpieces of art, and may regulate the selection of such works on the basis, let us say, of their influence on public morals; but obviously it must leave the creation of art to those whom it pleases God to endow with the requisite talent. Artistic genius always and everywhere authenticates its divinely given sovereignty. The state may encourage men of science by providing them with laboratories and technical facilities, but it has no means of determining for them what their findings shall be. Science must be granted sovereignty in its own proper sphere. In other words, the state may and must concern itself with all the life of the community in some of its aspects, but not with all that life in all its aspects. And today as never before this principle is bound to limit the state in its dealings with these associations that are the really formative and distinctive factors of our civilization and culture. The reason is obvious. Communities are becoming increasingly international in their outlook and in their activities. Industry, trade, science, art, religion—again I am naming only a few of the more important of these communal

interests—are everywhere overleaping the narrow territorial limits to which until quite recently they were confined. For now the world has become just a little neighborhood. It is impossible for any one state to control that large number of associations that extend far beyond its own boundaries and stand in vital fellowship with kindred groups in practically all enlightened nations. Civilization has developed an international community.

But what when international disputes arise and lead to war? Is armed conflict in such cases ever justifiable from a Christian viewpoint? I would speak with all respect of those who answer this question with an unconditional no. But I cannot share their conviction. For when a nation is without provocation ruthlessly attacked by another, is it not the Christian duty of the former to protect itself against the aggressor? Certainly, through the ages the great majority of the followers of Christ, and especially is this true of members of the Reformed Churches, have with a good conscience vindicated for the state the right to wage war in so just a cause. As Archbishop Temple has argued the matter:

The national State acts for a community which is . . . a partnership of many generations, including those yet unborn. The State of our generation, therefore, has not the same right to sacrifice the essential interests of its community as an individual has to sacrifice his own. . . . Not only is the State a trustee for the community, but each national community is a trustee for the world-wide community, to which it should bring treasures of its own; and to submit to political annihilation may be to defraud mankind of what it alone could have contributed to the general wealth of human experience.

But granting that war may be both just and necessary, we have to face the fact that today weighty considerations compel

us to view the problem in a new light. Neither geographical nor political isolation is any longer possible. Totalitarian war means universal war. And as Viscount Grey summed up the catastrophe of twenty-five years ago: "it was the victory of war itself over everybody who took part in it." And so our economists oppose war because under modern conditions it is an economic folly of ever-increasing magnitude. And our humanitarians oppose it as an insensate crime against civilization. And though at this very moment more men are under arms and more wealth is being expended on armaments than at any other time in recorded history, yet this also is true: never before has so much serious thought been given to the question, What can we do to prevent war?

One fact is clearly emerging out of the world-encompassing gloom. Internationalism must supplant nationalism as nationalism long ago supplanted tribalism. The state as the organ of the national community must, by the very logic of its being, look to the creation of an international state that can serve as the appropriate organ of the already existing international community. Our alternatives seem to be ever-recurring world-wide wars or the establishment of an international sovereignty, a supranational state—call it what we may—that will be duly empowered to perform the primary duty of government to protect life and property and promote the common welfare. The international community that has come into being calls for a vastly extended reign of law. States that in their sovereignty now indulge in utter lawlessness, making solemn treaties only to break them, must yield something of their sovereignty to create a world government that by the consent of the governed will establish order and preserve peace on the earth. One by one our sovereign states—as long ago did our helpless colonies—must realize that they are then most like the true and archetypal Sovereign—I mean the only

true and living God—when they humble themselves in love and sacrificial service.

The Function of the Church

And this leads me to a final word concerning the Church. The Church, according to her divine Founder, who is also her ever-living and ever-present Lord, is both the object and the organ of what he so often called the kingdom of heaven; that kingdom which is the rule of God through Christ by the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of his redeemed children. Essentially, then, the Church is not a national but a supranational brotherhood. What she was potentially from the very beginning she has now become in actuality—a truly catholic or universal communion. Convinced that beneath king's ermine and archbishop's pallium and professor's gown and soldier's uniform and laborer's jacket and prodigal's rags there is the same sort of human heart with needs that only God can satisfy, the Church makes her appeal to men as men, and thus creates that world-wide community of followers of Christ who purpose to establish here on earth that order of values, relationships, and laws that reflects the spiritual genius of Christianity as the builder of the true city of God, the real commonwealth of humanity.

What, then, does the Church have to say in our present crisis? What contribution can she make to the solution of our problem?

In general, my answer is very simple. Indeed, it is so old-fashioned and familiar that I am afraid its lack of novelty often makes us fail to appreciate its real significance. In a word the Church is that institution which more than any other agency or influence can and does promote international good will and fraternity. She insists that the universalism inherent in the Christian conception of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man must find expression not only in the relation of her many branches to one another

but also in the relation of nations to one another. Her ideal is not the cosmopolitanism that pretends to be superior to the sentiment of nationality, but rather the internationalism that recognizes the necessity and even the desirability of national differences, but resolutely subordinates them all to the unity of the whole family of man to whom she is commissioned to minister.

But in particular, I would say that if the Church is to realize this ideal in a manner more nearly commensurate with the needs of this new age, she must, in the first place, maintain the proper relation between her evangelistic and her educational tasks. Now, as ever, her primary function must be that of preaching the gospel for the salvation of individual sinners. For to have a better social order we must first of all have the spiritually renewed men and women who alone can make it. Not a single one of our economic, industrial, or political problems can ever be solved until we have solved the problem of changing the human heart. Now the Church has the key to this mystery of divine grace, and when she understands her business, she always dares to put first things first, saying, "Verily, ye must be born again." Otherwise, as Jesus goes on to say, a man cannot even see, let alone enter, the kingdom of God. But we need also to remember that regeneration is only the beginning of the Christian life. It is in order to sanctification and service. Though we are not justified by works, yet the faith that justifies is not without works. Too often our religion is specialized into a detached department of life, instead of being made to hallow all our relationships. No doubt, many who today are chiefly concerned about what they call "the Christianizing of our social order" or "the socializing of our Christianity" are putting a one-sided emphasis on a part of the truth and failing to do justice to the prior necessity of getting the right sort of converts. But they are quite right in what they

affirm: personality and community are correlative terms. Neither without the other can be what it ought to be. A Christian can realize himself only in the give-and-take of human intercourse. Only as he accepts the divine will for all the relationships that make up his life is he loyal to him whom he acknowledges as Lord of all. The Church may and must teach totalitarianism in this sense, that the Christian in the totality of his being belongs to Christ—intensively in every realm of the hidden man of the heart, and extensively in all his relationships in the local, the national, and the international community.

But there is a second imperative duty resting upon the Church of today as never before. She must strengthen her corporate witness to the gospel. This would be accomplished in large measure by healing those divisions in her ranks that have now fulfilled whatever good purpose they may have had. Of course, mere bigness is no guarantee of power, nor does true spiritual oneness demand the organic union of all our denominations. But they must come to a better mutual understanding of one another; they must face the fact that the things in which they agree are vastly greater and more important than those in which they still disagree; they must more effectively cooperate with one another in the common task; they must give the unbelieving world a more impressive demonstration of the unity of their faith in him whom they confess as Saviour and Lord.

And lastly, the Church to fulfill her mission must realize more perfectly than she has yet done her absolute dependence upon God. Natural and material resources are not enough to make a more friendly world in which to live. Our humanistic cults and all our boasted scientific achievements only keep throwing us back upon ourselves and convincing us that our wisdom is but folly, our wealth poverty, and our strength weakness. Conferences and alliances, leagues and treaties, civic pro-

grams and ecclesiastical machinery are helpful in their proper places, but quite useless apart from the spiritual dynamic that alone can make an organization into a living organism. Only God is sufficient for us. In shame and penitence, but also in thanksgiving and confidence, we must discover the hidden depths of meaning for our day in the ancient Calvinistic motto *Soli Deo Gloria*. In the Russo-Japanese War some officers came to the Mikado and reported, "Port Arthur cannot be taken." He replied, "Your Emperor expects you to do the impossible." And so it is with the Captain of our salvation. Only let us not imagine that we can accomplish the feat in our own strength. Only super-

natural grace can give us that true blood-brotherhood in Christ that may dare to hope that it can transform the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of our Lord. In him and in him alone all the contradictions of our individual lives and of our social order are reconciled. We shall have peace—peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with our neighbors, peace among the nations—when we and enough other Christians have learned to put God first, according to the full intent of the angelic strains that heralded the birth of the Prince of Peace: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT*

The Passing of Dr. Mackenzie

A few days after the October meeting of the Board of Trustees there passed away in the Princeton Hospital a much beloved member of the Seminary staff in the person of Dr. Donald Mackenzie. Dr. Mackenzie became a professor in this Seminary in the year 1934, succeeding Dr. Geerhardus Vos in the Chair of Biblical Theology. During that time he rendered signal service through the force of his personality, the warmth and ruggedness of his devotion, and the versatile and inspirational character of his lectures. Dr. Mackenzie was passionately devoted to the Seminary and to his work. He was engaged in dressing one morning before setting out to take his usual morning class when he succumbed to weakness. Two weeks later he passed away. A medical autopsy after his death showed that he suffered from an incurable disease that had entered his bloodstream. An account of his death, together with the memorial minute of the Faculty, will be found in

the March number of the *Seminary Bulletin*. He is survived by Mrs. Mackenzie and four children, three daughters and a son, all grown up, to whom our sympathy goes out in their bereavement.

The Department of Field Work

Pursuant to the action of the Board of Trustees a year ago a Department of Field Work was established under the direction of Dr. J. Christy Wilson. This Department has come to fill a long felt need in our Seminary. Building upon the foundations laid by Dr. Harold I. Donnelly before his lamented death, and subsequently to that time by Dr. Edward Howell Roberts and Dr. E. G. Homrighausen, Dr. Wilson has carried forward and developed the Department with very remarkable success. In the special report which he has prepared members of the Board will find data of very great interest regarding the prac-

* Selected passages from the Annual Report of the President of the Seminary to the Board of Trustees.

