

# THE CHURCH SUPREME AND INDEPENDENT\*

By REV. P. J. GANNON, S.J.

IT was on account of this principle that the martyrs perished in the Coliseum. For the instinctive antipathy of the Roman Empire to the infant Church was due to the jealousy of one supreme authority for another. No doubt, other causes and motives entered in. Pagan laxity took fright at the austere morality of the new faith; Roman pride and prejudice revolted against what seemed an Oriental superstition of Jewish origin and with servile or at least plebeian affiliations. But the action of the state authorities was dictated by an appreciation of the fact that here was a new and mysterious institution, which did not trace its charter to the Caesars, and claimed for itself a spiritual jurisdiction and independence apparently incompatible with the *suprema potestas* of a ruler who, when living, was styled *Pontifex Maximus* and, when dead, was enrolled among the gods.

Even the early Christian emperors chafed under the claims of the Church, and strove to evade them openly or covertly. We see the tendency already in Constantine, and still more in many of his successors, who imagined that in patronising the Church they established a right to enslave it. They succeeded in the East with the most disastrous results, first to the Church and secondly to the State; for history is full of ironical revenges. They failed in the West, because the successors of St. Peter knew their dignity and were able to maintain their rights.

But where the early empire failed, the later Germanic Empire tried again, and thus originated that long duel between Pope and Emperor which held Europe in turmoil for many a day. It was in vindication of the supremacy and independence of the Church that Hildebrand forced Henry to come to Canossa, and later died in exile himself. It was in essentially the same cause that Thomas Becket fell on the altar-steps of Canterbury Cathedral.

For a brief period in the thirteenth century Catholic principles triumphed, with results to both Church and State which may be commended to the calm consideration of all who assume that the Church's independence clashes with the interests of the State.

But the struggle began anew under a grandson of St. Louis, and from being a dispute among canonists and jurists, developed by slow degrees into a very complex, very bitter, very disastrous conflict of policies, economic systems, national aspirations, and cultural ideals. It ended in the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century, when the whole conception of a Catholic or universal Church, one in creed, one in cult, and one in jurisdiction, was challenged by the emergence of numerous local churches, each the creature of the State and thus its vassal, not venturing to claim independence and utterly incapable of asserting it. It was in protest against this attempt to reform Catholicism out of existence that the English and Irish Martyrs testified unto blood.

And the issue is with us still. It has passed through various phases and assumed various disguises. But Gallicanism and Napoleonism in Catholic France, Bismarkism in Protestant Prussia, evolving under our eyes into more radical and more devastating heresies, carry the question up to date, and are but milestones in the secular struggle between the Church striving to be free and the State endeavouring to rob it of its liberty.

If the victory of the State merely meant humiliation for churchmen, it might not be an unmixed evil. For humiliation, which is the only road to humility, is useful for all of us, for priests and pontiffs, no less than for politicians and princes. But the consequences are in reality far graver, graver indeed than the ordinary citizen perceives. For the ordinary citizen is little versed in the philosophy of history and little trained in systematic thinking. He is often impatient or indignant if asked to take long views and envisage ultimate consequences. He is unsuspecting of the dangers lurking in plausible, but inadequately thought-out, theories; he is at the mercy of the isolated instance of the incomplete induction, as against the operation of general laws; and his trust in the good intentions of individuals often blinds him to the logic of events. Thus it happens that the ordinary citizen, who is well-meaning on the whole, is perpetually at the mercy of unscrupulous propaganda or ingenious special pleading. Thus it is, too, that, even when a loyal Catholic at heart, he is often half

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persuaded that the Church's claims are excessive, and that the State is endangered by the presence in its midst of another society claiming independence and supremacy.

But the fact is, and the whole history of Christianity enforces the lesson, that whenever and wherever the State encroaches upon the Church's rights, both suffer. The Church reduced to vassalage becomes identified with the successful regime of the moment, shares the blame of its mistakes, grows feeble with its decay, and perishes in its fall. Within our own lifetime we have seen two State Churches go down in ruins with the Romanoffs and Hohenzollerns. In the French Revolution a local Catholic Church shared the fate of a dynasty with which under the influence of Gallicanism it had become too closely identified. Such a result need never happen if Catholic principles are understood in theory and honoured in practice—both large "ifs," I admit.

But first in theory. Without that there is little hope of the practice, which only too often falls far short of our theories and ideals, but obviously must go wrong if based on wrong principles. It will be my endeavour in this booklet to clear up, as far as I can, the Catholic theory, with the two-fold admission that hitherto it has been more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and that the fault for its non-observance has not always lain at the door of the politicians, though undoubtedly for the most part at their door.

Catholic teaching, then, recognises two and only two perfect societies, each in its own sphere supreme and independent, namely, Church and State. All others exist within the bosom and subject to the jurisdiction of one or other of these two. Both these societies derive their charter from God, the source and fountain-head of all legitimate authority; but in different ways. The State arises from the essentially social nature of man, and the need of ordered government if many men are to live in community, co-operate for common ends, and act in harmony. Anarchy is not only immoral in theory; it is impossible in practice. Some individual or individuals must in point of fact and under all circumstances exercise domination. And anarchy in practice is nothing else than the domination of the most criminal elements over the rest. It engenders such evils that commonly it leads to the despotism of some strong man, who armed with the tacit consent of the afflicted people, reasserts the reign of law and puts the criminals in their place. Such a dictatorship is not easy to defend in the abstract theory; but in the concrete it is sometimes a necessity brought about by the folly or wickedness of men. It marks the political bankruptcy of a people, and can, I think, only be justified as a provisional arrangement to bridge over the existing chaos and pave the way for a return to political solvency.

The State, therefore, in some shape -or other, under one or other of the many forms of government it may assume, arises by a law of nature which is interpretatively the will of God, and has from that law all that it needs for the performance of its functions. These functions are to be derived from its end or purpose, which is the temporal well-being of the subjects. Rulers exist for the good of the ruled', not vice versa. This principle is admitted by all Catholic thinkers. The divine right of kings to govern ill is not Catholic doctrine at all, though often vaguely styled medieval and attributed to the Scholastics by writers who never opened an approved author of the Schools.

Nay, I hold, though the contrary opinion gained considerable support during the nineteenth century, that power comes to rulers from God, indeed, but through the people. Nor is this at all identical with saying that the rulers must be chosen by popular election, though that again would seem to be the most obvious way, and is the basic principle of most modern states. It is sufficient that the people acquiesce in any form of rule to give that rule its charter. I do not, however, mean the acquiescence of despair, when a defeated and helpless people cower under the lash of tyranny and injustice. I mean a real acceptance of a rule which, though not set up by popular election, is yet manifestly ratified by popular consent, approval or contentment. Further, I think the charter lapses when a system fails in its primary duty of procuring the common weal. I personally cannot accept the theory that, however a regime comes into being, it acquires a divine right to continue indefinitely, even when it has outlived its usefulness and forfeited its hold upon the loyalty of the subjects. That, it seems to me, would be to condemn the world to political stagnation and nations to inner decay.

There is doubtless danger of abuse in this view, as also in any other that may be propounded. But abuse is excluded by many corrective considerations. For first, possession is nine-tenths of the law. The gravest reasons are required to justify the dislocation and confusion inherent in any fundamental change of system. Secondly, such change, when called for,

should be accomplished by the constitutional expression of the people's will. Violent revolution, with all its inevitable evils, can only occur when the old and discredited regime refuses to bow to the will of the people and endeavours to resist reform by the exercise of force. In other words, strife enters in, not by the acceptance of the theory here defended but through the repudiation of it by some section of the community or by an external power endeavouring to thwart its operation.

But the Church's charter differs considerably from that of the State. It comes direct to her from God. It was conferred on her when Christ Himself said: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations and behold I am, with you all days even to the consummation of the world." The Church which He established is a spiritual kingdom, the nature of which must be carefully considered. It is not localised but universal: "Teach ye all nations." It is not ephemeral or changing, as state-systems obviously are, but perpetual and, in its essential constitution, unchangeable. As it was in the time of the Apostles, so it has remained and must remain to the end of time. It is monarchical, because St. Peter and his successors are the divinely appointed rulers of the City of God on earth. But the Pope is not an absolute autocrat. The episcopacy, too, is of divine institution and cannot be dispensed with. The Pope and the bishops constitute the Hierarchy of the kingdom, through which both the power or orders and spiritual jurisdiction descend in due degree to all subordinate ministers of the Church.

Now this Hierarchy, being of immediate divine institution, does not derive its powers from the faithful and still less from the State. It is in its own sphere—the spiritual sphere—directly dependent on Christ, its invisible Head, and answerable to Him alone. From Him it derives all the powers requisite for carrying out His work, and this means that relative to all human authority it is supreme and independent. It has never sought permission of the State to preach its Gospel, ordain its ministers, or administer its sacraments. It has claimed, and baldly claimed, that it has a mission to mankind which it must needs fulfil. No state has the moral right, however much it may have the physical power, to exclude the Church from its borders. Many have attempted to do so from the days of Nero onwards. But in the attempt they have been resisting the will of God, and usually they have failed in the long run.

When the faith enters any land and makes converts, there arises what is called a particular Church, sometimes known as a national Church, though the title is dangerous in its import. Just as we speak of the Four Gospels where the early Church more accurately spoke of the One Gospel of Christ according to four different evangelists, so it is more correct to speak of the one Church of Christ spread in different localities and therefore distinguishable geographically or ethnographically. If the Church, for reasons of administrative convenience, has organised itself according to national frontiers, that is no denial of the organic unity of those various branches, which spring from one trunk and live only as long as they remain part of the one tree. Still less is it a surrender of those local churches to the jurisdiction of the various states in matters ecclesiastical. Such local Churches, retaining thus their organic relation to the main stem and endowed with full spiritual supremacy and independence as against the State, come into contact with the latter in a whole host of ways, and their relations, always delicate and sometimes really difficult, are of the gravest moment for both. They give rise to numerous problems which it would be insincere to describe as simple. On the contrary, they are complicated, and, at times, highly controversial. They call for restraint and statesmanship on both sides. They can only be solved by good will on both sides. And they can never be solved unless the principles I am enunciating are honoured by both.

The Church does not claim and has never claimed to exercise civil jurisdiction over the State. Where she has exercised temporal power, as in the States of the Church, or in bishoprics that were also principalities, and when, as in the thirteenth century, she is seen acting as a sort of supreme court of appeal between the princes of Christendom, we meet with something quite accidental, springing from definite historical causes, and claiming only that impartial inquisition which it so rarely receives. I am not concerned with it at all in this booklet, for I am dealing with the far more fundamental question of the Church's position in a State owing no political allegiance to pope or pontiff.

Yet even in such a State the Church is supreme and independent in the spiritual sphere, and cannot acknowledge any subjection in that sphere. To do so would be to betray its trust, and destroy its efficacy. Even the partial concessions, wrung from it at times by the powers and principalities of this world, have always proved subversive of its influence for

good and detrimental to its religious spirit. The right of nomination or veto, sometimes conceded to the State in regard to bishoprics, has uniformly led to weakness and timidity in the high places of the Church.

If this claim to independence and supremacy seems exorbitant, liable to abuse, or inimical to the interests of the State, as setting up an *imperium in imperio*, I reply, first, that if it came from God, as we are taught to believe, it cannot be called exorbitant; secondly, that all power in the hands of men is liable to abuse, yet it must rest in some hands and should be as safe in the hands of bishops as in the hands of princes, ministers of state, or politicians; thirdly, that there is question, not of an *imperium in imperio*, but of the co-existence in the same body corporate of two distinct supreme powers, having different ends and functions, each armed with the plenitude of power in its own domain. So far from this being detrimental to the State I think it will prove on fair consideration highly beneficial. For the State is only the people organised for its temporal interests, while the Church is the people organised for its spiritual and eternal interests. Now the existence of two supreme powers in different spheres is really a safeguard for the people against the abuse of power by either authority. They balance one another, and tend to produce an equilibrium making for the security of the governed.

It is a fact of history, admitted by the most biassed historians, that the Church has often proved the bulwark of civic freedom against the despotic tendency of rulers. Even the political power of the Church, often, I admit, considerable, has always come to it through great and abiding services rendered in the political, social or economic spheres. The Church has been a moral force holding in check the physical force which the army and the taxes put into the hands of kings and their ministers. You cannot be too much upon your guard relative to the so-called tyranny of the Church. I have no wish to deny either the possibility of such tyranny or its actuality in certain times and places. I am not called upon here to enter into an apology for the Church's use of its influence in every land and era. Priests can abuse power as they can abuse wealth, or sin in any other way. If you will not accept a Church or acknowledge its jurisdiction till all its ministers are impeccable and infallible you will go without a Church till the Day of Judgment.

But surely it is clear that the Church can never attain to any influence in temporal affairs except by its hold upon the affections of the people. Christianity never set out, like Islamism, with a horde of armed fanatics to impose its message by force. It has won, wherever it won, in virtue of a spiritual excellence which brought men captive to the feet of Christ. And the faithful are not such fools as to give their hearts to hypocrites or tyrants. Neither do they pour their gifts upon the Church without some consciousness of benefits received. I say it boldly, the reverence and gratitude of the faithful are, and must always remain, the source of whatever power the Church wields. Wherever she has relied, ever so slightly, on other motives or other appeals she has failed to attain her ends, and defeated her own purpose. Hence any abuse of power leads automatically to the loss of it. The Church can only exercise tyranny over a people in conspiracy with some existing state-regime, a tyranny which must undermine its own foundations and lead to its own fall when in the fullness of time both imperia go down before the indignation of the people. I think you can almost measure mathematically the influence of any Church at any time or in any place by the confidence its children retain in it and the affection they have for it. No other basis of influence is either creditable to it or permanently possible. Only on such a basis can it hope to accomplish its own spiritual mission or confer upon the State the immense benefits that may be confidently expected, if proper harmony exists between the two great powers that rule the life of a nation.

The State which seeks to enslave the Church is really digging two graves—its own and that of the Church. The higher interests of both institutions are inseparably united. No Church can fulfil its functions satisfactorily under tyranny or anarchy. Political discontent, instability and unrest create numerous difficulties—sometimes baffling solution—for the Church, which would be bound to preach peace and pray for it from the lower motive of self-preservation, if it had not the still higher one of the Master's command.

On the other hand, no nation can flourish or enjoy stable government without religion. The very foundation of all government is law-abidingness. This gone, what remains but a trial of wits between the rulers and the ruled in which ultimately the reluctant subjects must prevail and render ordered life impossible. But law-abidingness in any vast multitude supposes a recognition of, and a respect for, authority; and authority divorced from God is like a building resting on sand or mud. It must perish. Unless men feel conscientiously bound to obey, they will not long obey. Mere

penal enactments cannot hold vast masses of men in subjection for any length of time. History proves this or it proves nothing. Hence where the religious bond decays, nations oscillate between tyranny and anarchy till they pass away. They crumble from within or are conquered from without. There is no alternative. You must not be deceived by the relatively slow process of disintegration. The life of a people is not like the life of an individual. It is measured by centuries, or at least by generations, where the individual life is measured by years. The least observant can detect senility in an individual. It requires a keener penetration to trace the laws governing the rise and fall of empires, states and kingdoms. But there is a close analogy, at least, if not a perfect similarity between the two processes, and one of the surest symptoms of approaching national downfall is the loosening of the religious bond, with its inevitable corollary, the loosing of all moral bonds. And if this loosening manifests itself simultaneously in many nations, then you are witnessing the slow break-up of the civilisation to which they belong. And that is the reason why we hear so much about the danger to European civilisation, which in simple historical verity, is the by-product (not the primary purpose or result) of Christianity, but which has largely apostatised from the faith that made it possible. That is the situation of today in its larger aspect, and unless our supreme culture, which calls itself the only civilisation of the world, seeks again the sources of inspiration from which it once drew all its higher life, its end is easily foreseen, though the date of its dissolution and the manner of it may be beyond the prevision of man.

But if the Church is to teach discipline to men it must be accepted as its Founder moulded it. Many complain that its claims are large ones; they are, but its services are greater still, all the greater because to a large extent invisible. A modern novelist has written: "Nothing but a Church will do. All the other schemes of democracy have come to naught for want of that. The lecture-platform is no substitute for Sinai. . . The underground system of the human being is the thing that must first be set right. Mere nagging negations will never serve. Without religion, how is man, the essentially religious animal, to face the most tremendous of all problems—social justice? Religion. . . is his breath of life. Such progress as he has made has ever been in accordance with such religions as he has had" (Richard Whiteing: No.5 John St. Epilogue). But if the Church is, in the familiar phrase, "to deliver the goods," it must be, in its own sphere, independent and supreme. Let the people suspect for a moment that its religious teaching or its moral judgments are decided, or even swayed, by the politicians and its influence for good is gone. Hence the state that first subjugates it and then bids it preach the duty of obedience finds by a very just nemesis that the support it leans on breaks like a withered bough.

But I am sure no Christian will question the right of the Church to supremacy and independence in the spiritual sphere.

That the State should interfere in the jurisdiction of the Church in matters purely spiritual is so obvious an aggression that we need not stay to reason with anyone who upholds it. He cannot be a sincere believer in the Divinity of Christ or in the commission given by Him to His Church. On the other hand, the Church nowhere claims jurisdiction in purely temporal affairs. Churchmen have their civic rights and duties like other men, and they are free, nay bound, to exercise them like the rest of the body corporate. But their words and actions in such matters must be sharply distinguished from their words and actions as ministers of the Church. Priests and bishops may have their views on Tariff Reform, for example, or Bimetallism. They may vote or even plead for one or other in such controversies. Their arguments have then the value that springs from the cogency of the reasoning; their example the force that comes to it from men's trust in their competence and integrity. But no more. In temporal affairs of State their voice is the voice of citizens.

All this is, I take it, quite plain and unexceptionable unless from those who have imbibed the vague anti-clericalism floating around in the modern world, which would gladly get rid of priests everywhere, but failing that insists that they shall never speak or act outside the sanctuary or sacristy. No difficulty would ever suggest itself to a genuine Christian if the spiritual and political spheres were so clearly divided that they never overlapped or grew entangled, that is, if questions of a mixed category never arose.

But such questions do arise, and must arise. Religion and morality embrace the whole of life, to this extent at least, that all man's activities in every sphere of conduct must conform to natural and divine law. The State is no more exempt from subservience to the law of God than the individual. And acts of public policy in a Christian country ought to conform to Christian ethics. The laws of the State do not create morality. They, if just, must embody the principles of Divine law, and

apply them to the particular circumstances of a given people. There is a certain legalistic frame of mind, to which lawyers are peculiarly subject (often unconsciously) which sees in any existing regime a norm of conduct imposing itself on the conscience. But first, it must be proved that the regime itself is legitimate, and secondly, it must be clear that the legislature is not exceeding its powers, an abuse which should not be lightly presumed but must be admitted as possible.

Hence, if the State were to promulgate immoral laws or to transcend its jurisdiction, the Church would be in the former case bound, in the latter free at least, to protest against such legislation and use all its influence to defeat it. Let me add that in a well-conducted State such a situation will not frequently arise. But if it does arise let it not be said that the Church in standing for a higher law is infringing on the just claims of the State. It is only preventing that institution from following a course fraught with evil consequences for all parties concerned.

Again there are certain matters of the very highest moment in which both Church and State are immediately and deeply interested. The education of youth is one of many such questions. Neither can ignore the claims of the child. He is a citizen of the State and, if baptized, a subject of the Church. His education will determine largely the kind of citizen and the kind of Christian he will be. I think it was Daniel Webster who said that the best way to make a man a good citizen is to make him a good Christian. And I am sure all Catholics will subscribe to this view. But, in addition to his duties as a Christian, the youth has to learn many purely secular things, fitting him to be a useful member of society and not a mere drone in the hive through laziness or sheer incompetence.

Here, then, we have a sphere where both jurisdictions have an interest that is evident and a duty that is paramount. And such being the case there is every possibility of a conflict of wills. Where difficulties arise every effort should be made to find some formula of reconciliation, some *modus agendi* that will safeguard the rights of all concerned, of the children, their parents, the Church and the State. Nor is this nearly as hard as might appear. For the claims of all parties can be very happily reconciled, if only there is goodwill all round and a recognition of man's whole nature and entire destiny.

In earlier days the Church took upon herself gratuitously the burden of education in every branch of learning. It is historically certain that she founded nearly all the earlier universities and schools, endowed them, and gave them their charters. She was the mother of the arts and sciences when kings were nearly illiterate, and devoted their energies almost exclusively to warfare or the chase. Her enemies, who never acknowledge a decent or unselfish impulse in the hearts of Churchmen, say she created a monopoly of education, in order to reduce the human intellect to servitude. The truth is that she acquired the monopoly because she had no competitor. She found the mind of Europe, after the barbarian invasions, as wild and uncultivated as its soil, and she undertook the cultivation of both, because she saw that she must civilise in order to Christianise.

But today she could not, even if she desired, undertake the whole task of education. The State must co-operate. Yet that does not entitle it to set the Church aside or ignore her claims to mould to religion and morality the young lives that are hers by Baptism as much as they are the State's by the locality of their birth.

Again the institution of marriage, though primarily a private affair between the two contracting parties, has such important moral, religious and social aspects that again neither Church nor State can leave it entirely to the play of passion or individual caprice. And thus we have another wide and thorny field for discussion. I have explained elsewhere the Church's teaching on this momentous question and, need not linger on it here. I only take these two as examples of what I call mixed questions. Many more could be cited. And on all of them the harmonious co-operation of both supreme powers can alone ensure healthy conditions or Christian progress. Accommodation is always possible when goodwill exists. The Church has no interest that really clashes with the interests of the State properly understood. She is by instinct and long tradition accommodating and diplomatic, where fundamental principles are not at stake. Her ministers are in the main just as patriotic and as enlightened as the politicians. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose by the temporal well-being of the people, rightly conceived and not purchased at the expense of their souls. Hence in abstract theory strife need never arise, if only passion and prejudice on one side or the other or both does not create it.

But let us suppose that it does arise and that the two powers are in conflict on a mixed issue, which should prevail?

Well, on Catholic principles, the Church. I know that in an age of secularism this must sound arrogant and aggressive. I cannot help that. I can only assert that it flows logically from premises that seem incontrovertible. The Church is guardian of higher interests than the State-spiritual interests. She, has, moreover, a charter more immediately from God. She has a constitution more unchanging and more sacred. She has a profounder and more comprehensive knowledge of the nature of man, his needs, his aspirations, his passions and his dangers. I may add she has now an experience of nearly 2,000 years under conditions as diversified as the life of mankind. She thus possesses a granary of garnered wisdom compared with which the wisdom of the oldest empire is but as an empty threshing floor when the harvest work is done. She is much less likely to be in error than the statecraft of the passing hour.

Besides, every supreme court of appeal has the right to define the limits of its jurisdiction. And on those mixed questions in which alone a conflict of authority can legitimately occur, the Church as the older, more venerable, more universal, more spiritual and more divine court of appeal has the right to decide what questions fall under its competence to decide. I have already pointed out that the Church is safeguarded from arbitrary abuse of power by the fact that she does not wield the sword of the State. She has no army, fleet, prisons, nor gendarmerie. She does not control the state exchequer nor patronage. She is physically defenceless before Caesar. Hence, she is not likely to challenge him wantonly to a trial of strength. And she can never hope to do so with success except when the justice of her claim is clear, and when behind that claim stands the moral approval of her children. Even then she may have to yield to *force majeure*. A Nero, a Domitian, a Barbarossa, an Elizabeth, a Napoleon, a Bismarck or a Calles may even deprive her for a time of power to function at all. But the policies they stand for rarely have permanence and never make for the happiness, the dignity, or the genuine progress of the peoples. Time makes an end of all their works and over their tombs the Church returns, with its imperturbable patience, to repair the ruin they have wrought. Guizot, a Protestant but also an historian, has well said: "Nations that devour the Pope perish of indigestion." It is an astonishing thing that politicians have not yet learned the truth of these words, but still go on hoping for incompatibilities, for a Church strong to sustain the State, yet impotent to criticise it or direct it, even on those questions that it is the Church's duty to decide and which it alone has the competence, to decide scientifically.

It does not fall within the scope of this booklet to explain the marks by which we recognise an authoritative Church pronouncement. I may say, however, that the instructed Catholic will have little difficulty in knowing when his conscience is directly challenged by the teaching decrees, or commands of the legitimate rulers of the Church. Even then an inner movement of revolt on the part of fallen nature may be experienced. But it will generally be found that docility, though it may at first appear weakness, is in reality man's highest strength and truest wisdom. It makes us one in God. It gives a solidarity linking us up with all the ages that have passed since Peter trod the Appian Way, and all the ages that are to come till the Sign of the Son of Man is in the heavens. Rome certainly makes big demands upon her children. But when we think of Canterbury today can we honestly say that they are excessive? For one thing, the imagination refuses to conjure up the spectacle of a Pius XI being led in tears from an Italian Parliament that has refused to authorise an alternative Communion service and then meekly proclaiming that the politicians have acted within their rights! Even Mussolini, the wonder worker of the secular world, could not accomplish this wonder, if he had the desire, which he was perhaps too shrewd to harbour. A Church by Law Established may have many amiable characteristics—a comprehensiveness, for instance, embracing Dean Inge and Dr. Barnes on the one hand and Canon Bullock-Webster and Lord Halifax on the other. But only a nation of which one of its bishops exclaimed: "Thank God, we are an illogical people," could see in it any faintest resemblance to the Church which Christ founded and launched upon the sea of time with the words: "He that heareth you heareth Me; he that despiseth you despiseth Me." We are certainly told in Scripture to "give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." But it is nowhere hinted that the authorisation of a Christian prayer-book is one of those things. Yet this Erastianism will soon be seen to follow in practice from the denial of the Church's claim to supremacy and independence in its own sphere.

Censor Theol. Deput.

IMPRIMI POTES:

✠ Ioannes Carolus.,  
Archiep. Dublinen.,  
Hiberniae Primas.

Dublino, die 27<sup>o</sup> Februarii, anno 1957.

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