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*Community, State, and Church*
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Doubleday Press

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COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

will be dethroned, and the true order of human affairs—the justice, wisdom and peace, equity and care for human welfare which are necessary to that true order—will arise. Not as heaven (not even as a miniature heaven) on earth! No, this “true order” will be able to arise only upon this earth and within the present age, but this will take place really and truly, already upon this earth, and in this present age, in this world of sin and sinners. No eternal Solomon, free from temptation and without sin, but none the less a Solomon, an image of Him whose Kingdom will be a Kingdom of Peace, without frontiers and without end. This is what the Church has to offer to the State when, on its side, it desires from the State nothing but freedom. What more could the State require, and what could be of greater service to it than this—to be taken so inexorably seriously?

We all know the maxim of Frederick the Great: Suum cuique. It is a less well-known fact that it already appears as a definition of human law, as a summary of the functions of the Just State, in Calvin’s Institutio: ut suum cuique salum sit et incolume. But—this Calvin did not say, and this we must attempt to discover and to learn anew—it depends upon the justification of sinful man in Jesus Christ, and thus on the maintenance of this central message of the Christian Church, that all this should become true and valid in every sense, in the midst of this “world that passeth away.” In the midst of the great, but temporary contrast between Church and State, in the period which the Divine patience has granted us between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His return: Suum cuique.

By the “Christian community” we mean what is usually called “the Church” and by the “civil community” what is usually called “the State.”

The use of the concept of the “community” to describe both entities may serve at the very outset to underline the positive relationship and connexion between them. It was probably with such intention in mind that Augustine spoke of the civitas coelestis and terrena and Zwingli of divine and human justice. In addition, however, the twofold use of the concept “community” is intended to draw attention to the fact that we are concerned in the “Church” and the “State” not merely and not primarily with Institutions and offices but with human beings gathered together in corporate bodies in the service of common tasks. To interpret the “Church,” as meaning above all a “community” has rightly become more recognised and normal again in recent years. The Swiss term “civil community”—in Swiss villages the residential, civil, and ecclesiastical communities often confer one after the other in the same inn, and most of the people involved belong to all three groups—the “civil community” as opposed to the “Christian community” may also remind Christians that there are and always have been
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

Communities outside their own circle in the form of States, i.e., political communities.

The "Christian community" (the Church) is the commonality of the people in one place, region, or country who are called apart and gathered together as "Christians" by reason of their knowledge of and belief in Jesus Christ. The meaning and purpose of this "assembly" (ekklesia) is the common life of these people in one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, that is, in obedience to the Word of God in Jesus Christ, which they have all heard and are all needing and eager to hear again. They have also come together in order to pass on the Word to others. The inward expression of their life as a Christian community is the one faith, love, and hope by which they are all moved and sustained. Its outward expression is the Confession by which they all stand, their jointly acknowledged and exercised responsibility for the preaching of the Name of Jesus Christ to all men and the worship and thanksgiving which they offer together. Since this is its concern, every single Christian community is as such an ecumenical (catholic) fellowship, that is, at one with the Christian communities in all other places, regions, and lands.

The "civil community" (the State) is the commonality of all the people in one place, region, or country in so far as they belong together under a constitutional system of government that is equally valid for and binding on them all, and which is defended and maintained by force. The meaning and purpose of this mutual association (that is, of the polis) is the safeguarding of both the external, relative, and provisional freedom of the individuals and the external and relative peace of their community and to that extent the safeguarding of the external, relative, and provisional humanity of their life both as individuals and as a community. The three essential forms in which this safeguarding takes place are (a) legislation, which has to settle the legal system which is to be binding on all; (b) the government and administration which has to apply the legislation; (c) the administration of justice which has to deal with cases of doubtful or conflicting law and decide on its applicability.

II

When we compare the Christian community with the civil community the first difference that strikes us is that in the civil community Christians are no longer gathered together as such but are associated with non-Christians (or doubtful Christians). The civil community embraces everyone living within its area. Its members share no common awareness of their relationship to God, and such an awareness cannot be an element in the legal system established by the civil community. No appeal can be made to the Word or Spirit of God in the running of its affairs. The civil community as such is spiritually blind and ignorant. It has neither faith nor love nor hope. It has no creed and no gospel. Prayer is not part of its life, and its members are not brothers and sisters. As members of the civil community they can only ask, as Pilate asked: What is truth? Since every answer to the question abolishes the presuppositions of the very existence of the civil community. "Tolerance" is its ultimate wisdom in the "religious" sphere—"religion" being used in this context to describe the purpose of the Christian community. For this reason the civil community can only have external, relative, and provisional tasks and aims, and that is why it is burdened and defaced by something which the Christian community can, characteristically, do without: physical force, the "secular arm" which it can use to enforce its authority. That is why it lacks the ecumenical breadth and freedom that are so essential to Christianity. The polis has walls. Up till now, at least, civil communities have always been more or less clearly marked off from one another as local, regional, national, and therefore competing and conflicting units of government. And that is why the State has no safeguard or corrective against the danger of either neglecting or absolving itself and its par-
ticular system and thus in one way or the other destroying and annulling itself. One cannot in fact compare the Church with the State without realising how much weaker, poorer, and more exposed to danger the human community is in the State than in the Church.

III

It would be inadvisable, however, to make too much of the comparison. According to the fifth thesis of the Theological Declaration of Barmen (1934), the Christian community also exists in “the still unredeemed world,” and there is not a single problem harassing the State by which the Church is not also affected in some way or other. From a distance it is impossible clearly to distinguish the Christian from the non-Christian, the real Christian from the doubtful Christian even in the Church itself. Did not Judas the traitor participate in the Last Supper? Awareness of God is one thing, being in God quite another. The Word and Spirit of God are no more automatically available in the Church than they are in the State. The faith of the Church can become frigid and empty; its love can grow cold; its hope can fall to the ground; its message become timid and even silent; its worship and thanksgiving more formalities; its fellowship may droop and decay.

Even the Church does not simply “have” faith or love or hope. There are dead churches, and unfortunately one does not have to look far to find them anywhere. And if, normally, the Church renounces the use of physical force and has not shed blood, sometimes the only reason has been lack of opportunity; struggles for power have never been entirely absent in the life of the Church. Again, side by side with other and more far-reaching centrifugal factors, local, regional, and national differences in the Church’s way of life have been and still are strong. The centripetal forces which it needs are still weak enough to make even the unity of Christian communities among themselves extremely

doubtful in many places and a special “ecumenical” movement both desirable and urgently necessary. There is then no cause for the Church to regard the civil community too superciliously.

IV

More important still, however, is the positive relationship between the two communities which results from the fact that the constitutive elements of the civil community are also proper and indispensable to the Christian community. The very term ekklēsia is borrowed from the political sphere. The Christian community also lives and acts within the framework of an order of law which is binding on all its members, of a “canon law” which it cannot regard as an end in itself but which it cannot neglect to institute as a “token of the Lordship of Christ” (A. de Quervain, Kirche, Volk und Staat, 1945, p. 158). The Christian community exists at all times and places as a politeia with definite authorities and offices, with patterns of community life and divisions of labour. What the legislature, the executive, and the administration of the law are in the life of the State has its clear parallels in the life of the Church, however freely and flexibly it may be shaped and however “spiritually” it may be established and intended. And though the Christian community does not embrace all men, but only those who profess themselves Christians and would like, more or less seriously, to be Christians—it reaches out, instituted as it is to be the “light of the world,” from these few or many, to all men. The gospel, with which it is commissioned, is preached to all, applies to all. To serve all the people within range of the place, region, or country where it is established is the purpose of its existence no less than it is that of the civil community. In I Timothy 2:1-7 we read that the God in whose sight it is good and acceptable that Christians as such may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty will have all men to be saved and to come to
the knowledge of the truth, and that Christians are therefore to pray for all men and especially for "kings," that is, for those who bear special responsibility in the political sphere (which embraces all men).

In this sense, therefore, the existence of the Christian community is political. Furthermore, the object of the promise and the hope in which the Christian community has its eternal goal consists, according to the unmistakable assertion of the New Testament, not in an eternal Church but in the polls built by God and coming down from heaven to earth, and the nations shall walk in the light of it and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour into it (Revelation 21:23, 24). It consists in a heavenly polis (Philippians 3:20)—in the basilica of God—in the judgment of the King on the throne of His glory (Matthew 25:31 f.). Bearing all this in mind, we are entitled and compelled to regard the existence of the Christian community as of ultimate and supremely political significance.

V

The Christian community is particularly conscious of the need for the existence of the civil community. For it knows that all men (non-Christians as well as Christians) need to have "kings," that is, need to be subject to an external, relative, and provisional order of law, defended by superior authority and force. It knows that the original and final pattern of this order is the eternal Kingdom of God and the eternal righteousness of His grace. It preaches the Kingdom of God in this external form. But it also knows that this Kingdom has an external, relative, and provisional embodiment "in the world that is not yet redeemed," in which it is valid and effective even when the temporal order is based on the most imperfect and clouded knowledge of Jesus Christ or on no such knowledge at all. This external, relative, and provisional, but not on that account invalid or ineffective, form of legal order is the civil community. The Christian community is aware of the need for the civil community, and it takes the need absolutely seriously. For—because it knows of the Kingdom and grace of God—it knows of man's presumption and the plainly destructive consequences of man's presumption. It knows how dangerous man is and how endangered by himself. It knows him as a sinner, that is as a being who is always on the point of opening the sluices through which, if he were not checked in time, chaos and nothingness would break in and bring human time to an end. It can only conceive the time that is still left to it as a "time of grace" in the twofold sense of being the time which it is given in order to know and lay hold of God's grace—and as the time which it is given for this very purpose by the grace of God. The Christian community exists in this time, which is given to men, that is, in the space where man's temporal life is still protected from chaos—and on the face of it chaos should have broken in long ago. It sees as the visible means of this protection of human life from chaos the existence of the civil community, the State's effort to achieve an external, relative, and provisional humanising of man's life and the political order instituted for all (for non-Christians as well as Christians—they both need it, for human arrogance is alive in both), under which the evil are punished and the good rewarded (Romans 13:3; I Peter 2:14) and which guarantees that the worst is prevented from happening. It knows that without this political order there would be no Christian order. It knows and it thanks God that—as the inner circle within the wider circle (cf. O. Cullmann, Königswirtschaft Christi und Kirche im Neuen Testament, 1941)—it is allowed to share the protection which the civil community affords.

VI

Knowing that, it recognises in the existence of the civil community—disregarding the Christianity or luck of Chris-
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

Christian Community and Civil Community

The activity of the State is, as the Apostle explicitly stated (Romans 13:4, 6), a form of divine service. As such it can be perverted just as the divine service of the Church itself is not exempt from the possibility of perversion. The State can assume the face and character of Pilate. Even then, however, it still acts in the power which God has given it (“Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above”: John 19:11). Even in its perversion it cannot escape from God; and His law is the standard by which it is judged. The Christian community therefore acknowledges “the benefaction of this ordinance of His with thankful, reverent hearts” (Barrow Thesis No. 5). The benefaction which it acknowledges consists in the external, relative, and provisional sanctification of the unhallowed world which is brought about by the existence of political power and order. In what concrete attitudes to particular political patterns and realities this Christian acknowledgment will be expressed can remain a completely open question. It makes one thing quite impossible, however: a Christian decision to be indifferent; a non-political Christianity. The Church can in no case be indifferent or neutral towards this manifestation of an order so clearly related to its own mission. Such indifference would be equivalent to the opposition of which it is said in Romans 13:2 that it is a rebellion against the ordinance of God—and rebels secure their own condemnation.

VII

The Church must remain the Church. It must remain the inner circle of the Kingdom of Christ. The Christian community has a task of which the civil community can never relieve it and which it can never pursue in the forms peculiar to the civil community. It would not redound to the welfare of the civil community if the Christian community were to be absorbed by it (as Poppe has suggested that it should) and were therefore to neglect the special task which
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

It has received a categorical order to undertake. It pro-
claims the rule of Jesus Christ and the hope of the Kingdom
of God. This is not the task of the civil community; it has
no message to deliver; it is dependent on a message being
delivered to it. It is not in a position to appeal to the au-
thority and grace of God; it is dependent on this happen-
ing elsewhere. It does not pray; it depends on others praying
for it. It is blind to the whence and whither of human ex-
istence; its task is rather to provide for the external and
provisional delimitation and protection of human life; it de-
PENDS on the existence of seeing eyes elsewhere. It cannot
call the human hybris into question fundamentally, and it
knows of no final defense against the chaos which threatens
it from that quarter; in this respect, too, it depends on ulte-
rime words and insights existing elsewhere. The thought
and speech of the civil community waver necessarily be-
tween a much too childlike optimism and a much too
peevish pessimism in regard to man—as a matter of course,
it expects the best of everybody and suspects the worst! It
obviously relies on its own view of man being fundamentally
superseded elsewhere. Only an act of supreme disobedience
on the part of Christians could bring the special existence
of the Christian community to an end. Such a cessation is
also impossible because then the voice of what is ultimately
the only hope and help which all men need to hear would be
silent.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

The work of faith, love, and hope which they are under-
orders to perform will assume different forms on either side
of the boundary. In the sphere of the civil community the
Christian community shares common interests with the
world and its task is to give resolute practical expression to
this community of interest. The Christian community prays
for the civil community. It does so the more since the
civil community as such is not in the habit of praying. But
by praying for it, it also makes itself responsible for it be-
fore God, and it would not be taking this responsibility se-
riously if it did not pray, if it did not also work actiely on behalf of the civil community. It also expresses
its active support of the civil community by acknowledg-
ing that, as an operation of a divine ordinance, the civil power
is also binding on Christians and significant and just from
the Christian point of view. It expresses its active support
of the civil community by "subordinating" itself, in the
words of the Apostle (Romans 13:1), to the cause of the
civil community under all circumstances and therefore
whatever the political form and reality it has to deal with
in concerto). Luther's translation speaks of "being subject"
(cf. English A.V.: "Let every soul be subject to the higher
powers"—Trans.), which is something dangerously different
from what is meant here. The last thing this instruction im-
plies is that the Christian community and the Christian
should offer the blindest possible obedience to the civil com-
munity and its officials. What is meant is (Romans 13:6f.)
that Christians should carry out what is required of them
for the establishment, preservation, and maintenance of the
civil community and for the execution of its task, because,
although they are Christians and, as such, have their home
elsewhere, they also live in this outer circle. Jesus Christ is
still its centre: they, too, are therefore responsible for its
stability. "Subordination" means the carrying out of this
joint responsibility in which Christians apply themselves
to the same task with non-Christians and submit themselves
to the same rule. The subordination accures to the good of
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

the civil community however well or however badly that community is defended, because the civil cause (and not merely the Christian cause) is also the cause of the one God. In Romans 13:5 Paul has expressly added that this "subordination" is not optional but necessary, and necessary not merely "for fear of punishment," for fear of the otherwise inevitable conflict with an obscure commandment of God, but "for conscience sake": in the clear evangelical knowledge of the divine grace and patience, which is also manifested in the existence of the State and, therefore, in full responsibility towards the will of God which the Christian sees revealed in the civil community. The "subordination" will be an expression of the obedience of a free heart, which the Christian offers to God in the civil sphere as in the sphere of the Church—although with a different purpose (he renders to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's—Matthew 22:21).

IX

In making itself jointly responsible for the civil community, the Christian community has no exclusive theory of its own to advocate in face of the various forms and realities of political life. It is not in a position to establish one particular doctrine as the Christian doctrine of the just State. It is also not in a position to refer to any past realisation of the perfect State or to hold out any prospect of one in the future. There is but one Body of Christ, born of the Word of God, which is heard in faith. There is therefore no such thing as a Christian State corresponding to the Christian Church; there is no analogue of the Church in the political sphere. For it, as the effect of a divine ordinance, as the manifestation of one of the constants of divine Providence and of the historical process which it governs, the State is in the Kingdom of Christ, this does not mean that God is revealed, believed, and perceived in any political community as such. The effect of the divine ordinance is that men

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

are entrusted (whether or not they believe it to be a divine revelation) to provide "according to the measure of human insight and human capacity" for temporal law and temporal peace, for an external, relative, and provisional humanisation of man's existence. Accordingly, the various political forms and systems are human inventions which as such do not bear the distinctive mark of revelation and are not witnessed to as such—and can therefore not lay any claim to belief. By making itself jointly responsible for the civil community, the Christian community participates—on the basis of and by belief in the divine revelation—in the human search for the best form, for the most fitting system of political organisation; but it is also aware of the limits of all the political forms and systems which man can discover (even with the co-operation of the Church), and it will beware of playing off one political concept—even the "democratic" concept—against the Christian concept, against all others. Since it proclaims the Kingdom of God it has to maintain its own hopes and questions in the face of all purely political concepts. And this applies even more to all political achievements. Though the Christian will be both more lenient and more stern, more patient and more impatient towards them than the non-Christian, he will not regard any such achievement as perfect or mistake it for the Kingdom of God—nor can only have been brought about by human insight and human ability. In the face of all political achievements, past, present, and future, the Church waits for "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). It trusts and obeys no political system or reality but the power of the Word, by which God upholds all things (Hebrews 11:3; Barmen Thesis No. 5), including all political things.

X

In this freedom, however, the Church makes itself responsible for the shape and reality of the civil community
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

In a quite definite sense, we have already said that it is quite impossible for the Christian to adopt an attitude of complete indifference in politics. But neither can the Church be indifferent to particular political patterns and realities. The Church "reminds the world of God's Kingdom, God's commandment and righteousness and thereby of the responsibility of governments and governed" (Barmen Thesis No. 5). This means that the Christian community and the individual Christian can understand and accept many things in the political sphere—and if necessary suffer and endure everything. But the fact that it can understand much and endure everything has nothing to do with the "subordination" which is required of it, that is, with the share of responsibility which it is enjoined to take in the political sphere. That responsibility refers rather to the decisions which it must make before God: "must" make, because, unlike Christian understanding and suffering, Christian intentions and decisions are bound to run in a quite definite direction of their own. There will always be room and need for discussion on the details of Christian intentions and decisions, but the general line on which they are based can never be the subject of accommodation and compromise in the Church's relations with the world. The Christian community "subordinates" itself to the civil community by making its knowledge of the Lord who is Lord of all its criterion, and distinguishing between the just and the unjust State, that is, between the better and the worse political form and reality; between order and caprice; between government and tyranny; between freedom and anarchy; between community and collectivism; between personal rights and individualism; between the State as described in Romans 13 and the State as described in Revelation 13. And it will judge all matters concerned with the establishment, preservation, and enforcement of political order in accordance with these necessary distinctions and according to the merits of the particular case and situation to which they refer. On the basis of the judgment which it has formed it

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

will choose and desire whichever seems to be the better political system in any particular situation, and in accordance with this choice and desire it will offer its support here and its resistance there. It is in the making of such distinctions, judgments, and choices from its own centre, and in the practical decisions which necessarily flow from that centre, that the Christian community expresses its "subordination" to the civil community and fulfills its share of political responsibility.

XI

The Christian decisions which have to be made in the political sphere have no idea, system, or programme to refer to but a direction and a line that must be recognized and adhered to in all circumstances. This line cannot be defined by appealing to the so-called "natural law." To base its policy on "natural law" would mean that the Christian community was adopting the ways of the civil community, which does not take its bearings from the Christian centre and is still living or again living in a state of ignorance. The Christian community would be adopting the methods, in other words, of the pagan State. It would not be acting as a Christian community in the State at all; it would no longer be the salt and the light of the wider circle of which Christ is the centre. It would not only be declaring its solidarity with the civil community: it would be putting itself on a par with it and withholding from it the very things it lacks most. It would certainly not be doing it any service in that way. For the thing the civil community lacks (in its neutrality towards the Word and Spirit of God) is a firmer and clearer motivation for political decisions than the so-called natural law can provide. By "natural law" we mean the embodiment of what man is alleged to regard as universally right and wrong, as necessary, permissible, and forbidden "by nature," that is, on any conceivable premise. It has been connected with a natural revelation of God,
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

that is, with a revelation known to man by natural means. And the civil community as such—the civil community which is not yet or is no longer illuminated from its centre—undoubtedly has no other choice but to think, speak, and act on the basis of this allegedly natural law, or rather of a particular conception of the court of appeal which is passed off as the natural law. The civil community is reduced to guessing or to accepting some powerful assertion of this or that interpretation of natural law. All it can do is to grope around and experiment with the convictions which it derives from "natural law," never certain whether it may not in the end be an illusion to rely on it as the final authority and therefore always making vigorous use, openly or secretly, of a more or less refined positivism. The results of the politics based on such considerations were and are just what might be expected. And if they were and are not clearly and generally negative, if in the political sphere the better stands alongside the worse, if there were and still are good as well as bad States—no doubt the reality is always a curious mixture of the two—then the reason is not that the true "natural law" has been discovered, but simply the fact that even the ignorant, neutral, pagan civil community is still in the Kingdom of Christ, and that all political questions and all political efforts as such are founded on the gracious ordinance of God by which man is preserved and his sin and crime cleansed.

"What we glimpse in the better kind of State is the purpose, meaning, and goal of this divine ordinance. It is operative in any case, even though the citizens of the particular State may lack any certain knowledge of the trustworthy standards of political decision, and the overwhelming threat of mistaking an error for the truth may be close at hand. The divine ordinance may operate with the co-operation of the men and women involved, but certainly without their having deserved it: Dei providentia hominum confusitum. If the Christian community were to base its political responsibility on the assumption that it was also interested

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

In the problem of natural law and that it was attempting to base its decisions on so-called natural law, this would not alter the power which God has to make good come of evil, as He is in fact always doing in the political order. But it would mean that the Christian community was sharing human illusions and confusions. It is bad enough that, when it does not risk going its own way, the Christian community is widely involved in these illusions and confusions. It should not wantonly attempt to deepen such involvement. And it would be doing no less if it were to seek the criterion of its political decisions in some form of the so-called natural law. The tasks and problems which the Christian community is called to share, in fulfillment of its political responsibility, are "natural," secular, profane tasks and problems. But the norm by which it should be guided is anything but natural: it is the only norm which it can believe in and accept as a spiritual norm, and is derived from the clear law of its own faith, not from the obscure workings of a system outside itself; it is from knowledge of this norm that it will make its decisions in the political sphere.

XII

It is this reliance on a spiritual norm that makes the Christian community free to support the cause of the civil community honestly and calmly. In the political sphere the Church will not be fighting for itself and its own concerns. Its own position, influence, and power in the State are not the goal which will determine the trend of its political decisions. "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my Kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). The secret contempt which a Church fighting for its own interests with political weapons usually incurs even when it achieves a certain amount of success is well deserved. And sooner or later the struggle generally ends in mortifying defeats of one sort or
another. The Christian community is not an end in itself. It serves God and it thereby serves man. It is true that the deepest, ultimate, divine purpose of the civil community consists in creating opportunities for the preaching and hearing of the Word and, to that extent, for the existence of the Church. But the only way the State can create such opportunities, according to the providence and ordinance of God, is the natural, secular, and profane way of the establishment of law, the safeguarding of freedom and peace, according to the measure of human insight and capacity. The divine purpose is therefore not at all that the State should itself gradually develop more or less into a Church. And the Church's political aim cannot be to turn the State into a Church, that is, make it as far as possible subservient to the tasks of the Church. If the State grants the Church freedom, respect, and special privileges in any of the ways which are open to it (guarantees of one kind or another, a share in education and broadcasting, the defence of the Sabbath, financial reliefs or subsidies, and the like,) the Church will not immediately start dreaming of a Church-State. It will be thankful for the State's help, seeing in such help a result of the divine providence and ordinance: and it will show its gratitude by being a Church all the more faithfully and zealously within the broader frontiers that the State's gifts make possible, thereby justifying the expectation which the State evidently reposes in it. But it will not claim such gifts as a right. If they are refused, it will look in itself for the reason, not in the State. "Resist not evil" is an injunction that applies here. The Church will ask itself whether it has already given proof to the State of the Spirit and the power of God, whether it has already defended and proclaimed Jesus Christ to the world to the extent that it can expect to be considered an important, significant, and salutary factor in public life. It will ask, for example, whether it is in a position to say the tremendous things that are certainly entitled to be heard in schools. It will first and foremost do penance—when and where would it not have

cause for so doing?—and it will do that best by concentrating on its own special work in the, possibly, extremely small space left to it in public life, with all the more confidence and intensity and with redoubled zeal, "with the greatest force applied at the narrowest point." Where it has first to advertise its desire to play a part in public life, where it must first establish its claim to be considered a factor of public importance, it only proves that its claim to be heard is irrelevant and it thoroughly deserves not to be heard at all, or to be heard in a way that will sooner or later afford it no pleasure. Whenever the Church has entered the political arena to fight for its claim to be given public recognition, it has always been a Church which has failed to understand the special purpose of the State, an impatient, spiritually unfree Church.

XIII

The Church cannot, however, simply take the Kingdom of God itself into the political arena. The Church reminds men of God's Kingdom. This does not mean that it expects the State gradually to become the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom where God is without shadow, without problems and contradictions, where He Is All In All: it is the rule of God in the redeemed world. In the Kingdom of God the outward is annulled by the inward, the relative by the absolute, the provisional by the final. In the Kingdom of God there is no legislature, no executive, no legal administration. For in the Kingdom of God there is no sin to be reproved, no chaos to be feared and checked. The Kingdom of God is the world dominion of Jesus Christ in honour of the Father, revealed in the clear light of day. The State as such, the neutral, pagan, ignorant State knows nothing of the Kingdom of God. It knows at best of the various ideals based on natural law. The Christian community within the State does know about the Kingdom of God, however, and it brings it to man's attention. It reminds men
COMMUNITY, STATE, AND CHURCH

of the Jesus Christ who came and is to come again. But it
cannot do this by projecting, proposing, and attempting
to enforce a State in the likeness of the Kingdom of God. The
State is quite justified if it refuses to countenance all such
Christian demands. It belongs to the very nature of the State
that it is not and cannot become the Kingdom of God. It
is based on an ordinance of God which is intended for the
"world not yet redeemed" in which sin and the danger of
chaos have to be taken into account with the utmost serious-
ness and in which the rule of Jesus Christ, though in fact
already established, is still hidden. The State would be dis-
avowing its own purpose if it were to act as though its task
was to become the Kingdom of God. And the Church that
tried to induce it to develop into the Kingdom of God could
be rightly reproached for being much too rashly presumpt-
uous. If its demand were to have any meaning at all, it
would have to believe that its own duty was also to develop
into the Kingdom of God. But, like the State, the Church
also stands "in the world not yet redeemed." And even at
its best the Church is not an image of the Kingdom of God.
It would appear that when it makes this demand on the
State, the Church has also confused the Kingdom of God
with a mere ideal of the natural law. Such a Church needs
to be reminded again of the real Kingdom of God, which
will follow both State and Church in time. A free Church
will not allow itself to be caught on this path.

XIV

The direction of Christian judgments, purposes, and
ideals in political affairs is based on the analogical capaci-
ties and needs of political organisation. Political organisation
can be neither a repetition of the Church nor an anticipa-
tion of the Kingdom of God. In relation to the Church it
is an independent reality; in relation to the Kingdom of God
it is (like the Church itself) a human reality bearing the
stamp of this fleeting world. An equating of State and

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

Church on the one hand and State and Kingdom of God
on the other is therefore out of the question. On the other
hand, however, since the State is based on a particular di-
vine ordinance, since it belongs to the Kingdom of God, it
has no autonomy, no independence over against the Church
and the Kingdom of God. A simple and absolute heteroge-
nity between State and Church on the one hand and State
and Kingdom of God on the other is therefore just as much
out of the question as a simple and absolute equating. The
only possibility that remains—and it suggests itself compel-
ingsingly—is to regard the existence of the State as an allegory,
as a correspondence and an analogue to the Kingdom of
God which the Church preaches and believes in. Since the
State forms the outer circle, within which the Church, with
the mystery of its faith and gospel, is the inner circle, since
it shares a common centre with the Church, it is inevitable
that, although its presuppositions and its tasks are its own
and different, it is nevertheless capable of reflecting indi-
rectly the truth and reality which constitute the Christian
community. Since, however, the peculiarity and difference
of its presuppositions and tasks and its existence as an outer
circle must remain as they are, its justice and even its very
existence as a reflected image of the Christian truth and
reality cannot be given once and for all and as a matter of
course but are, on the contrary, exposed to the utmost dan-
ger; it will always be questionable whether and how far it
will fulfil its just purposes. To be saved from degeneration
and decay it needs to be reminded of the righteousness
which is a reflection of Christian truth. Again and again it
needs a historical setting whose goal and content are the
'moulding of the State into an allegory of the Kingdom of
God and the fulfilment of its righteousness.' Human initia-
tive in such situations cannot proceed from the State itself.
As a purely civil community, the State is ignorant of the
mystery of the Kingdom of God, the mystery of its own
centre, and it is indifferent to the faith and gospel of the
Christian community. As a civil community it can only