

**THE RELATIONS OF CHURCH AND  
STATE HISTORICALLY  
CONSIDERED. TWO PUBLIC  
LECTURES DELIVERED AT OXFORD  
ON NOVEMBER 16 AND 17, 1865**

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The relations of Church and State historically considered. Two public lectures delivered at Oxford on November 16 and 17, 1865 by Montagu Burrows

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Two Public Lectures

DELIVERED

AT OXFORD

ON NOVEMBER 16 AND 17, 1865.

BY

MONTAGU BURROWS,

CHICHELE PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY.

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THE first of these Lectures was written with the view of supplying a connected account of a subject which, during a course of Lectures on English History extending over three or four Terms, it was not easy to treat in detached fragments; and the second grew out of the first. They are not published under the belief that they can throw any fresh light upon a subject with which most persons are tolerably familiar, but partly to comply with the request of those who heard them, and partly because it was thought that there might be others to whom an elementary treatise on the Relations of Church and State would not be unacceptable.





# The Relations of Church and State Historically considered.

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## LECTURE I.

THE time has perhaps passed when theories of the relations of Church and State could command attention. Warburton, Paley, Coleridge, Arnold, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Macaulay, have each in his turn had his day. None of their contributions have been without value; but their way of dealing with the subject was, perhaps, rather suited to a past generation than the present. Rightly or wrongly, we are learning to look more to facts than to theories, and to inquire into the history of what we see around us rather than to rest satisfied with philosophical discussions. We are learning to recognize that a thing which we have inherited from a remote period stands on a footing which does not admit of our considering it sufficiently treated when merely dealt with as an open question, or put before us as a matter of choice whether we shall accept it or not. If we find our inheritance impaired, it is to history as well as to reason and policy that we must look for light upon the repairs which that inheritance may from time to time demand.

The two last-named writers have given us, each

from his own point of view, the highest results of the controversy in its abstract form. It might not be useless to attempt an impartial statement of what was left at the end of that controversy; but it will be sufficient for our purpose to say that, while the most determined adherents of Church principles will scarcely support, any more than Mr. Gladstone himself is supposed to support, every statement or every deduction in the able work of that writer's younger days, there are in all probability very few Churchmen of any kind in the present day who would accept the fundamental principles on which the most brilliant of essayists has built his structure. Few would now be willing to forget the lessons of all history, and exclude the establishment of religion from the prime functions of government. Few take so false a view of morality, the only basis and bond of government, as to suppose that it can exist without a Faith; few believe that such a Faith can lay a firm hold on the various elements of a scattered society without the assistance of the State; few, at least amongst Churchmen, would doubt what that Faith must be. Few would now consider it a sufficient argument to point out that a Railway Company, a Club, or a Joint Stock Bank, perform their functions without any agreement on religious matters; or that because it may happen that two portions of an army can combat in unison, although of different creeds, that therefore a nation as a whole must be considered free from all responsibility for the Faith of those who compose it. We may indeed have been slow in learning lessons of toleration, but the most tolerant do not find themselves obliged to give up the position that the public recognition and support of the Christian religion, as taught by the Church,

is the best possible condition for a nation ; and that all which falls short of it is a deterioration, a condition to be deplored, a condition to be delayed as long as possible, if it is still possible to save the principle upon which alone a Church Establishment can be properly retained. When we hear such a deformed and really unnatural position as that of an organized State without an Established Religion, not excused on the ground of untoward circumstances, but held up to admiration as theoretically superior to all others, we are irresistibly reminded of a certain ancient fable about a fox that had lost its tail.

What, then, are the facts as to the relations of Church and State in this country? What is the history of those relations? What have we inherited? What do we now possess of our inheritance? What have we in common with other branches of the Church? What do those other branches possess? We cannot in two short lectures do much more than indicate the lines of inquiry, but that may be better than nothing.

We must start with an axiom. The Church is One, Catholic, and Apostolic. She may be separated into parts, and thus shorn of her proper glory, but her parts are in essence entirely homogeneous. Each branch possesses exactly the same sacred deposit which was entrusted to the Church at the beginning in order to be handed on to the end of time: and of this deposit if any part is lost by any branch, that branch ceases to belong to the one Whole. Each branch owns the same Divine Head, refers back to the same original Constitution, rejects all notion of any subsequent origin. The bishops and clergy of each branch of the Church are the appointed guardians of the one deposit. That view of the Church of England which would degrade