

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

OBJECTS:

1. *To provide for readers at home and abroad information concerning the life and thought of the British Churches in wartime.*
2. *To elucidate by news and quotations the spiritual issues at stake in the war.*

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KARL BARTH SPEAKS OUT AGAIN

Dr. Karl Barth has shown his intrepid courage by writing another pamphlet, in which he warns his own country, Switzerland, of the dangers of the so-called "New Order."

We quote some extracts.

"We must know (1) that the threat of foreign domination is hanging over us: the threat of political, military, economic and cultural dependence on an alien will, alien interests and an alien spirit. Three years ago, a number of other nations thought they were in no danger. . . . On the side from which the threat comes, there can be no question of a 'fight for liberty' with a view to procuring *Lebensraum*, or a place in the sun. As for the new unity and order with which all Europe is to be endowed, it is quite clear that these simply consist in the establishment of a coercive control over as extensive an area and as many hitherto free peoples as possible and their exploitation, spoliation and spiritual tutelage—a control, be it said, which is as unsolicited as it is unnecessary. We are witnessing a comprehensive war of conquest pure and simple like the Napoleonic wars, though perhaps it resembles more closely those of the ancient kings of the Near East. The Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians are once more on the march. An attempt is made in all such cases to justify what is done by arguments based on an alleged fight for liberty, the need to assert the nation's right to exist and to secure vital space in which it may operate, and on the intoxicating and soporific promise of peace, order and wholesome renewal.

"We must realise (2) that that which

threatens us is intolerable. There are conditions which we can bear because, though grievous, they do no violence to the conscience and human dignity of him who has to bear them. There are others which we cannot bear, because we ought not to bear them—because life under those conditions is shameful; because by submitting to them we incur partial responsibility for foreign sin. Christian acceptance of suffering has its natural limits. We are told not to resist evil, but we are not told to participate in evil-doing. The despotism with which we are threatened is, in this grave sense, intolerable, for it is intolerable that a Government concentrated in the hands of a small group should not be content with such outward obedience as a legitimate authority responsible for law and order must require, but, assuming divine prerogatives, should demand the complete surrender of everything by all: complete allegiance (*Gleichschaltung*) of the conscience, servile submission, the fettering of every word and thought, the abandonment of every shred of independent responsibility and free collaboration by the individual with the community, the bending and breaking of every right apart from that right which finds its sole justification in the will of the ruler and his power to enforce that will. It is intolerable that a Government subject to no sort of control should adopt as its principle and daily practice the moral destruction or even the physical reduction to impotence of every opponent, as also the systematic extermination of those who by reason of their weakness cannot be used to further its aims. It is also in this deep sense intolerable that the Church should be faced with the alternatives of

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participating in the worship of this self-deified Government, or confining her witness to a non-committal, whispered contribution to personal piety. If it be necessary, we can suffer these things, as we suffer epidemics and earthquakes, but we cannot *desire* them. As long as we have the power of speech, we must say 'no' to them, and again, from the bottom of our hearts, 'no.' To have any hand in such things as the brutal and spiteful ill-treatment of the Jews (to mention only one thing) is intolerable, because it is not right—because it is shameful: and it is a fact that such things are part and parcel of the foreign despotism which threatens us and in some sort provides its *raison d'être*. . . . Evil will never be conquered by a lesser evil but only by good. . . .

"We should be fools if we were to allow our present 'correct and friendly relations' to make us forget that *we* have certainly not been forgotten and that the steam-roller of the so-called New Order will sooner or later reach us."

NAZI PROPAGANDA THROUGH SOUTH AMERICAN GERMAN CHURCHES

It is well known that the Nazi Party endeavours to exploit to the full overseas German Churches as centres for Nazi propaganda among Germans and non-Germans alike. In charge of all this is the Nazi-appointed Bishop Heckel, who is reckoned as the Evangelical Bishop of all Germans living abroad.

The German communities in South America are very considerable. In one State alone two Evangelical German communities number between them some 80,000 adherents. In Party publications issued at Stuttgart the Protestant pastors in Southern Brazil are mentioned as the chief factor in maintaining German racial feeling. For this reason the Nazis have treated the pastors in a way directly opposite to that followed in the Reich itself. Free vacation trips to Germany were assigned to the pastors in turn as an inducement to keep to the Party line. These pastors were well treated in Germany and came back to South America strangely ignorant of the facts of the German Church struggle.

Following the instructions of Bishop Heckel, pastors of the Brazilian German churches have kept silent on the German Church conflict. Very few of the lay members of

these churches know anything of Niemöller and his stand.

One church needed an organ and the German Consul volunteered to present one. The church agreed to accept it, but, to the embarrassment of the pastor, the Consul followed his gift by a request to speak a few words in the church every Sunday, and there seemed nothing to do but to comply.

Some pastors have been the object of Government attention because of their vigorous Nazi sympathies. It has not been unknown for a pastor to be about to be deported, and suddenly to re-appear as a member of the German Consulate staff, thereby gaining diplomatic immunity.

The German Churches have been certainly hampered by a regulation according to which all services were to be in the local vernacular of Portuguese. They have overcome this by adding to the Portuguese sermon a summary in German, and often the summary exceeds the sermon in length.

Even the refugees who have arrived in South America "from Nazi oppression" include in their number some who are Nazi agents. The Roman Catholic committee for helping Catholic refugees disbanded because it discovered that five per cent. of all the Catholic refugees coming into Brazil turned out to be Gestapo agents. Some spies are thought to have entered South America as American Lutherans. It is believed that the rule preventing missionaries entering Brazil during the present emergency is aimed not at any one religious group, but at the infiltration of Nazi agents in missionary disguise.

THE WORLD CRISIS AND AMERICA

Few things are more important at the present time than the strengthening of bonds of spiritual fellowship between Britain and the U.S.A. We are glad, therefore, to be able to print a large part of a sermon preached in the Episcopal Cathedral of New York by the Bishop of New York, the Rt. Rev. W. T. Manning, on October 5th.

"Put on the whole armour of God . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

Ephesians vi, verses 10 and 13.

From this Cathedral pulpit I am to speak to-day to you who are here, and to all whom

my words can reach, of the present world crisis, and of the call which this crisis brings to us as a nation.

There are some who hold that on these issues the representatives of the Church should take no stand and should be silent. I do not agree with them. It would be strange indeed, and it would be worse than strange, if at such a time as this, and on such issues as the world now faces, the representatives of the Church should be silent, non-committal, and neutral.

We are facing a moral and spiritual crisis such as this world has never before known, a crisis for the world, for humanity, and for our own country. Hitlerism is an assault upon all that we believe in and hold most sacred as Americans, and it is equally an assault upon all that we believe in and hold most sacred as Christians. It is an assault on the minds and souls as well as on the bodies of men. In the horrors and terrors, the ghastly crimes and cruelties which are now taking place in the enslaved countries, countries which desired only to live in peace and freedom, we see the true picture, and the utter condemnation of Hitlerism.

As that great European theologian, Karl Barth, reminds us, in his published "Letter to Great Britain," we are opposed to Hitlerism because this world is the place in which Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Between the things for which Hitlerism stands and the things for which Democracy stands, no Christian, and no American, can be neutral.

Our people in this land have been slow to realise the full meaning of this crisis. It has been hard for them to believe that such evil could threaten our security and our life, and there have been influences, some of them honestly misguided, some of them false and traitorous, which have misled, divided, and confused them.

But the facts are now clear to the vast majority of us in this land.

We see now that this is not just another conflict between rival nations or empires, but that it is a life and death struggle against the domination of this world by the brutal power of Hitlerism.

We see now that the counsels of our Isolationists and pacifists and appeasers would bring us to the same tragedy and ruin which these counsels brought to the countries now enslaved. We see that this policy would, at best, make us an isolated nation in a totalitarian world, that we should have to

become, not temporarily, as is now the case, but permanently, an armed camp, with the consequent destruction of our freedom and our whole way of life; we see that our only security is to do our part to bring this world terror to an end.

Every American abhors war. We all want peace. But we see that there can be no peace, no security, no freedom or decency in this world until Hitlerism is defeated and destroyed.

We see now clearly that it is not only the destiny of Europe, or of Great Britain, but of the world and of our own land that is at stake. Every person of intelligence knows now that this is not only the battle of Great Britain, and of Russia, and of China, but that it is also the battle of America. And we know that we owe the priceless time and opportunity that we have had for our own defence measures to the amazing fortitude and the magnificent courage of the British people.

We realise now what this world crisis is, and in this great conflict our Government has taken its position openly, definitely, and irrevocably. By the action of the President of the United States and by Congressional action, with the support of the overwhelming majority of our people, America stands pledged and committed to the defeat of Hitlerism. The time for controversy as to our entrance into the war is past. We are already in the war, we are pledged to the defeat of Hitlerism. It is time now for a united nation and for supreme national effort. . . .

Our whole nation must now stand united in spirit, in aim, and in action. Every loyal American must see that there is now only one course for us to take. We must give a vastly greater contribution in this conflict than we have yet given. We must set no limits to our effort in the common struggle. We must let the forces of freedom, and also the forces of aggression, know that we are in this struggle with our whole power and strength and until the end. Our united aim now must be the complete, decisive defeat of Hitlerism for our own self-defence, for the shortening of the war, for the ending of the frightful cruelty, misery and human suffering, for the restoration of the enslaved peoples to their freedom and their rights, for the liberation of the German people themselves from the brutal power which now misleads and degrades them, and for the preservation of justice, freedom, and humanity in this world.

And in this hour of world crisis, and of grave peril for our own country, there is one call which comes to us above all others. In this crisis the all-important thing is our national morale. The whole course of this world tragedy has shown us that the supreme thing in the life of any nation is the character, the spirit, the soul of its people, and the very life of that spirit is religion, faith in God and in His eternal law of right.

This world crisis calls us as a nation back to God, back to simple Christian faith and to true religion.

It is religion which gives men strong character, clear moral vision and moral conviction. It is religion which tells us that man is a child of God and therefore has rights of which no Government and no power on earth may deprive him. It is religion which will give us as a people the vision, the strength, the courage that we now need and which calls us to help make this a world in which all men and women, Germans as well as others, may live as free children of God. It is religion which will enable us to do our full part in this world conflict, not in the spirit of hatred or ill-will as some untruly say, but, on the contrary, in the spirit of brotherhood and fellowship and of willingness to give our aid to those who to-day, like that man in the New Testament parable, are lying "wounded" and "half dead" under brutal and inhuman assault. They are calling to us for the manifestation of our brotherhood.

But let us remember that religion, faith in God, our religion as Christians, calls us to definite, specific, and personal acts.

As we face this great crisis, we must be more real, and more faithful, in prayer and worship.

As we face this crisis, we must come back to the daily reading of our Bibles. The Bible is the Divinely given Charter of spiritual life and strength and power.

As we face this crisis, we must believe with all our minds and souls in Christ, the Living Christ, the one Light and Hope and Saviour of this world.

Our need now as a nation, and the call to all of us, is to put on the armour of God.

This world crisis calls every American, man and woman, young or old, to his place in the service of our country, and to his place in the ranks of the Church of God.

WORLD ISSUES

In spite of war conditions British churches are keeping up their interest in, and study of, missionary events and enterprises. The United Council for Missionary Education (Edinburgh House Press) has recently published the first four pamphlets of a series entitled *World Issues* (3d. each). No. 1 is "Towards a New Order," by Cecil Northcott, and shows how missions are playing a vital part in the shaping of a better future in many lands, a "new order" which is really new, and not merely the latest form of tyranny. Another pamphlet of great interest to those concerned with the wider spiritual issues of current events is called "With Chinese Communists," by Stanton Lautenschlager, and tells of friendly contacts between Christian missionaries and the Communist authorities of North-West China. "Copper in Africa" and "New Life in China" are other titles.

MORALS OF THE "BLOODSTREAM"

Confirmation of the Bishop of Münster's declaration that the Nazi leaders were encouraging their followers to break the Christian commandments is to be found in *Schwarze Korps* of September 25th. It gave a whole page to an attack on a doctor who had written an article in a Munich medical journal denouncing a man for seeking a separation from his wife because, through illness, she had become incapable of bearing children. This doctor, the Nazi paper said, was really appealing to "bourgeois pathos" against social obligation. But, in the conflict between love and duty, duty should always prevail. "That is the greatness of our National Socialist enlightenment, that it has released us from the limitations of the horizontal of the I-and-Thou relationship and has incorporated us in the everlasting vertical of the bloodstream, which must not be betrayed."