

# CHRISTIANITY IN

# GERMANY

8 Times July 19

## TWO POINTS OF VIEW

### THE CASE OF PASTOR,

NIEMÖLLER KBA 17685

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I do not wish to burden your columns with a long discussion on the Bishop of Durham's letter, but I should like to emphasize two points.

It is quite true that a section (but only a section) of those in authority in Germany is antagonistic to Christianity, but the question at issue is, whether the best way of meeting that movement is that adopted by five-sixths of the pastors in the German Church or that adopted by the Confessional Church. I interviewed a large number of clergy of very varied schools of thought in Germany. So far as I could judge, they were Orthodox Evangelical Churchmen, even those belonging to the Thuringian school. Many of them might be defined as neutral on the controversial points. Their method was to do their work without entering into political or ecclesiastical controversy, and if they did so they were not exposed to any difficulties from the Government. There might be some trouble with the Hitler Youth. The other method is that adopted by the Confessional Church, which means dividing the Church and irritating the Authorities by doing exactly what they dislike.

The one thing that my experience impressed upon me was the need of a united German Church. More than that, it is the one thing that Herr Hitler desires. The Confessional Church not only prevents Church unity, but irritates the Authorities against the Church. There is, I believe, a desire on both sides to come together, but I am certain it is not helped by letters such as those of the Bishop of Durham or by the attitude taken up by a section of our politicians.

I have just been at a Scouts service, at which we were bidden to be courteous. I venture to think that it would be wise to be courteous even to dictators, and if the critics did not make it so apparent, that their attitude was obviously dictated by a dislike of forms of government their remonstrances might be more effective. I notice that the same people who are so indignant at what happens in Germany are apparently quite indifferent to the burning of churches and to murder of priests and nuns in Spain. It is not my business to defend everything that is done by the National-Socialist Government in Germany, but I am sure that the methods adopted by many in this country do nothing to help Pastor Niemöller, and may help to involve Europe in a disastrous war.

A. C. GLOUCESTR:

The Palace, Gloucester, July 18.