

BLACKFRIARS

well as the falsehood, the good as well as the bad. The author suggests that the dialectic of history may bring about the synthesis (the Christian ideal) from the contemporary antithesis and part thesis: from liberalism and its antithesis fascism, order; from the materialist antithesis of communism, the ideal-realist synthesis which will give to the body constructed by its predecessor the soul it lacks.

This is a profound and stimulating book, in spite of unevenness, and a very definite help towards the clarification of the tendencies of our times. The author concludes with a reasoned statement of his views on *Peace and War*.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

SOCIOLOGY

GERMANY'S NEW RELIGION. By Wilhelm Hauer, Karl Heim, and Karl Adam. (Allen & Unwin; 5/-.)

The situation of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, in Germany to-day, is a desperate one. Dangers and difficulties beset them at every step. It is hard for us to understand the crisis, and to grasp what lies behind this attack, carried on with violence and persistency. This book dealing with Germany's "new religion" comes opportunely, for part of it is from the hand of one of its chief founders and supporters.

The book consists of several essays, by three professors in the university of Tübingen. In the first, Wilhelm Hauer, who is the prophet of the new Paganism, gives an account of the German Faith movement, which began in 1933, soon after Hitler came into power. The second, by Karl Heim, one of Germany's leading Protestant theologians, is confined to a discussion on responsibility and destiny, and is a refutation of Hauer's attack and distortion of the Christian teaching on this subject. The third is by Karl Adam, well known to Catholic readers. He, in his fine essay on *Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Age*, answers Hauer's protest against Jesus Christ "being imposed on us as a leader and pattern."

Hauer studied at Oxford, and later became a Protestant pastor in Germany. After he had practically abandoned Christianity, he became professor in the university of Tübingen, where he lectures on Race and Religion, and kindred subjects. He is less fantastic in many ways than Rosenberg or Ludendorf in his exposition of the "new religion," which he has had so great a share in formulating.

He claims that the German Faith movement must be understood in close relation with the national movement, which led to the formation of the Third Empire. In the programme of the National-Social Party there is a statement that the

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party stands for positive Christianity, and Hauer contends that in this way thousands of Germans were forced back into the Church. He then demands "freedom for all religious confessions within the state, so long as they do not imperil its existence." This defensive struggle grew into an offensive struggle for a philosophy and a religion, which was German in contrast to Christianity, which, he maintains, is alien and Semitic. An alien faith and the German genius stand in fundamental opposition to one another. "Germany history is our sacred history. Germany is our Holy Land. Our holy mountains are within the sound of German streams and German forests. Our sacraments too must arise out of this reality."

Christianity, he maintains, does not fit the creative genius of the German people. "We must not allow our native religious life, which grows immediately out of our own genius to be diverted into foreign tracks . . . The general impression that Jesus makes does not suit our genius. Despite all its height and depth, it is and remains alien . . . The spiritual plight of our people is due to the alien influence of Near-Eastern and Semitic elements. We are therefore carrying on a pitiless battle against them. We are convinced that only German Faith can be the standard, normative religious force, for the era is practically over when Christianity could claim to be the norm of religion."

Hauer protests that he is not disturbing the unity of Germany, for did he not, after the success of the revolution address an appeal to the administration of the Evangelical Church, suggesting that all non-Catholic Germans should form one national religious fellowship? He assumed that the Catholic Church would not participate. But he hoped that at least the Protestants, "if they were real Germans," would gather into one great fellowship. The "German genius" seems to cover an incredible amount of simplicity and naïveté.

The movement makes definite concrete demands, and especially in the sphere of education. Catholic and Protestant schools are the clearest expression of that belief which he characterizes as anti-German. The German nation of to-day, he says, feels the Catholic and Protestant schools to be an unbearable yoke, and the most deadly peril to the German will to unity. Universities too are included in this demand to control education.

Her long and glorious roll of saints and martyrs is proof enough that the German genius is not so opposed to the Christian spirit as Professor Hauer would have us think. It is for us to remember that these aberrations in present-day Germany are the result of her sufferings and humiliations during and especially after the war, for which we ourselves must bear some share of responsibility.

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