

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE NATIONAL DECLARATION

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—It was a profound shock to read in an enlightened journal like yours the Editorial on the National Declaration. The opposition which that straightforward and simply-worded document has aroused is, on the face of it, very difficult to understand, and the hostility of so many Catholics most disturbing. The League of Nations Union is avowedly a propagandist body. Is there anything wrong in that? Are not we Catholics the most bare-faced propagandists going? And is not the ascertainment of public opinion a perfectly legitimate aim, and what method can be more direct than the one adopted? And how else are the upholders of the League and its principles to combat the pernicious campaign waged against them by *The Mail* and *The Express*?

The conviction forces itself on me that it is simply narrow-mindedness which makes many Catholics hostile to any movement outside their own body. Such an outlook reflects little credit and will do them and the Catholic cause much harm. They seem, moreover, to entirely forget the public pronouncements of Catholic authorities, beginning with the Holy Father himself, in favour of the League.

I quite fail to follow your view that there can be no peace until the Nations accept the Incarnation; in other words, until the whole world is converted to Christianity. Are we to make no effort for peace till the millions of China and India are converted? And if you dislike the achievement of spiritual and moral aims by organization and machinery, are not Catholics doing just the same in societies like the C.E.G. and heaps of others, methods which Catholics have employed all through their history?

In a word, peace is the first and greatest object of the League of Nations. What is there to put in its place, if it fails, as there is great danger of its doing, if it does not get the support of all right-minded persons, irrespective of creed and race?

Yours faithfully,

FRANCIS HUGHESDON.

[Mr. Hughesdon errs in supposing that Catholics in general or we in particular are hostile to the League of Nations or to its propaganda in the cause of peace. We merely refuse to close our eyes to the omission of the only really important factor

for its attainment. We criticized the Peace Ballot (and indirectly the League of Nations), therefore, for one reason alone, namely because in its search for lasting peace it fails to take into consideration the only real guarantee of such a peace. In any contract the only reliable assurance of the observance of its terms is a sense of moral responsibility on the part of the contracting parties. But the self-sacrifice implied in the moral guarantee of international peace must be motivated by something higher than national security, higher than world prosperity, higher even than natural brotherly love. It is so sublime in its implications that it demands a motive as exalted as that of Calvary, a supernatural, even a divine, motive. The majority of the nations subscribing to the League are professedly Christian, yet the commandment of Christianity—*Love one another as I have loved you*—is not apparently thought worthy of serious consideration as a basis of peace. Let us by all means use organization and machinery, but let us use them to spread knowledge and acceptance of the social principles of Christianity; otherwise our leagues and our peace pacts will provide at best only a jealous defensiveness and will be at worst just so many more 'scraps of paper.' Our Divine Saviour has given us a practical rule of life: *Seek first the Kingdom of God, to which he has added a magnificent assurance: And all these things shall be added unto you.* The Christian nations, at least, must be urged to recognize this as the primary essential of peace; otherwise the machinery and organization of the League are foredoomed to failure and the laudable efforts of its supporters misdirected and wasted. That is the point of our criticism.—Ed.]