

non-Catholics; that the issue of this revision will be a new discipline which, while instituting more positive and living safeguards of the faith of Catholics than an ineffective attempt to isolate them from harm, will also positively encourage them to make apostolic contact with their separated brethren on lines that are both Catholic and ecumenical. The deepening and spread of this relationship will lead one day, please God, to another General Council which will effectively bring to pass the lost unity which belongs by right to all Christian men.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

---

### GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN OPINION

AS elsewhere, the forthcoming General Council has been a focus of discussion in Germany and Austria ever since Pope John XXIII announced it. The monthly *Herder-Korrespondenz* continues to contain detailed information about its preparation and related topics such as the planned conversations between Catholic and Orthodox theologians in Venice. Cardinal Döpfner, the Bishop of Berlin, and Professor H. Jedin, the historian of the Council of Trent, have tried to assess the significance of the Council and to put it in historical perspective, Cardinal Döpfner with special reference to the part of the Bishops and their task, Jedin by comparison with the (First) Council of the Vatican. In Vienna, a series of lectures about the Council was held from October to December, 1959, in one of the evening Institutes. It would seem that all those writing on the Council are at pains to discourage over-optimistic as well as over-pessimistic views of its probable results, particularly in respect of Christian unity.

The Council has naturally led to an increased interest in the problem of Reunion and to increased interest in both the Orthodox and Protestant as well as the Uniate Churches. Two articles in the periodical *Ostkirchliche Studien* may be mentioned specially: *Christozentrik im russischen Gedanken* by B. Schultze and *Die Uzhoroder Union* by M. Lacko, in vol. 8 (1959). This deals with the reunion with Rome in 1646 of the Ruthenians in what was later Carpatho-Russia, the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia, and is now in the Soviet Union. It shows the protracted and difficult course of the negotiations as well as the fact that the initiative came from the Ruthenian side and that the reunion was in no way forced as was alleged by the Soviet authorities when they destroyed the Uniate Church by force after 1945.

The chief focus of attention for German Catholics in their relation with other Christians is inevitably the German Evangelical Church in which they take a sympathetic and constructive interest. This appears to be mutual and increasing as is evident from the *Herder-Korrespondenz* and other publications. E. J. Lengeling's article, *Der gegenwärtige Stand der liturgischen Erneuerung im deutschen Protestantismus* (*Muenchner Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 10 (1959), pp. 83, 200, shows how the forces that work for a liturgical revival are as

active in the Lutheran Churches (the movement is not confined to Germany, but appears equally fruitful in the Northern countries) as among other Christians. The difficulties encountered are similar to those met with elsewhere: conservatism, charges of Romanizing or, conversely, Protestant tendencies, etc. The revival is largely a return to the sixteenth century and Luther, but goes back to earlier periods in some cases, e.g. in a new liturgy for the Vigil of Easter. Another topic that will be very prominent in the near future is that of loyalty and obedience to the state. This has been a burning question in Germany for a long time, first under Hitler and now in Eastern Germany. A new discussion among the leadership of the Evangelical Church has been touched off by Bishop Dibelius in raising the question of the meaning of Romans 13, 1. It is clear, however, that the question concerns German Catholics equally (*Herder-Korrespondenz* vol. 14 (1959/60), No. 3, Dec. 1959). In January 1960, Fr J. Schasching, S.J., gave three talks on 'The Christian and the State' on the Austrian wireless, dwelling both on the necessity of the state and on its limitations. The position of the laity has been given increasing attention in recent years. R. Egenter writes on *Christliche Laienförmigkeit* in the *Muenchner Theologische Zeitschrift* vol. 10 (1959), pointing out that the laity have not always found sufficient sympathy and help to enable them to play their proper part in the Church. Cardinal Frings, the Archbishop of Cologne, has suggested that Catholic girls should voluntarily spend one 'Deaconess' year' working in charitable institutions. He envisages that this should be done when they have finished their training at the age of between eighteen and twenty. Dr Schoiswohl, the Bishop of Seckau, has called a diocesan synod for the summer of 1960, the principal subject of discussion in which is to be 'The layman in the Church'.

That the recent past has not been forgotten is shown by the fact that a Catholic church of reparation is being built near the former concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen. According to Dr Janssen, the Bishop of Hildesheim, the new church is to be a shrine of remembrance and expiation. *The Herder-Korrespondenz* for December 1959 (vol. 14, No. 3) contains a sociographic supplement on *Jewry in the world*.

An important problem for Austria is that of the Concordat which has given rise to much discussion and writing. The Concordat was concluded by the Government headed by Dr Dollfuss and came into force near the time when the Austrian Parliament was dissolved. It has, for this reason, always been compromised in the eyes of many Austrians. It was in force and its provisions were being applied until 1938. The National Socialist legislation rendered it of no practical effect, and the position from 1945 until now has been complicated. Both the Holy See and the Austrian Government take the view that as an international agreement it remains in force and binding, the temporary occupation of Austria notwithstanding; the Social Democrat Party which forms part of the Coalition Government dislikes the Concordat, but has now accepted its validity. The Government takes the view, however, that some of its provisions are in need of revision because they conflict with legislation in force that could not, in practice, be repealed. Many of the provisions are non-controversial, and these are being applied.

The points in dispute are, in ascending order of difficulty: (1) The financial relations: these, complicated in themselves and still partly governed by eighteenth-century legislation, were made far more difficult by the wholesale confiscation of Church property by Hitler's government, affecting all Churches. A provisional settlement has been worked out and a permanent settlement will be arrived at soon. (2) The Catholic schools: under the terms of the Concordat, denominational schools ought to be subsidized by the State. This is not being done, and the Social Democrat Party whose agreement would be necessary, would concur only very reluctantly. (3) The marriage law: the Austrian civil code gave effect to the religious laws so that Protestant and Jewish marriages could be dissolved, but Catholic marriages could not. Religious marriage was the rule. The Concordat transferred jurisdiction over Catholic marriages to the ecclesiastical courts. In 1938, the German marriage legislation which provides for compulsory civil marriage and grants divorce in all cases was introduced. It was amended in Germany in 1946, but is still in force in Austria. Its most objectionable ancillary provisions have been declared unconstitutional, but the basic questions of the status of religious marriages and of the dissolubility of marriage are likely to prove intractable for some time. Reference may be made to A. Dordett: *Die Ordnung zwischen Kirche und Staat*, 1958, and H. Kleccatsky and H. Weiler: *Oesterreichisches Staatskirchenrecht*, 1958.

\* \* \*

M. A. M. J. Mattijssen's article, 'Catholic intellectual emancipation in the Western countries of mixed religion,' is summarized in the *Herder-Korrespondenz*, for December 1959, under the title 'Sind die Katholiken kulturell unterlegen?'. The author examines Catholic participation in the intellectual life of the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Britain and the United States as expressed by the percentage of Catholics in the universities and the intellectual professions as compared with that in the population as a whole. He finds that they are under-represented in all the countries mentioned; he shows that this is not due to reasons of dogma, but to historical causes (discrimination in the past in the Netherlands and Germany and secularization of ecclesiastical educational institutions in Germany), the social structure (working-class preponderance in Britain and the United States), and the concentration of Catholics in the predominantly agricultural cantons of Switzerland on the one hand, and Catholic reluctance to share fully in the intellectual life of the country on the other. The Catholic aversion from science in particular is very marked in all countries. Efforts to make up for past neglect are being made everywhere, and it is sad to learn that not only is the actual position worst in this country, but that less is being done to improve it than elsewhere.

Newman's foundation for a philosophy of the person is the sub-title of an essay by G. Rumbold in *Wort und Wahrheit*. The writer stresses Newman's concern with the relation of men to God rather than with abstract theology. How is the assent of faith possible? This is the question underlying much of his work. Rumbold points out that Newman had one thing in common with

Rationalism and Liberalism, namely the cartesian *point de départ*. This appears to be shown in an unpublished essay by Newman, entitled 'Proof of Theism', which begins with an analysis of the consciousness of self. But man is not just a thinking substance for Newman: he is a 'unit made up of various faculties'. And one of the most important of these is conscience: men have an awareness of their own existence and of duty and sanction at the same time. Newman says 'this feeling is analogous to that which we have . . . towards a person whom we have offended. . . . If the mind tries to explain this feeling, it will reasonably come to the conclusion that its object is an invisible father.' In conscience men meet God person to persons and in this relationship they must go beyond themselves and give the assent, of faith to the Person of God.

W. A. STEINER and E. STEWART

---

### HEARD AND SEEN

'CANST thou', demanded the Lord God of Job, 'draw out leviathan with an hook?' and faced by the sheer size of William Wyler's *Ben Hur* one feels rather the same kind of inadequacy. For the first thing to realize when considering this film is that it is very big: moreover it was intended to be very big and it is idle to condemn it for the lack of subtleties which may well be the chief decorations of smaller works. One cannot measure an epic in inches without missing the whole object of the exercise, and it must stand or fall by its consistency of scale. No film that lasts for nearly four hours, it is safe to say, can be a masterpiece, and if you do not care for religious epics, then do not go and see it. But as big films go *Ben Hur* is very good indeed, and its defects are almost always the defects of its *genre* rather than the fault of its brilliant director; while its successes are more telling, because more intelligently integrated into the story than is at all usual with this kind of picture.

And the story itself is well worth considering. As a piece of pure narration Lew Wallace's book is extraordinarily good, and it is easy to see why it has been a perennial temptation to the film industry, with its splendid set-pieces and the way in which the central struggle between Ben Hur and Messala is developed against the wider conflict between Jews and Romans. General Wallace had a deep moral purpose in writing this 'Tale of the Christ', as he sub-titled it, and this sense of dedication is what gives not only weight and dignity to the main plot, but also significance to the admirably detailed background against which that plot is played out. The book begins with the journey of the Wise Men and ends with the Crucifixion, and it is a tribute to the author's skill that the three levels on which the story is developed—the conquered Jews, the conquering Romans and the life of Christ—remain clear and comprehensible from start to finish. The style is neither pompous