

1939

The Cross & the Plough, V. 7, No. 4, 1939

Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales

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The CROSS & The PLOUGH



The Organ of the Catholic Land
Associations of England and Wales.

QUARTERLY.

TWOPENCE

SAINTS PETER
AND PAUL 1941

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The Cross and the Plough

Published by the Catholic Land Federation of England and Wales
at Weeford Cottage, Hill, Sutton Coldfield

Quarterly

Subscription: One Shilling a year

The Papal Statements on the Return to the Land, and the statement of policy by the Catholic Land Federation, which hitherto have dignified our covers, have had to be suspended on account of the paper shortage. A copy of a previous issue containing them will be supplied on request to any new subscriber.—THE EDITOR

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

THANKS

The Cross and The Plough owes much to Mr. Philip Haggren, whose cartoons, grave, gay or deadly, have adorned our pages for over four years. But we were never so much in his debt as for the lovely series illustrating the feasts of the Church under whose protection *The Cross and The Plough* appears. St. Michael, Bethlehem, the Annunciation, the Princes of the Apostles—never was our purpose linked so well.

We tender him once more our gratitude and thanks.

IN PRAISE OF ENGLAND

Our medical bureaucracy told us last autumn to beware of pestilence, and noble quantities of anti-toxins were held ready to be *rushed* (that is the obligatory word) to populations in extremis from the beastly conditions of air-raid shelters. It was hinted, not obscurely, that compulsory inoculations of all exposed to these conditions might be necessary.

The winter is past, and the bureaucracy is announcing, somewhat dazedly, that there has been no pestilence. After the most dreadful winter of our history, bombed, blasted and underfed, we remain unpested and even calm.

Our poor, herded by industrialism in targets too large to miss, needed, not the bureaucrat, but Henry V. They stiffened the sinews, summoned up the blood, and laughed at the bureaucrats. But the laugh has not yet got into the papers.

It is worth adding that these unsuspected reserves of vitality disprove entirely the legend that military health in the last war was due to the various inoculations; for conditions in our urban shelters have approximated to those of the trenches.

(Note—When we say *medical bureaucracy*, we mean *medical bureaucracy*, not the doctors, nurses and helpers who have been in the forefront of the battle).

ORDER OF BATTLE IN CHINA

In the last instalment of *Order Of Battle* there was indicated the first essential for the Post-War—the diffusion of population and industry to the limit of possibility. In *Free America* of February last, received after our Ladyday issue went to Press, there is a remarkable article from the pen of Bertram B. Fowler entitled *China's Decentralist Revolution*. It appears that on an immense scale, partly spontaneous and partly directed by sympathetic technicians, the refugee hordes from the squalid industrial districts of coastal China have established themselves as small workshops and co-operative groups in western and south-western China. Frequently they have not only a diffused but a nomadic quality, leaving a district invaded by the Japanese and establishing themselves elsewhere.

Of necessity, much of the work is free from the machine incubus and the quality of craftsmanship returns.

"The stage," says Mr. Fowler, "was perfectly set for a real experiment in decentraliza-

tion . . . Overhead were the bombers to prevent centralisation . . . The Chinese are laying the groundwork now for a completely decentralised industry owned by all the people." He also says "When the Japanese landed at Shanghai and the tide of invasion swept inland from the sea, there was in Tokio much talk of a new order for Asia. To-day you may see that new order rising. But it has not been brought about by force of arms . . . it is of the Chinese and for the Chinese."

This massive achievement will have no Press elsewhere in England. We draw attention to it here as a striking corroboration from an unexpected quarter of the validity of our own solution for our own problem.

CLOVEN HOOF IN EIRE

We expect propaganda for large mechanised farming from capitalists and from totalitarians of all colours. It is rather surprising to find it in Ireland.

In *The Irish Digest* of March last is an article entitled *Collective Farming Must Come*, by Mr. Ernest Blythe. Apparently this gentleman is the same as the Minister of Finance in the Cosgrave Government.

Doubtless it is true that village life in Ireland, as in other countries to which industrial standards have penetrated, is not at its best. The remedy is not more of what has damaged it, but more of what made the standards of successful village life. Those standards owed nothing to mechanisation, nothing to centralised ownership with proletarian status for the villagers, and nothing to being "put as far as possible on a plane with other industries."

Friends in Eire who value a rural civilisation might do worse than enquire into the curious epidemic of *Digests* which afflicts the English-speaking world. The *Irish* in this specimen is only skin deep: the *Digest* goes to the bone.

NO HOOF IN ENGLAND

The B.B.C. has always been at the disposal of the secret rulers for tendentious news and talks. When they were trying to foist eugenics and sterilisation on the country, the nonsense that was put over in the name of science was enough to make not only Mendel, but Galton weep, nor was the sane truth ever allowed to reach the air.

Now, it appears, the B.B.C. is helping along the unscrupulous propaganda for the complete mechanisation of English farming. On the 25th April, for instance, an American who claimed to "farm" 96,000 acres in Montana, lectured the English on their addiction to the horse, and urged mechanisation in the best tradition of industry.

Apart from the impertinence of any man conditioned to Montana standards trying to teach English farmers, it is clear that the only appeal of the argument would be to those furtive corporations who wish to farm 96,000 acre units in England.

RESTRAINT OF TRADE

Shopkeeping is a secondary occupation, and *The Cross and The Plough* is not concerned with it directly. But since the same unscrupulous interests as are using the crisis to impose mechanisation in farming, are also using it to kill the small shopkeeper, as well as the small manufacturer, we record our protest here. The amount of support given to the worshippers of Big Business by Government spokesmen is ugly, scandalous and treasonable. The little man is being frozen out against the national interest, for concentrations in Mammoth Stores are playing the enemy's game. Diffusion, diffusion and again diffusion, is our supreme need. For that we need the thousands of small shopkeepers who are being deprived of their livelihood. It seems to be time for Mr. Churchill to apply his largeness of mind for a few minutes to the correction of some of his underlings.

TAILPIECE

Self-sufficiency is perhaps an unfortunate word owing to its association with pre-war German finance. Nevertheless it is the key to success in our war-time agricultural policy; many people think that it is likely to remain so when the war is over. The aim is to make each farm as self-sufficient as is reasonably possible, so that, whatever happens in the world around him, the farmer can still carry on. Much has been achieved already in this direction by the ploughing-out campaign, and the purely grass farm which relied on outside purchase for its feeding-stuffs has become an anachronism. It is implicit in the arrangement that the farmer should be allowed to retain as much of the crops which he raises as

is necessary to the proper conduct of his business.

So far the only serious exception to this rule is the prohibition which prevents a farmer, whose wheat is up to milling standard, from giving it to his stock. What he would most like to do with it, of course, is to feed it to his poultry, for which other sorts of grain are less suitable. The choice in fact lies between wheat and eggs. Without disputing the importance of conserving home-grown wheat supplies, it may be argued that

eggs are hardly less essential. Interest and patriotism combine to urge the farmer to produce the most he can for the nation. It can safely be assumed that if he is allowed to feed his wheat, or a proportion of it, to his hens it will not be wasted—which is more than can be said of that which was bought from him and improperly stored last year. In addition, a further step will have been taken in assuring the viability of the farm as a self-contained economic unit.

—From "Truth," 25th April, 1941

ONE CAUSE OF JUVENILE CRIME —INSECURITY

By ALOYSIUS PURCELL

"The essential point of my argument is this, that in a civilization where one man is the enemy of the other—for that is what our whole industrial system means—demoralisation is ineradicable, for demoralisation and crime are by-products of the struggle for existence as known to our industrialised civilisation. The shadows of this struggle fall very early across the soul of the child, destroy its poise, facilitate its craving for greatness and render it craven and incapable of co-operation."—Adler on "Demoralised Children."

Adler may be unsound in his theology, and in his metaphysics to wit; but he is a great mind doctor. He stands in the front rank of psychologists. He knows his stuff. And when a man of Adler's standing declares that the problem of Juvenile Crime is ineradicable so long as the Industrial System exists, his opinion must be taken into account.

The point is the uncertainty of things; the insecurity. The child is now uncertain of everything; he is afraid; whether he will be able to make a living in this grim modern world, whether he will be able to assert his personality or become just another cipher; whether he will be able to stand, or be swamped and go down. The children are terrified; that is the explanation of the problem of Juvenile Crime; that is Adler's explanation, anyhow, and one worth listening to.

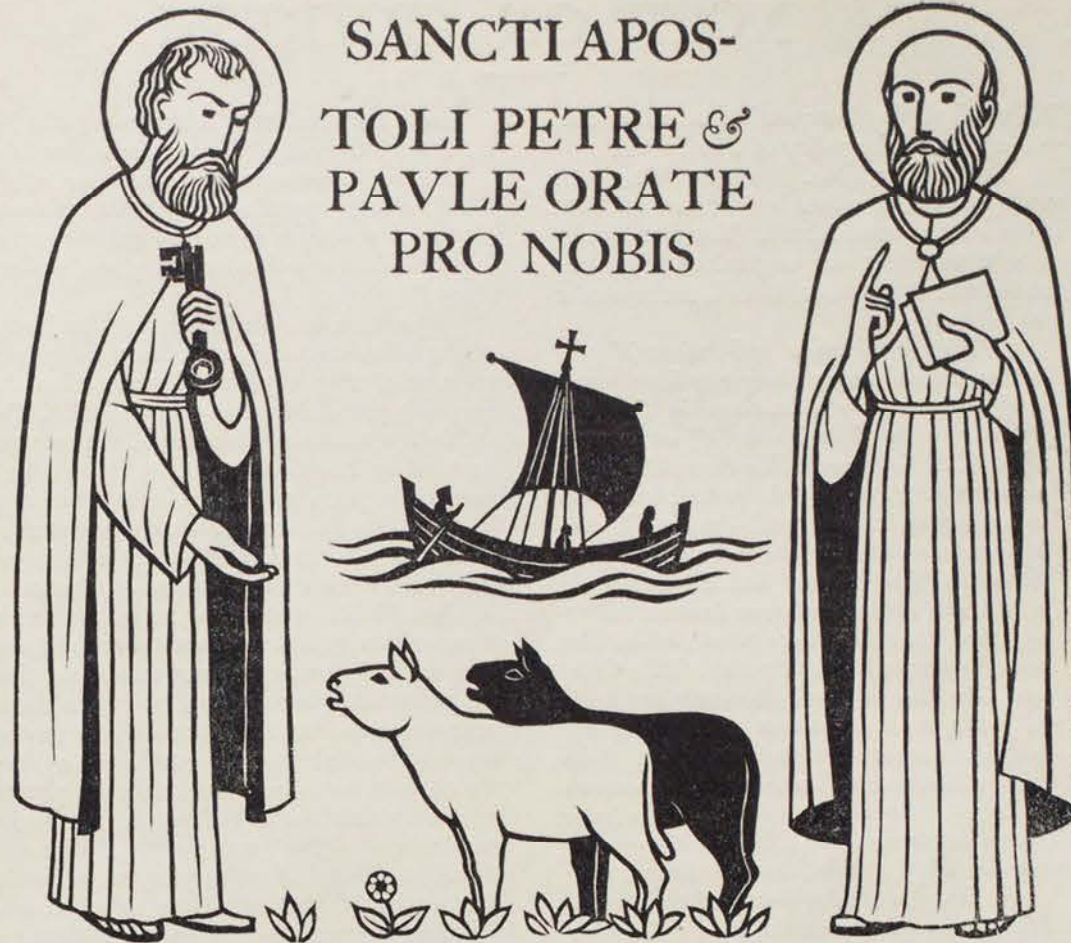
Crime is the easy way out; the easy way to assert one's personality, to be somebody, to defy. It is the coward's way out. Theft is "the crime of cowardice." The fact that the juvenile criminals usually operate in gangs is more evidence of their cowardice. I have known juvenile "criminals" myself, and they are, strangely enough, often boys it is easy to terrify.

The insecurity of our civilisation, then, breeds terror, breeds cowardice, breeds crime, which is the coward trying to rehabilitate himself in his own way. As our civilisation grows more and more insecure, so the terrified children will strike at its pillars. We have no such evidence of widespread juvenile crime among the apprentices of the old guild system, merely high-spirited riots. The reason is easy to find—their future places in the world were secure; they had no fears for the future.

It is hard, in fact impossible, to inculcate Christian morality into individuals in a society based on the denial of Christian morality, where the law of the jungle operates.

Another point, the child desires to assert its personality; to be somebody. And this is next to impossible in our vast modern cities and factories, inhabited by their dust of individuals. The ordinary man can only be somebody in a small community, of the village or the guild, the circle of his neighbours. He is lost in Megalopolis.

SANCTI APOSTOLI PETRE & PAVLE ORATE PRO NOBIS



REVIEW

The Family: Rev. A. L. Ostheimer, Ph.D.; *Corporate Democracy*: Rev. B. W. Dempsey, S.J. (Central Bureau, 3835 Westminster Place, St. Louis, M.O.: unpriced)

The first of these pamphlets is a rather pedestrian treatment on familiar lines, and the reader would be hard put to it to discover by what means, if any, the Family can be restored.

The second has striking qualities. The author has had the rare intelligence to see and draw attention to the grave danger which

attends any attempt to equate the human person with the body economic or politic. The former is *sui generis*: the parts have no rights against the whole. In the economic or political analogy, the parts have rights which the whole has not, but by a process of hypnosis this fact tends to be overlooked. Hence the totalitarian state. Unless this distinction is made clearly and the danger indicated, Catholic talk of the Corporate State is a betrayal. And the distinction is rarely made. We may have to develop this point if the process continues.

It is curious, and rather disturbing, that neither author seems conscious that Industrialism has any bearing on the problems he discusses. It is accepted lock, stock and barrel.

A NOTE ON CRITICISM

IN our Ladyday issue we had occasion to be critical of the policy of *The Tablet*.

The Editor, Mr. Douglas Woodruff, comments on, or rather beside, that criticism in the issue of 22nd March. The fact enables us to assume that our original criticism was not without importance. In full, the rejoinder is as follows:—

"Mass production and industrial processes generally are no longer to be tolerated and defended by Christians in England (not even by *The Tablet*)," so I learn from *The Cross and The Plough*, which, disapproving even of the mass production of cigarettes, as do not I, draws this conclusion somehow or other from the joint letter to "The Times" last December, in which the various religious leaders, adopting the Pope's five peace points, added five tests for home economic policy. "*The Cross and The Plough*" hails this letter as "probably the most important and sensational religious event in England since John Henry Newman delivered a certain sermon at Oxford over a century ago." This looks like a confusion with Keble's Assize Sermon in 1833, which Newman always took as the date for the beginning of the Oxford Movement. I should have said Cardinal Manning's letter on the Right to Steal was a more sensational event than this joint letter.

"*The Cross and The Plough* is the organ of the Catholic Land Associations, which have some true and important ideas to uphold. I wish it very well, but I cannot help asking myself whether whoever is editing it now would not do far better to make his or her appeal much more to the understanding. If you are a quarterly with a limited number of pages, indignant and rather shrill rhetorical language is a much greater mistake than if you are a daily paper reaping the reward of constant repetition. A quarterly has to appeal to the head, and seek to convey the understanding, because it cannot bully people into acquiescence. To write, as is done at the outset of this number, that any politician or financier who

evades that position (safeguarding the fertility of the soil) "deserves trial for high treason—deserves in fact every one of the old savage penalties for that ultimate crime," is not going to convince the sort of people best worth convincing and collecting."

By a curious coincidence, in *The Tablet* of the following week, 29th March, appeared an article, *The Greater Menace*, from the very able pen of Mr. Christopher Hollis. The article is a summary of much of the case put forward by *The Cross and The Plough* for a number of years, and it should be referred to by all readers as an important endorsement of our claim that the Land Movement is essential, and not merely optional, to our future.

Mr. Hollis being what he is, the article is not only very able, but very restrained and urbane. It is pleasing on any assessment, but the point made here is that, having to direct attention to the fact that our cake is eaten and we must be anxious about our bread, he does not do so in terms calculated either to placate or to convince "the sort of people best worth convincing." He uses expressions and phrases which are, if we may say so, distinctly reminiscent of our own line of approach, although in saying that we do not challenge a comparison. The exploitation of foreign lands for cheap food is suicidal. Soil erosion is the madness of the last years. The necessary adjustment of the current attitude towards a rural culture involves a very profound social revolution. He insists on the root destruction of this whole odious habit of mind which flouts the farmer and the soldier in times of peace, and squeals to them in times of stress. "The whole issue," says Mr. Hollis, "is that at any moment prior to the moment of ultimate catastrophe, it is possible to have an immediately greater abundance of consumable goods by pressing a policy of folly." This, says Mr. Hollis with great truth but with a fine disregard for Mr. Woodruff's verbal preferences, is almost treasonable.

He concludes "There is no real question of our enjoying this complicated mechanized existence permanently. That is not the issue.

The issue is between the simple life and extinction."

This is not an "appeal to the understanding." It is a judgment. It is to "bully people into acquiescence," because otherwise they will die. And that has been, and will remain, the method of *The Cross and The Plough* with those many Catholics who ought to have seen so simple an issue years ago. That they have not seen it hitherto is proof of the need for the methods of shock, although it may be perfectly true that our manners leave something to be desired.

In a further paragraph of the issue of 22nd March, Mr. Woodruff says—speaking now, it is true, of a dead man and not of a live one:

"I wonder how it is that so many Catholics forget that our religion began in the cities of a business civilisation."

This sentence, we predict, will become classic.

ANOTHER PLAIN LETTER

By GEORGE MAXWELL

IN the first place let me say I agree with you that Right, Left and Centre are of no help. They are but labels describing various brands of Materialism.

I believe too that the matter of order and emphasis is of first importance and that the order of reality is as you say (1) Grace (2) The natural life of the soul (3) Bodily life. I agree also that the whole emphasis is the other way about in England and like-minded countries, and venture to suggest some of the reasons I think are the cause of this.

Put briefly, I suppose, it is the Primacy of the spiritual which is lacking and which must be restored not merely nominally but in reality. Now this presents in the concrete a paradox which puzzles many even of those who try to unveil it. Some despair of solving it and fall away. Others fail to solve it, but with blind faith in authority accept the truth without seeing its application. The paradox may be stated thus. The spiritual life of man, though primary, presupposes the material life. A concrete example of the effect of this

So far as we can tell, there are three alternative reasons for its use:

1. That the Business Civilisation begot our religion;
2. That our religion accepted the Business Civilisation;
3. That our religion rejected the Business Civilisation.

The first, presumably, would be excluded by the Authorities. The second appears to be *The Tablet's* choice, if we are to judge by a later sentence: "The early Church was full of people whose activities would have disqualified the standards of the Catholic Pastoral School."

The third is the only one in accordance with the historical facts. Business Civilisation disappeared, and was not heard of again until the Renaissance and the Reformation.

We assure Mr. Woodruff that our religion will also destroy *this* Business Civilisation, and for the same reasons.

from St. Thomas. "A hungry man should be fed not instructed." Again Charity is *primary* but Justice in the concrete is *basic*. Dardano states it thus. . . . "Justice is always the principal bond through which the sympathy of society is to be obtained. Charity is always supplementary." Now I suggest this apparent paradox has a simple solution. It is to be found by a proper emphasis being placed on man as a *person*. Unique among persons as needing matter for his completion, and making this emphasis real not merely nominal. Wrong emphasis has resulted in wrong or disorder, disintegration.

It almost seems that the cleric and the layman, with exceptions in both cases, are living in two different worlds, neither real in the strict sense. The preacher, the expert on the spiritual, tends to forget the man, the *unique* person in his contemplation or his expounding of the soul. The layman's search for the Kingdom of God is necessarily in his work, his home and family and among his fellow men. The world he finds himself in,

for the most part knows not God, or only as it knows Confucius, and at best regards these things on the natural plane alone. He finds it impossible in most cases to see where or how his soul fits in to the greater part of his life, particularly in his work which generally, as he is aware, is the service of Mammon and soulless. He is mystified at the apparent complacency of the spiritual expert in this matter, whose sole contribution is the advice to offer up his work to God. He knows consciously or instinctively there is something lacking in this advice, even perhaps something wrong. The preacher sees the effects but does not realise the cause. The layman, in a declining degree, realises the cause but does not realise the full effects . . . the deprivation of that fulness of life which Our Divine Lord came to give, and eventually the callousing over of what spirituality he has, preventing its functioning at all. The preacher seeks out whatever scapegoat that may be popular at the time to blame and lash for the subversion of his flock, and provides new specifics for the patient to apply to the injury, not realising the injury is organic and radical, and needs a lancet. The layman in his efforts to preserve the "status quo" of his spiritual life is forced to use the sacraments as an *end* for this purpose instead of a *means* to an extension of that life. His life as a man . . . real life . . . soul-body.

If without impertinence I may say, the theological jewel of sanctifying grace needs, if it is not to be lost, a proper setting. If the setting is defective the jewel is in danger of being lost. The necessary setting is, I believe, known as ascetic virtue, but what hope is there for this virtue to be exercised when the *natural* life of multitudes depends upon its denial? This position is aggravated by the complacency, if not encouragement, by many if not most of those charged with the care of souls. Dispensers of the jewels from the chest of Mother Church call her children to gather the jewels she scatters so profusely amongst them, encouraging them to gather all they may. The loss of these jewels means the loss of the soul. Yet, that the recipients of these jewels are unable to provide at best a but very defective and dangerous setting seems to be of little consequence to the dis-

pensers. That the fault is not altogether that of the recipient may stand in his favour when he is called upon to give an account on his stewardship of the jewels, but what of the dispenser? Is he free of responsibility for instructing on how to prepare, make, or if necessary, repair this setting and this in a language understood of the recipient. May he be complacent when the setting is in such a state as to be sufficient to hold the jewel only if it is not shaken? The number of jewels lost through this cause may be conjectured to some extent by considering the number lost to the Faith in "Catholic" countries. Then what of those cases like England when the shaking is continuous and severe?

I agree with you that the dream of an earthly paradise is lunacy, and that the true picture of the normal life is Calvary . . . a penalty or a privilege which willingly borne is to all a means to the fulness of life, as Our Lord Himself promised. "He that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." There are and will be, no doubt, those who will reject this *life-giving* Calvary for the vision of an earthly paradise. But, I believe the common man still retains some remnants of Christian tradition in his make-up. This is being sapped rapidly by a *soul-destroying* Calvary with its accompanying passion of impersonal labour. This Calvary blinding the mind and the will to the sacramental nature of work and daily actions denies man's status as a person, makes Poverty, Chastity and Obedience superstitions and the body and soul separate entities, if the latter is considered at all. This state of things while being anathema to Catholic principles is nevertheless in practice accepted by Catholics, gives the Dialectic Materialist all the ammunition he needs in his attack on religious tradition and supports his dictum that "religion is the opium of the people." There is little sign that this blasphemy is being attacked but much to indicate its permeation into the minds of both rank and file and officers. A legacy of the Renaissance. It is a battle which if we are not to lose we must use the weapons with which God has armed us. Soul and body, both are essential, organically united in one entity and if in our unwisdom we trust in a disembodiment then we are lost.

GOD AND THE LAND

By THE REV. J. M. LLOYD THOMAS

(We are privileged to reproduce here some extracts from a remarkable sermon delivered at Manchester College, Oxford, in February last.—Editor).

You cannot serve God and Mammon.

Men should not repent merely because they are frightened, or because, as it has been said, calamity sends men howling to their gods. If we truly repent, it must be from an affirmative conviction and decisive choice, from a Vision of the Best that has been sufficiently disclosed and revealed to us, not merely or mainly from the exposure of ugliness and bestiality of the worst or because we now plainly perceive that the working beliefs of an agnostic and pagan world in its own worldliness have failed, that men's political and economic bag of tricks has collapsed, that the bottom has fallen out of all that godless and absurdly irrational universe.

* * *

Men who are now taking God seriously and turn their hearts to him, and, indeed men who are left stoically grim with little hope of anything, are to-day talking in terms of new orders for Europe, new plans for the world, when the war is over. The political panaceas are legion. The new economic systems are innumerable. We prattle in terms of continents, hemispheres and worlds. We talk of everything except of radically new types of civilisation under the felt and obediently acknowledged Sovereignty of God. Some appear to think presumptuously that the clay over there in a corner of their studios is ready for shaping by their hands. They ignore the fact that it is constituted of free-wills, that what plasticity we have to deal with is a miraculous clay full of elusive mercurial activities that cannot finally be controlled by our clumsy hands.

* * *

I often ask myself whether even theologians have pondered soberly enough the scope and significance of the examples from nature which fill this Sermon on the Mount. Are we not all far too much inclined to regard them as romantic similes with little relevance to a world of blood and iron?

They are to be taken with utter and ultimate seriousness. Our Lord's metaphors and parables are not the temperamental and poetic result of an accident of birth whereby he, the Son of God, became a son of the soil. They are not due to a happy chance that he lived in the country. There is something deeper, something far more significant in his having been born just *there* and in his having lived *thus* a village and country life, *something as charged with meaning, if not with the same meaning, as that he was born at all.* That, for Christians, has the most momentous and eternal meaning in all human history, and therefore in all the world, the origin, development, destiny and interpretation of which set the central problem of philosophy. It means for Christians that the religion of Jesus is a religion of the land and that its unique character suffers or is lost if the fresh springs of its rural origin are not emphasised and jealously guarded for all time.

This may seem an extravagant statement, but only because already many of the psalms of the Old Testament and the parables of the New have become almost unintelligible to the townsman.

* * *

Exorbitant urbanisation, it is true, is not the first or direct cause of our malady, but it is the unmistakable sign of a deep-seated mortal sickness. Though huge cities are not the primary or the deadliest aberration of mankind, hugeness is an infallible symptom of its corruption and decay. The mania for vast aggregation and for rearing imposing towers of Babel has preceded the death of nearly all, if not all, recorded civilisations. Great towns, upon which the ends of the ages have come, are pustules on the skin of the earth, or cancers that eat up and thrive, even unto death, on the healthy tissue of the land.

This is not, as is sometimes suggested, to be cured by an adjustment of mathematical proportions, by some quantitative equality of reciprocity or "balance" between town and country. The town assuredly has its rights; but it has no independent rights or any rights at all other than those conferred upon it by its ministry to the country. The town exists

for the country to a degree, and, qualitatively in a sense, in which the country does not exist for the town. On that as a principle there can be no compromise. Nor, again, can any "balanced" life be found by higgling the market of imports and exports or by a "scientific" management of doses of free trade and tariffs. That presupposes the fallacy that one people may properly be regarded as peculiarly destined for "industry," that is, as doomed to dwell and work in "Black Countries" composed of a spawn of inseparable "Tiptons." Another people is then seen to be destined to powder up rich lands by supermechanised, large-scale factory agriculture, so that thousands of square miles, stimulated to exhausting productivity and final sterility by artificial methods, are ground into the dust of erosion while deserts creep like a leprosy over the green earth. Our discord can never be relieved by any such "balanced" life. There is, or there is not, a law of life divinely decreed that man must labour directly on the land or on work that justifies itself by its serviceableness to the people of the land. Disobedience to this everlasting law is sin and brings disease and death to the world's unheeding civilisations. But it is the urbanism that perishes. The life of the land survives and gives mankind "another chance." There is nothing arbitrary about this, unless every divine and moral law is said to be arbitrary. There is nothing harsh or unintelligible in it however much our obstinate and inveterate town-habits may make us determined to deny its meaning and authority.

* * *

Even now the lessons of war have not burnt themselves into our souls. We go on talking superiorly or complacently of town-planning, of the service of man. The country, the rural population, will tell the engineers, technicians and scientists, the legislators and administrators, what is required for the health, dignity and joy of the life of men. Factories will be in the fields, not allotments in the slums.

These, I know, will seem wild and whirling words. But at least note this undeniable fact—that aggregated and artificial hugeness is a sure precursor of the death of civilisations. In his monumental *Study of History*, Prof. Toynbee writes of "the mania for big buildings which is a well-known symptom of declines and falls." It is biologically comparable

with "the malady of the Reptiles who turned huge on the eve of being surpassed by the Mammals." It is sociologically comparable with "the titanic scale and massive structure of the sky-scrapers built by the termites, which makes ants' nests look careless and shapeless" (Vol. iii, p. 153). Great agglomerations of monster cities bring down, like "this great Babylon," the wrath of God. They breed arrogance, superficiality, a frivolous outlook and a secular confusion of speech which only a Pentecost of the Spirit can unify and make intelligible. It is, in fact, secularism not religion, that is the opium of the people—the people who crave for nerve-stimulants and narcotics, material and mental, because they have lost the way of health and the capacity for undrugged natural delights, the pleasures of that life which is the chief end of man—to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.

This life, however much we desire its cultivation and triumph, cannot come about through secular politics or materialistic economics, still less through the secular education of our rising generation into a celluloid high-brow caste and a chromium-plated intelligentsia. This renaissance and redemption, which will be the result of a moral revolution of character, will not come at first, if ever, as a mass-movement or with a rush. When bees have clustered the swarm does not break up at once. The bees on the outside must detach themselves singly until the inside pressure is relaxed. Nor will this dispersal be a panic expedient of the "escapist" dreaming of returning to his disillusioned darling dreams, when the war is over, to share once more the elaborate sensualities of Sodom and Gomorrah town-planned on more magnificent and prodigious designs, with added varieties of high spots of delirium for those who will then be still more "broadminded" and not as these bitter puritans and Sunday school moralists. To mean anything of worth, it will be an eager emancipation out of stuffy perfumed conservatories into breezy downs, a glad long-desired entrance into a way of life which serves God and is merry. Men and women singly and in little groups and colonies seeking this finer and more civilised life, which our townies describe as the life of coarse yokels, are already settling on the land to find hard athletic bracing work, but to find also radiant bodily health and rewarding mental energy and new interests in the open air.

THE REIGN OF BLACKMAIL

By C. J. WOOLLEN

OUR Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, when enunciating his "Five Peace Points," said: "Since the world seems to have forgotten the peaceful message of Christ, the voice of reason and Christian brotherhood, we have been forced to witness a series of acts irreconcilable alike with the precepts of positive international law and those of the law of nature, as well as with the elementary sentiments of humanity; acts which show in what a vicious circle the juridical sense becomes involved when it is led simply by considerations of expediency." The methods of Hitler, founded on considerations of expediency and nothing else, involve a technique of large-scale blackmail.

The blackmail used by Hitler is not ordinary blackmail; it is much blacker and fouler. True, it is a refined form, but that only means it contains nothing that might have relieved its blackness. It is inhuman. Hitler does not say: "Pay me so much, or it will be the worse for you." What he says is: "I want to be friends. So do you. There is no reason at all why we should not be friends. I value peace more than anything else in the world. So do you. Therefore, when I ask you to do this for me, I am sure you will do it. I want to settle this question as between friends. So please regard me as a friend and do what I ask. But if you *don't* . . . well, look for yourself. My tanks are lined up round your borders; my bombers are ready; my submarines are roving the seas; all await the word."

It is only fair to Hitler to explain that he did not invent this technique. It has been used for many years now by Big Business. "We want to come to a friendly arrangement," it says to the small trader. "We want to expand. You don't want to starve. So if you let us have your little business at the price we have mentioned, we shall all be friends together. But if you *don't* . . . well, you know what happened to Mr. Jones in the next town. He refused our offer two years ago. His business was flourishing then, but we opened opposite his shop, and his trade

dwindled away to nothing. Yes, he's dead now. And, by the way, did I mention that we'd taken an option on the block of shops next to this one?"

As for the financiers, without whose "fiat" the trader cannot trade at all, we all know how charming they are when we first walk into their parlours. There is such a friendly and encouraging atmosphere. "We want to help you all we can," they say. "It's so consoling to have warm-hearted friends in this bleak world. So call on us whenever you feel inclined." But when their bill of charges has mounted up against you for "services" rendered, and they are becoming a little tired of you, and are looking round for fresh "friends," they change their tone. "Pay up in six months," they say, "if you want to keep our friendship. But if you *don't* . . ."

Those speculating landlords, too. "We want you to be comfortable in your own home," they say. "Every Englishman should own his own castle, and the bit of land attached to it. So we are giving you the opportunity to buy that lease on the easiest of easy terms. But if you *don't* . . . well, our price may be high in your view, but it will cost you far more than that if you don't accept our friendly offer."

The reign of blackmail, in fact, extends all through our social system. The formula may differ, but in substance it is always the same. "You are free to do exactly as you like. There is no compulsion. It depends entirely on yourself whether you help me in this matter or not. But if you *don't* . . ." and up comes the mailed fist, which had been up till then hidden behind his back.

It is to be feared that it governs even the realm of charitable affairs, which more than anything else should be as free as air. Bazaars for charitable objects have, of course, always been recognised as organised blackmail. Because of that, more than one great man has refused to countenance them. But, after all, those who patronise bazaars are willing victims. Those who object to be victimised can keep away.

It is not so easy to avoid the meshes of that ugly snare for kindhearted folk that is laid out more or less on these lines: "So-and-so promises to give such-and-such if so many people give so much each." The man, or woman, can afford to give, otherwise he could not offer. He is not bound to give. But he is determined that the other people shall be bound to give. If they *don't* . . . well, they will certainly not get the church, school, or whatever it is they want so badly; they will not even get his share of it.

Not so black as Hitler's blackmail, perhaps. But it smells too much of Hitler to be pleasant. And all this ruthless compulsion in the guise of friendly persuasion is only the devil's method of using the spur. It resembles the trick that boys indulge in when they dare each other to do something. "I dare you to take the water-jump with your ordinary clothes on," one says to another, and it is almost as good as if he had pushed him in.

It is true that that metaphor has been used to illustrate the gentle promptings of divine grace. But the parallel is useful only in showing the freedom of the will. The boy is still free not to jump even while he is shamed into jumping. There is a foolish and somewhat blasphemous saying that "the devil is God upside down." But the blasphemy is actually in the devil himself, who has pretended to usurp the divine power. He has a blasphemous parody for every divine manifestation, even to the Mass. And the revolting, foul, and now almost universal practice of blackmail is his parody of divine grace.

It is for Catholics to end the reign of blackmail by restoring the Kingdom of Christ. The world which Pope Pius XII says "seems to have forgotten the peaceful message of Christ" will be freed from diabolical influence only if Catholics listen to "the voice of reason and Christian brotherhood." They must be guided in every circumstance not by "considerations of expediency," but solely by the grace of God.

In the eighteenth century when British farming reached a higher peak of productivity and self-sufficiency than it has ever known since, artificial fertilisers were unknown.—*Ministry of Agriculture News Service, October 1940.*

RUST

My friend, it has not "come to stay,"
That thing to which your soul is slave,
That subtle stream-lined sin, to pay
For which you've bartered all you have.

You call it "she," and so confess
The nature of your heart's surrender;
Made "her" your mistress and address
To "her" all homage you can tender.

To Vachell Lindsay you appeal?
You seek "the goal you understand"?
My friend, his "Santa Fé" I feel
Was much composed of strings of sand!

You scorn the horse, the slow-drawn wain,
You have "no time" for "things old-
fashioned"

Know then your attitude in vain—
I need no rhetoric impassioned—

I point to one quaint spot of red
That grows upon her, 'mid the dust;
She'll pass 'ere many years are sped—
The victim of all-conquering rust!

—LOUIS A. DESSURNE

MORE SHRILLNESS

The argument of those who believed a smoking factory looked better than a field of golden corn was that it was cheaper and better for Britain to have many smoking factories and few fields of golden corn. To-day every thinking person knows it was not a better way of life, but not everybody knows that when the cost of the armed might which ensures our dividends and food supplies, even in peace time, is added to its selling price, imported food is a costly commodity. We do not pay it over the counter to the shopkeeper—we pay it to the tax collector. . . . No new conception could be quite so ludicrous as that which creates the spectacle of non-producers earnestly debating each year how much subsidy they will be able to pay the actual producers.—*From The Primary Producer, by John Scanlon, Organising Secretary of the Central Chambers of Agriculture, in The Tablet, 26th April, 1941.*

ORDER OF BATTLE: VII

IN the earlier instalments of this series were discussed the main principles of action for the post-war restoration of Social Justice in England. Two preliminary conclusions were drawn, that it fell into two categories; a primary one of example, a secondary one of precept. We then stated a corollary, that there is imposed upon us, not alone by the permanent principles of Catholic Social teaching, but by the sheer necessities of survival, an over-riding principle of *diffusion* in all respects. This follows inexorably on the twin facts that the modern corruptions have made the persistence of aggregation impossible, and that finance-capitalism has exhausted the capital resources of the world which facilitated hitherto the industrial and urban concentrations. This diffusion must be of population, of the control of productive property, and (therefore) of political and economic power.

In the field of example we have to set up a substantial working model of the kind of society fulfilling these conditions. If possible, this should be by national action. If not, then by Catholic action to be set in motion from the very instant when the fighting men are available to man it. The general form and scope of this action should be decided in priority to any schemes to rebuild our churches and institutions on their present urbanised basis.

The achievement of this example should be by action approximating closely to what is known to our readers as *The Birmingham Scheme*. In 1928 the Birmingham Branch of the *Distributist League* put forward a scheme for the restoration of balance to England by means of fully-rounded communities based on Land Settlement. In five successive editions, running into many thousands, this scheme proved that such settlement would involve no extra expense, but a positive saving, to the Exchequer, by capitalising the subsistence grants to the unemployed. In the latest editions* based on the prevailing rate of interest, it was shown that only half the unemployment grants would be necessary.

* See *Plain Letters for Plain Men. The Cross and The Plough, Ladyday 1938*

It is now clear that we shall not tolerate the continuance of usury by the City of London, and the blocking of English Land Settlement by those interests will tend to cease. The main problem, for us, is not money but morals. Shall we be able to persuade the authorities and our fellow-Catholics, bemused for so long by spurious mis-statements of the Catholic Social teaching, to ensure the necessary momentum for this crucial point of example? The least hesitation, when the correct moment has passed, will ensure the success, not of the spurious imitations, but of some expedient utterly hostile to all our doctrines. It may be Communism, some form of Anglicised Nazism, or the Servile State—most probably the last. But it must be quite clear that this is our last chance. Within twelve months of the close of the war we shall be on the way to Nazareth or the Catacombs. This time, there is no fence blunt enough to be sat on.

There remains the main outline of our precept, or as the modern world will have it, of our propaganda. We shall have to put our case to our countrymen in something like the following terms.

Both politics and economics have for many years been talking off the point. The point is not whether the State is best controlled by the Duke of Plaza Toro, by Sir Isaac Finkelstein, or by Jack Jones. The point is that in the long run, only that society will endure and be happy in which it is made impossible for any of them to indulge their *Lust for Power*. That this is the central and critical point of the problem is proved by the fact that the Church has made the diffusion of private property the central point in her social teaching.

The fact has admittedly been obscured by traitors, clerical and lay, but the fact is there. Of all forms of society that alone will curb the lust for power. That alone enables the human person to be free from the domination of other human wills. It has never been pressed with due weight because the propertied society is not compatible with urbanisation, industrialism or bureaucracy. It is they must go now and not property.

We must disavow the school that wants Guilds without personal property—we must disavow the Planners of all complexions. This, and this alone, is the Catholic ethic, and our countrymen will hear it if we shout it loud enough.

As our capital expedient to achieve this diffusion of property must be advocated such a reversal of the incidence of real taxation as will encourage small property and discourage large. We must tax the size of economic activity, so that at a relatively modest inflation it disappears.

Jack Jones can have his inn and brew his beer free of tax: the combine brewer must be taxed out of existence. Tom Smith can have his huckster's shop for nothing: Mammoth Stores Incorporated cannot have it for anything. Piers Plowman can have his little farm: the Improvident Assurance Combine cannot play with gyrotillers anywhere in these islands.

With such a process will come an impressive decline in the need for taxation and bureaucracy. Families owning their own means of livelihood do not need doles. They do not need Ministries of Health or Food. And certainly they do not need Lord Reith to keep them from spoiling England. England was not spoiled until the little man was made impotent by Mammon.

Mammon must let the people go.

PROGRESS

I cannot find a rhyme for Progress
Unless I call the lady "Ogress."
'Twere more polite, as well as neat,
To call the dear Threadneedle Street.

H. E. G. ROPE

This advocacy of small self-contained farms, relatively independent of outside purchases, seems to be very contrary to modern tendencies in the world of trade and commerce, with its ever-increasing specialisation and centralisation, reflected in the modern industrial town. It is here categorically stated that those tendencies, whatever be their merits or demerits for manufacturing industry or trade, are, as they affect farming, diametrically opposed to the satisfaction of the essential biological needs of mankind.—*From Look To The Land, by Lord Northbourne.*

MORE REVOLUTION

"There must to the thoughtful neutral observer be an element of hypocrisy in our claim to be fighting this war in defence of freedom and justice, while the potentialities of our political democracy have been persistently nullified by the efforts of economic 'interests'; and our boasted liberty, so wide in theory, so greatly circumscribed for four-fifths of the population by the fact of their permanent insecurity. *The Times* of November 13th wrote of Mr. Roosevelt's electoral victory that 'he mobilized the little man against the monstrous economic system which threatened to strangle him, and has for the third time carried the votes of the multitude against the whole power of American capital.' But the 'monstrous economic system' of America, thus denounced by *The Times*, is identical with our own.

"While the Church accepts this system she stultifies her preaching of the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness; for she is conniving at a system which denies the essential dignity of human personality, and preaches an ethic which stands contradicted by the economic system.

"So long as the Church's leaders consider it their first duty to back up the existing order, and visualise the life of the Church herself as dependent on its maintainance, so long will she remain inept in the fulfilment of Christ's redemptive mission.

"The Church cannot be fulfilling her prophetic mission to the world unless, side by side with a full participation in the practical humanitarian work of the nation, she is publicly and openly proclaiming the falsity of the political and economic assumptions which led up to the war, and by which assumptions the nation was led to tolerate, e.g., slums, unemployment, and the glaring inequalities of wealth and opportunity, which have been the permanent features of our industrial civilisation."

—(*A letter in the "Church Times" by a group of Anglican clergy*).

OUR NEIGHBOURS' LANDMARKS

(The National Catholic Rural Movement of Australia has issued the following striking manifesto. We hoped also to have included a report on the Annual Conference of the Movement, but this has not reached us. From the Agenda, it appears that vigorous action is to be initiated in favour of the sounder farming here set forth as the standard.—Editor).

Eighty per cent. of our farmers are in the hands of mortgagees and financial institutions, and practically bankrupt.

The National Enquiry on the Flight from the Land which the Movement has conducted through its Rural Groups in every State shows that the main cause of this fact is the practice of "specialised farming."

Specialised farming is that system of agriculture by which a farmer devotes all his land and all his energies to the production of one, or at the most two, commercial crops. He is not concerned with producing his own necessities for home consumption. He relies on his commercial crop to supply him with enough money to buy all his necessities. The best example is the farm which produces wool and wheat, and nothing else.

Drought or the collapse of the overseas market mean that these of our farmers are ruined—as many have been threatened with ruin by the operation of both of these factors this year.

The N.C.R.M. attacks this problem in three ways:—

(1) Independent Farming.—The Movement is adopting a definite campaign to induce farmers

(a) to produce all that they need for themselves as far as possible. The farmer can produce nearly all his own foodstuffs if he wishes, and by doing this, to a large extent, he makes himself independent of markets.

(b) At the same time, in order to get a money income, to produce widely diversified crops and products so that even if the market fails in one or two crops, they will have some products for which there is a market.

(2) Credit Unions.—The encouragement of small co-operative banks by which the

farmers finance their own small needs. These Credit Unions are easily organised on a parish basis and serve the community by the encouragement of thrift and the provision of credit to their members. There are many thousands of flourishing credit unions operating on a parish basis in Europe and America.

(3) The encouragement of Co-operation in all its forms.

(4) The provision of expert technical advice for our farmers in every State.

All the education which is given to our children in the schools of to-day is a preparation for city life. The subjects which are commonly taught—languages, histories, etc.—while giving a good cultural foundation, are not accompanied by any training in the life which the students are to lead later. This is so especially in the case of boys and girls who are to live on the land. As a result they are completely unfitted for this life, become discontented and leave the land for a city profession which is all that their training fits them for.

The N.C.R.M. includes in its activities a campaign for the proper rural education of rural youth—both boys and girls. Training in agricultural science and farm management for the boys; training in domestic science and home management for the girls.

This is not in place of the education which they already receive. It is an attempt to secure a proper balance so that their education will be "a training in life."

By the organisation of discussion groups it will provide a forum of opinion in which interested farmers and farming families can extend their knowledge of ideas, of the Catholic faith, of national and international affairs, by study and discussion among themselves. Through its monthly paper, *Rural Life*, it spreads Catholic ideas among many thousands of families.

By showing the farmers a practical solution for their material difficulties founded on the social principles of the Church, it will strengthen their loyalty to her and make them more receptive of her teachings.

It will train its leaders to spread the devotion of the Family Rosary among all families on the land; will provide religious vacation schools where country children may supplement their knowledge of the Faith;

will periodically arrange retreats for the farmers of the different regions.

To sum up: the N.C.R.M. will be a powerful help to our Catholic farmers and their families to LEAD THE FULL CATHOLIC LIFE as it should be lived on the land.

WASHINGTON.

"Comparative facts brought out by the latest religious census of the United States regarding the rural and urban church give every evidence of the continued weakness of the rural church," the Rev. Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, said in a statement here last week.

"This census, while only recently published, is really for the year 1936," Dr. Schmiedeler said. "It shows that, of the total membership of 19,914,937 of the Catholic Church in the United States, 16,041,764 are listed as urban and 3,874,173 as rural. That is, 80.6 and 19.4 per cent. are urban and rural respectively.

"Regarding parochial schools, the census brings to light the following facts: There are in all 6,825 parochial schools. Of these, 5,001, or 73.3 per cent., are in the city, and 1,824, or 26.7 per cent., in the country. In these schools there are 2,095,254 pupils—1,859,341, or 88.7 per cent., in the city schools, and 233,913, or 11.3 per cent., in the country. The 65,001 teachers comprising the total staff are classified as follows: 54,931, or 84.5 per cent., urban, and 10,070, or 15.5 per cent., rural.

"In the matter of number of church edifices, the country leads the city. Out of 16,639 church edifices, 7,538 are urban and 9,099 rural. The respective percentages are 45.3 and 54.7. So far as the values of the church edifices are concerned, however, the story is strikingly different. City churches are valued at \$637,474,311, country churches at \$140,527,046. In other words, 81 per cent. of the value of church edifices is found in the city and 19 per cent. in the country.

"In view of the nation's declining birth rate, this comparison between the urban and the rural church, as presented by the census, is particularly unfortunate. The birth rate of the country as a whole is declining. Any evidence that this adverse tide is being stemmed comes from rural areas, and usually from Catholic rather than non-Catholic groups.

Therefore, it is to be regretted that the country's most promising bulwark against a dwindling population is weaker than its urban counterpart.

"As evidence of the latter, the case of public and a parochial school in a country town is cited. For decades the public school in question was much larger than the parochial unit. To-day the parochial school shows an attendance of 282 in the grades and 144 in the high school—a total of 426 pupils—while the public school shows 174 in the grades and 124 in high school—a total of 298 pupils.

"It is very much a mistake to think that birth control has not also become a curse of the rural population in general. The rural public grade school population dropped by 1,000,000 between 1930 and 1940. That is the same as the drop in the urban public schools."

—(From the *Catholic Transcript*,
Hertford, Conn.: U.S.A.)

REVIEW

How to Economise On Poultry and Eggs
(*Homestead Bulletin No. 13*), *The*
School of Living, Suffern, New York.
25 cents.

This admirable series is well maintained in the present bulletin, which gives detailed instructions for the domestic production of eggs and table birds on the scale of a laying flock of 25.

In present conditions in England it can be of only academic interest, since our unsound dependence on imported feeding stuffs, no longer available, has made small enterprises of this kind impossible. But for this, we should have pointed out, in all friendliness, a number of points where the compilers seem unduly optimistic on the work and returns involved. The main conclusions, however, are undoubtedly sound.

The quality of the chamber of horrors, in the section on commercial methods, is well maintained. It is, perhaps, the most damaging feature of the whole series.

For years the City of London had been refinancing Germany, finding in that shortsighted business a higher return than English agriculture, for example, provided.—*The Tablet*.