

THE FATE OF THE NON-ARYAN CHRISTIANS IN GERMANY.

By GERTRUDE FARION.

THE sufferings of the non-Aryan Christians in Germany, though perhaps not so spectacular as those of the Jews, are none the less real. This body of unfortunate people with their divided allegiance and tragic fate deserve all the sympathy and assistance which their fellow-Christians can afford.

In order to understand, to some extent at least, the measure of their sufferings, it is well to remember that the term non-Aryan is as new as the persecution it involves. It was coined by National Socialists in order to deal more adequately with those members of the community who, though no longer professing Jews, were yet of Jewish origin. Until 1933 numbers of Christians in Germany were unaware of the fact that any difference existed between them and their fellows. They belonged to the same nation and professed the same creed. In no wise did their outlook differ from that of the average German. Or so they believed. The National Socialists were of a different opinion. In their desire to purify Germany from alien interlopers, they soon realized that there were living in that country a comparatively large number of men and women whose "blood" was tainted and who must be prevented from spreading the contamination further. They were for the greater part Jewish converts or descendants of mixed marriages. For since the abolition of the Ghetto about one hundred years ago, frequent intermarriages between Jews and Gentiles had taken place. The children born of such unions were mostly received into the Church. Moreover this number of Christian citizens of Jewish origin was greatly increased by those converts from the Jewish faith who, for various reasons, had adopted Christianity, *e.g.*, in the days of the Kaiser higher posts such as chairs at universities, which were closed to professing Jews, were immediately obtained on baptism. This was in itself a sufficient incentive to conversion for those whose belief in the Jewish religion was practically non-existent and who remained the same after the ceremony had taken place. High respect is due to those Jews who, though no longer believing the religion of their fathers, were honest enough not to exchange it for another creed because of the material advantages such a "conversion" offered.

It is indeed difficult to assess the exact percentage of the total population of Germany which these non-Aryan Christians constitute. According to the figures published in the official Swiss organ *Der Bund* on July 3, 1938, there lived in Germany at the time of the National Socialist Revolution 500,000 professing Jews, about 175,000 to 200,000

half Jews and 100,000 quarter Jews *i.e.*, Christians with one Jewish grand-parent. To these must be added the non-Aryans from Austria and Czechoslovakia, making a sum total of about one and a half million. Even should the number of non-Aryans in Germany exceed the figure quoted here, it would barely be more than one eightieth of the entire population. It is a fact worth mentioning that, families in this section of the nation being very small, according to some computations even without the efforts of the National Socialist Party it would have died out in the near future or have been absorbed entirely.

The purification of the German people from alien blood, however, being one of the cornerstones of the Nazi programme, steps were taken to ensure it. In fact, the very elasticity of the term non-Aryan, which figures so largely in the decrees that caused the first wave of fugitives to cross the German frontiers early in 1933, was suited to the needs of a new government that had to feel its way very carefully at the beginning. The original definition of the term as used in the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, issued on April 7, 1933, runs as follows, "A non-Aryan is one who is descended from non-Aryan, particularly Jewish, parents or grandparents. It suffices if one parent or one grandparent are non-Aryan. This obtains especially if one parent or one grandparent belonged to the Jewish faith."¹ This definition has been modified in the course of time, the interpretation being more severe or laxer as the situation might demand. The Nuernberg Laws of 1935, for instance, by which the status of Jews and non-Aryan Christians within the Third Reich were defined, deprives all Jews and descendants of either two Jewish parents, two Jewish grandparents and one Jewish parent, of their German citizenship. The descendants of those who are of half Jewish and half Aryan origin, having not more than one Jewish parent and two grandparents, can be absorbed into the German community, provided that they contract suitable marriages and avoid all further "contamination."

On the other hand there has been an evergrowing tendency towards a stricter interpretation of the term non-Aryan. The law regulating peasant holdings (September 29th, 1933) no longer spoke of parents and grandparents but declared that: "A person is not considered as of German or cognate blood if his paternal or maternal ancestors have Jewish or coloured blood in their veins," and went on to fix the "first of January, 1800, as the day beyond which probing would be unnecessary. A new regulation concerning the press which was issued in April 1935, likewise barred from the publishing business all persons who could not prove their own Aryan descent and that of their consorts . . . up to 1800."² The same test was subsequently applied to the army, where marriages between the nobility and Jewish heiresses had been frequent in the days of the Kaiser. Moreover, in all cases where exposure of non-Aryan descent would remove the holder from a much coveted post, a stricter interpretation of the term non-Aryan seemed indicated.

¹ Annex to the Letter of Resignation of James G. McDonald, High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany, p. 17, issued by Friends of Europe.

² *ibidem*, p. 18.

These unfortunate non-Aryans suffered severe material losses through the discriminatory legislation levelled against them. The first of these laws, the so-called Aryan Decrees, mentioned above, are the central part of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. They served as a model for the purge of the liberal professions. The legal and medical professions were affected first, then followed measures applied to the fields of education and general culture, industry, agriculture and commerce. The situation of the non-Aryan has been aggravated by the fact that these laws found a different application according to the temper of the local authorities entrusted with their enforcement. Nuernberg and Breslau have been noted for the severity of their officials, while the non-Aryans inhabiting large centres like Berlin and Frankfurt were left comparatively unmolested at the outset. However, on the whole a steadily growing tendency towards the strictest interpretation of the term non-Aryan can be traced. "The legislative disabilities of 'non-Aryans' which have just been analysed prove that it is the intention of the National Socialist rulers of Germany to eliminate Jews and Christians of Jewish ancestry from all public and semi-public institutions, from the liberal professions and from intellectual and cultural life; to restrict their opportunities as business men, employers or labourers; and to segregate them as a group of outcasts."¹ These words, if true in 1935, and they were certainly true then, are even more true in 1939.

Although the non-Aryan Christians were spared the worst outrages and humiliations which followed the murder of von Rath in Paris last November, although their homes were not ransacked nor their menfolk rushed off to concentration camps, the hatred of the Jews rekindled by these atrocities could not fail to have its effect on non-Aryan Christians. To-day they are finding it all but impossible to retain their positions in business, though, and this is a strange paradox, even Jews can find employment as manual labourers because of the scarcity of hands due to Germany's extensive re-armament programme. Sooner or later every one of them is faced by the problem of emigration. For this fate he is as little, possibly even less prepared than the Jew, because his ties to his native land are very close.

Though, together with the professing Jew, he is subject to the most cruel persecutions a civilized country has ever known, the non-Aryan Christian lacks the solace which common adversity can provide. The pure Jew may find comfort in the contemplation of his nation's glorious past. He may learn patience when he considers that his people have survived all their persecutors of previous ages. The rebuilding of the National Home in Palestine may offer to him an ideal for which he can live, and fill him with hope for his children though, maybe, not for himself. He will concentrate on his own national values and draw from the feeling of community strength to suffer and endure. Even to the assimilated Jew who has always rejected Zionism as a one-sided solution of the Jewish problem, the way to the religion of his fathers remains open.

¹ *ibidem*, p. 20.

No such reflections can alleviate the sufferings of the non-Aryan Christian. His links with the Jewish community may be, and very frequently are, only slight. They may not exist at all. If he is merely a professing Christian, he may be extremely antisemitical. The persecutions inflicted upon him must appear even more unreasonable to him than to the Jew with his long and tragic history. In all probability he shared so intimately the life of the German nation that he cannot understand why he should be branded as an outsider and denied his part in the task of national regeneration. There seems to be no rhyme or reason why a teacher of Scripture should be dismissed because one of her grandparents was Jewish. Why should a Christian minister deny help and spiritual guidance to a Christian youth whose father happened to be a Jew? Why is it wrong for a German congregation to be ministered to by a non-Aryan pastor?

In the early days of the National Socialist Revolution when people still believed that the "positive Christianity" of the party programme would be put into practice and the persecutions of the Jews were directed against their religion and not their race, a number of non-Aryan Christians formed a union in order to vindicate their rights. Mistaking the issue for a religious one, they emphasized the fact that, though of Jewish origin, they shared the faith of the nation. This effort was doomed to failure. In the course of one year it became apparent that the persecutions were of a racial and not a religious nature. Nay, more than that : it was soon realized inside and outside Germany that this new *Weltanschauung* called National Socialism claimed to be a religion and had engaged Christianity in a life and death struggle. It was no longer a question of : Here Christian, here Jew ! it was a question of : Here true follower of Christ, here unbeliever ! And once the establishment of the Confessional Church in Germany had taken place, the issue was perfectly clear.

Under these circumstances the non-Aryan Christian could not fail to receive his share of the persecutions. Gradually he was excluded from all spheres of national life. Mention has been made of the purging of the liberal professions. This example was followed. Non-Aryan Christians were forbidden to join the National Labour Organization (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) which was all but compulsory. It is true, employment could still be found in Jewish firms, but their number was steadily decreasing, and since last January, they are practically non-existent. Aryan employers would in most cases prefer to employ Aryan workers to avoid enquiries by the authorities. Even where non-Aryan employees were retained, they were subjected to all manner of slights and humiliations. A case of a non-Aryan Christian employed in an Aryan firm is known to the author, who was forbidden to take part in a ceremony in honour of the war dead though he was the only man to have fought in the war and still bore the marks of his wounds ! He was excluded from all social gatherings and made to feel his inferior position in every way that ignorance and hatred could devise. It would be unsatisfactory as well as useless to dwell any longer on these pin-pricks, which in their endless repetition can have the effect of breaking hearts and wrecking homes.

Especially tragic, however, is the fate of children from mixed marriages. Sooner or later such a child is bound to find out that one of his parents is an outcast, a pariah, an enemy of the people. In one of his lessons the teacher will describe the Jew as the parasite battenng on the substance of the nation, and the whole class will turn round and stare at him. Former friends will drop him. And even if he is spared such experiences, there still remains the *Stuermer*, posted in all conspicuous places, which will pour out its filth into minds that are too immature to discriminate. Even into the home the spirit of discord may penetrate, when the Aryan mate regrets having married a non-Aryan and divorce is easily obtained on grounds of racial incompatibility. It is difficult to picture the extent of harm done to minds young and old by thus sowing the seeds of an implacable hatred. For by virtue of such persecution the non-Aryan Christian is gradually driven to hate and despise his country, or at least those who govern it at the present moment, though retaining that passionate love for all things German, which strikes everyone who comes into contact with refugees from that country. He is all but forced to side with those whose enmity towards Germany is purely destructive.

Fortunate are those who find their consolation in the Christian Faith. But even here, this most sacred private sphere is spoilt for them. Unless the non-Aryan Christian can find a parson belonging to the Confessional Church, he will be destitute of the spiritual help and guidance he so sorely needs. For it is sad to confess that German pastors outside the Confessional Church have by no means been prepared to open the Church of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for all men, to all and sundry. It is only within the Confessional Church, which by this very fact proves itself to be the only true Church of Jesus Christ in that country, that the non-Aryan Christian is admitted as an equal.

The Confessional Church is, however, not the only body ministering to the spiritual and temporal needs of the non-Aryan Christians. Great services are rendered to them as well as to Jews to-day by foreign societies, *e.g.*, the Society of Friends, the Baptists, and the Mildmay Mission, as well as by other denominations. They provide for these people who frequently have no pastor to minister unto them an experience of Christian fellowship and service, and endeavour to keep the light of the gospel aflame in a country enveloped in spiritual darkness. Many a tale could be told of hope rekindled and suffering relieved, of friendships formed and new openings found abroad, but it is better not to say too much. One fact, however, seems worth mentioning, that the services of other denominations are attended even by Aryan Protestants who do not belong to the Confessional Church, because of the failure of a great part of the Lutheran clergy to preach the pure Gospel.

No essay dealing with the fate of the non-Aryan Christians in Germany can fail to point out, in conclusion, the urgent need for assistance to emigrate. There can be no doubt that it is becoming increasingly difficult for non-Aryan Christians to obtain a livelihood in Germany. They are forced to turn to other countries, in order to

support themselves and give unto the world their own precious contribution. This is impossible unless help is obtained from abroad. In this country various organizations¹ are endeavouring to assist those fellow Christians who, united with us by the bond of a common faith, by their sad fate should make a special appeal to our Christian charity.

¹ Church of England Committee for non-Aryan Christians, 20 Gordon Square, W.C.1. Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 120 Victoria Street, S.W.1. The Society of Friends, Friends House, Euston Road, N.W.1. a.o.

SEEING IN THE DARK. By Rev. S. Greer, M.A. *Lutterworth Press.*
2s. 6d.

There is often a tendency to say as one hears or reads short addresses to children: "Oh, how simple. Anyone could have done that." And yet, in such a collection as this, there are dozens of illustrations and points and pegs which show how gifted the author is for this particular kind of work, and though the talks may not be especially arresting, they will be found very useful and suggestive.

GUIDANCE. By W. J. Noble. *Student Christian Movement.* 1s.

Some people haughtily reject the notion that God gives particular guidance to such an insignificant creature as Man. Others seek His guidance in all kinds of circumstances, in which it is quite unnecessary to do so. Others claim divine guidance when it is more than doubtful whether such could possibly be the case. All these types and others besides will find a wholesome corrective to their misguided views in these sane and balanced pages. We commend wholeheartedly Mr. Noble's very helpful treatise.

ONCE UPON A BEDTIME. By Sibyl Harton. *S.P.C.K.* 5s.

The Stories of the Old Testament seem to defy reproduction in any but their original form. If any version of them for young children is desirable, here it is in these "fifty-two delectable stories from the Bible for the want-to-be-read-to's." There are 49 stories from the Old Testament, two from the Apocrypha, and the story of the Birth of Christ.

Details here and there may not please everyone. In the story of Adam and Eve we are told "God did not want them to be ill, so He warned them never to taste that fruit." Would physical illness ever occur to anyone as a reason for the prohibition? Jacob's wrestling at Jabbok is entirely spiritualized. It is refreshing to find that the story of Abraham and Isaac in Gen. 22 is not explained away.

There are 16 good illustrations and a Bibliography.

With the maximum of narrative and the minimum of moralizing the book makes good reading for the young.

H. D.