

at the mercy of the world; I am buffeted about by sharp adversity and driven before the storm of grief and sorrow. Except Thou dost keep me I must perish. Keep me, my God, for Thy ocean is so wide; the journey is so long, and the days and years are so many. In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."

THE GERMAN CENTER PARTY

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT EXPLAINS NEW PROGRAM

By Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Baron von Capitaine Cologne, Sept. 1.—While recent modifications in the program of the Center Party, permitting the nomination of non-Catholic candidates for office in the coming elections, were not the result of unanimous opinion among its members, yet it is safe to say that in view of the critical condition of the country they were welcomed by the great majority. The necessity of Catholics and Protestants uniting against the materialistic and non-Christian forces of Germany was never more urgent.

A significant statement on the new program was made by the president of the Center Party recently.

THE NEW PROGRAM

"We must not speak of the reform of the Center Party as one of principles," he said. "The political character of the party, however, must assume a wider scope than it has in the past. In the coming elections a greater number of non-Catholic candidates must be presented."

"The Center Party at all times has been a political party and as such it has opened its doors to members of Protestant churches. After the death of Dr. Rathenau a terrible catastrophe threatened the German Republic. We all suddenly awakened to the fact that we were on the brink of an abyss and that nothing but the union of all those who were of the same opinions, whatever might be their confession or calling, was necessary to save our land and our people."

"A replacement of old and good Catholics and of the brave Catholic deputies is not intended. The principles of the old Center Party have not been changed at all, they were in fact reiterated in the convention of January 1922. There is no intention to eliminate these principles. The salvation of Christian culture will be our aim at all times. Therefore we will demand confessional schools with all the energy with which we demanded them in times past. A Protestant can be a member of the Center Party only in case he is willing to stand by our fundamental principles and acknowledge them in public life. The Center press has been exhorted to give a political form to the political sections of our newspapers. But it will, as heretofore, regard all political events from the viewpoint of Catholicity."

DUTY OF PRESS

"We must not, in these days when the Catholic press is suffering under so many burdens, impose new burdens upon it. But the party is right in demanding that our press feature political articles which will awaken political interest and an understanding of the conditions we face as a nation among our people. There is no doubt that the Center Party, if necessary, will defend the liberty of the Church if it should be threatened by State measures."

There is no questioning the fact that the Catholics of Germany were not in favor of the manner in which the new constitution was brought into existence. But at the same time it must be acknowledged that never was a constitution brought into existence which had to face graver tests. Many things have arranged themselves in a manner which is far more satisfactory than could ever have been expected, due largely to the good will of those who were in power. The third anniversary of the constitution has now passed. It would be unlawful now to destroy it by violence or artifice. Catholics cannot assume the role of anarchists. Liberty of conscience, religion and private property are being respected. The rule of the majority must be respected. The murder of Rathenau undoubtedly gave pause to those who were outstanding in their criticism of the constitution and the manner in which it was adopted. Notable church leaders, as well as notable political leaders of the Center Party, secured the adoption of resolutions which would tend to weaken the spirit of resistance and reaction which had become so powerful.

THE NEW CONFLICT

The former minister, Dr. Stegerwald, pointed out that there was no longer any combat between Church and State, but that the combat was between two religious and cultural opinions, the one Christian and the other materialistic. Catholics and Protestants, he declared, had a common cultural opinion and a well-founded common social opinion that could unite them. They could, in the crisis, work together as faithful allies.

It is opinion such as this that has prompted the new political policy of the Center Party, and important developments for the future of the country and for the conservation of Catholicity are expected to result from it.

DOUBT AND CERTAINTY

Father Hull, the noted editor of the Bombay Examiner, is himself a convert to the Faith, hence he has had experience of the religious doubts that frequently agitate the conscience of the sincere and virtuous non-Catholic. To a correspondent who attempts to exalt the benefits of doubt over those of certainty, as a stimulus to faith, he gives the following exhaustive answer in a recent number of his paper:

"Our correspondent goes on to expatiate on the advantages of doubt as a stimulus to faith. We regard a good deal of this sort of thing nowadays, for the obvious reason that doubt and uncertainty abound, and all well-disposed people feel that they have to make the best of it. It must be acknowledged that a state of doubt can produce in some souls a stimulation which certainty does not produce. It is the stimulation of search and discovery, with all the sporting chances of success or failure. Nay, the pleasure of search can even develop into a passion, such as led some German philosopher (Lessing I think) to say that 'If God gave me the choice between the possession of truth and the search for it, I should certainly prefer the search.'"

"That is all very well if God's designs were to leave us in a state of doubt, and to make our particular probation to consist in the earnestness with which we strive to solve it. In this striving an immense amount of heroic virtue could be exercised. But if, on the other hand, God's design has been to impart to us a revelation ready-made, and thus to give us a starting point in knowledge of the truth; that in that case it is not His intention that we should be wasting time and energy in trying to find out things for ourselves which He has already revealed. What He wants us to do is rather to live in the joy of our knowledge, and to make that a starting point for progress; not in the way of seeking for the truth, but in the way of deepening our grasp and appreciation of it, and turning it to account for the building up of character and virtue on the lines laid down."

"It is, therefore, resolvable into a question of fact. Has God designed to give us a revelation ready-made, as the firm and certain foundation on which to build up our spiritual life and work to the highest ideals which that revelation places before us; or has He merely put into us an aspiration for truth, and left us groping in the dark trying to find out by degrees what point we have to start from, and what goal we have to strive for?"

"The world is divided into two classes of men: (1) Those who are convinced that God has given them the truth as a foundation ready-made, and (2) Those who are convinced that He has not, and that if we want a foundation we have to grope about to find it. If we compare these two classes, we may find in given cases, that those in doubt are leading more strenuous lives of spiritual effort in quest of the truth than those who enjoy the full possession of the truth, and merely rest in its possession without any effort to make use of it. But this does not mean that the state of doubt is (ideally or abstractly) a better state than the state of certainty. If the proper outcome of the state of doubt is an earnest endeavor to arrive at the truth, so also the proper outcome of the state of certainty is not to rest in it as a goal, but to make the truth a stimulus to further advancement in the truth, and the conversion of knowledge into life."

"Any one who has grasped the truth of the Christian revelation will find that it offers to him a tremendous opening for effort—for self-realization and self-development on the lines laid down, working towards that ideal goal of perfection which the Christian ideal portrays. The great feature of the Christian ideal is that it is an unattainable ideal: 'Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. But the fact of its unattainability is not meant as a discouragement. It is meant rather to provide just that stimulant of search which the earnest victim of doubt prizes so highly. There is certainly one advantage in the state of doubt, in that it furnishes a stimulus to spiritual efforts in hope of attainment; but there is a still greater advantage in the state of certainty, viz., that it furnishes a stimulus to spiritual efforts in the certainty of attainment."

"To illustrate the difference let us make a comparison. Here is a man who finds himself in an interminable stretch of bog of which he knows not the way out but has to search for it; not far away is another man who finds himself in the midst of a chain of mountains, which he has to scale in order to reach his home. There is a striking difference between the two. The man on the mountain at least has solid ground under his feet. He can look around him, above and below, and plan out his track and reckon on his chances, making advancement all the time. But the man in the bog has no such satisfaction; he cannot even gauge the nature of the ground on which he stands. Any step may land him in a quagmire; in whatever direction

he walks he may find himself confronted with an unexpected and impassable ditch. He may wander round for ever, and never find the one narrow track by which alone he can escape."

"Hence I can never sympathize with any argument on the superiority of doubt over certainty. The advantages of doubt have merely the nature of consolations in saving a man from despair. They never amount to more than making the best of a bad job, and the mere satisfaction that one is trying one's best under difficulties. Whatever stimulus may arise from finding oneself in the dark and trying to work forward in spite of the darkness, can equally arise from finding oneself in the light, and seeing the goal in front and the way to reach it. But, more, there is little satisfaction in timid groping which may plunge one down a chasm at any moment; there is much satisfaction in stepping briskly forward on a well lighted road and counting the milestones of one's safe and certain progress."

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