



# Germany's New Religion

The German Faith Movement

# **GERMANY'S NEW RELIGION:**

THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

## BY THE TRANSLATORS

### TUBINGEN - THE HOME OF THE NEO-PAGAN MOVEMENT

The "University Village" of Tübingen, as the students affectionately call it, still preserves a good deal of its early nineteenth century atmosphere. The "alte aula", the old main building of the university, still looks down on the gracious splendor of the famous avenue of plane trees and the quiet waters of the Neckar, just as in the days of Holderlin and Uhland, Strauss and Bauer. The smells, too, of the peasant quarter, which are reminiscent of nothing so much as a Jerusalem Bazaar, remains unchanged. But it bears the stamp of the new Germany as well. A magnificent new university building has been erected in the postwar period, new barracks have been rushed up to house the new army, and the main street resounds daily with the tramp and song of eager Storm Troopers. And it is also now the center of the main types of German theology. The confessional Lutheran Church is represented by its most prominent theologian, Karl Heim, the Catholic Church its eloquent apologete, Karl Adam; and the neo-pagan religion by its prophet and leader, Wilhelm Hauer. Professor Hauer has become the center of a controversy which is raging all over Germany, and he is everywhere regarded as a serious menace to all types of Christianity.

This volume gives the English reader a statement from his own pen - both of his positive aims and views and of his objections to Christianity.

## THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

The eccentricities of foreigners are a notorious source of delight to all English-speaking people, and the newspapers have never been slow to take advantage of the fact. The lurid colors in which they have painted the activities of the new German cults must have left the public the impression that the Germans, who are so practical, if a little lacking in humor in other matters, especially foreign politics and the organization of defense, have in the matter of religion an exaggerated taste for the bizarre, and have indulged in it to such an extent that they have relapsed into the excesses of prehistoric tribal fetishism. It is hoped that a reading of this book will prove this not to be the case; but it is necessary to clear away a few preliminary misconceptions. There has been no reintroduction of the worship of Nordic deities such as Thor, Wotan, and the rest of the Scandinavian pantheon. Hauer makes the point as strongly as possible, in one of the articles that follow.

Nor, on the other hand, is the German Faith Movement an atheistic movement. It claims to be a counter-religion to Christianity, and to worship a more than human God.

Again, however great the impetus given to it by the National Socialist revolution - an impetus which Hauer does not attempt to deny - it is not just a political movement, nor has it been fostered by the state for political ends. Moreover, no one who has had the advantage of hearing Hauer lecture

or of holding a private conversation with him would want to deny that he is a sincerely religious man. And his genuine followers are as sincere and religious as he is. There has been acrimony on both sides, though this book only records the charges brought by Hauer against his opponents, but in both cases it has been the acrimony of fanaticism and not of petty warfare or ambition.

We must see the movement in its historical connections and its modern context. The history of all religious philosophies is necessarily dominated by two main trends of thought. The one regards God as immanent in the world, that is, as discoverable only in nature and the human genius, and leads logically to one or other of the many forms of pantheism; the other school puts God completely outside the world and regards him as operative in it only through occasional interventions such as, in Christian thought, the creation, or the redemption achieved by Christ. The one school regards the knowledge of God as accessible to all without the help of sacrament or priest; the other finds approach to god impossible without a mediator of some sort, whether it be priest or church or bible. But whereas we are accustomed to find attempts, more or less successful, to discover a compromise between the two points of view, the German mind finds such solutions difficult to entertain and seems to regard itself as forced to one or other of the two lines of thought to the bitter end. Meister Eckhart, of whom a great deal will be heard in these pages, the mystic of the fourteenth century, condemned by the Catholic Church as a heretic and later reinstated, is the first prominent member of the immanentist school in Germany. Until the Reformation, and to a more limited extent after it, many members of this school were inside the fold of the church, either Catholic or Protestant, for example Tauler and the German mystics of

the fifteenth and the pietists of the seventeenth century; and after the Reformation we find Goethe, Holderlin, Fichte, and Nietzsche outside the church. Hauer definitely takes his place as the latest in this succession.

On the other side we have the whole spirit of Luther's Reformation and the emphasis of his successors, magnifying the distance between God and the world. The philosophy of Kant belongs to that succession, however little he may resemble Luther in his method of expression, and its ablest, and at the same time most extreme, modern exponent is Karl Barth, according to many the most influential Christian thinker in Germany today.

The other main historical consideration to be borne in mind is that the German mentality has been, from time immemorial - and is, of course, not least at the present moment - incredibly race conscious. No reader of the following articles can fail to be struck by the continual reference to the "depths of German nature", a phrase which apparently means something to the ordinary German. What it seems to mean is something like this: German blood and German soil and German race possess a mysterious quality of indwelling power for the possessor of them, and it is this quality which makes the German the heir to a richer inheritance than the other Europeans; this indwelling power is located in the depths of the German nature. It is the mingling of this inherited feeling with the operation of political forces which makes the German Revolution of 1933 an event very different from others which seem to resemble it, and which gives to the enthusiasts of the new regime their semireligious idealism. The "mission of Germany to the world" and the "Pan-Germanic ideal" are no mere cloaks for political ambition and acquisitive imperialism, though there are those who use them as such. They are genuine, if sometimes misguided

and often dangerous, expressions of something which is native to the German character and can only be suppressed at terrific cost to those who carry out the suppression. The Treaty of Versailles and its present consequences furnish a melancholy testimony to the truth of the last statement.

The particular form which this race-consciousness has recently taken is, as all the world knows, the determined exclusion of all that is biologically or culturally Jewish, or even faintly Semitic, from the German nation-state and the life of its people.

This temper, argues Lutheran theologian Karl Heim, has resulted in the emergence of two types of race-religion, the crude "German religion" of Ernst Bergmann, who professes faith in a God who is nothing more than the overflowing vitality of the German people, and the much more defined and highly developed religion of Hauer. There is no reason to dispute the substantial accuracy of this account, which makes abundantly clear why the soil has proved so favorable to the crop which Hauer has sown in it.

Two other reasons for this are equally important. The first is the political situation created by the National Socialist revolution, and its effect in making things easy for Hauer does not need any more emphasis, as it is adequately stressed by Hauer himself in the articles which follow. The second is the present position of Protestant religion and theology in Germany today. It is scarcely possible to deny that both Lutheran and Calvinist theology have assumed a reactionary form and made a conscious return to the forms and expressions of the Reformation period. Although the typical Lutheran theologian is still compelled to work with scientific methods in Biblical investigation, he seems to have turned his back on the more general conclusions of criticism. Lutheran theology is determined at all costs to be biblical and



to raise the Protestant Fathers to a position only a little lower than that occupied by Saint Thomas in Roman Catholic theology.

To English minds, some of the criticisms made of Christianity by Hauer seem to be dealing merely with ghosts of the past. But it is precisely there, to us dead forms, that German Protestantism is seeking to revivify. The churches of North Germany are empty, perhaps because their worship and theology seem barren; in South Germany they are often full, but the crowds which sometimes throng them are made up only to a very small extent by representatives of educated youth. Hauer has not too difficult a task in persuading this section of the community that it may safely leave the essentially alien thought of the church on one side; in very many cases it has already done so, long ago, and the heroic stand which the Confessional Churches have made against the encroachments of the state has not brought many of the young people over to its side; for the youth of Germany is, in the first place, National Socialist, and in the second or a much later place, Christian - if it really is Christian at all.

Before the Great War, German Christianity was predominantly liberal; that is, it tried to combine the spirit of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment with the legacy of the past. But liberalism in every form, whether political or religious, is dead in Germany today, and the reaction against it in religion, as in everything else, has been as violent as only reactions in Germany can be. It is not too much to say that if a new and vital form of liberal Christianity had arisen to capture the allegiance of postwar youth, Neo-Paganism in Germany would have had small chance of success.

## THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

So short a book as this does not, of course, make it possible to see all sides and aspects of the conflict which is raging at present in Germany between Christianity and the new religion. In the first article, written by Hauer especially for foreign readers, he describes the origin and sketches the aims of his movement. In his second, which is in form of a lecture delivered to an audience of ten thousand at the Berlin Sport Palace in April of 1935, he sets forth in outline his criticisms of Christianity and his positive contribution to religious thought, together with various suggestions for the reform of education in Germany, etc. In his third article, which is an extract from his recent book *A German View of God*, he defines his attitude to Christianity in general and to Jesus Christ in particular.

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## THE WORSHIP OF THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

A good test of a religious movement is its worship, and it is worth while giving a personal impression of the service which in the Faith Movement fills the place of Confirmation in the Christian Churches.

It was held on a summer morning, in the beautiful garden of Professor Hauer, with its magnificent view over the valley of the Neckar, in the midst of sprouting fruit trees and vines - an ideal background for the rites of a movement of German Faith. The ceremony was definitely a religious and

spiritual experience. An odd note might be struck by an occasional phrase in a hymn, such as the expression of undying loyalty to Hitler. Prayer might be conspicuous by its absence. But the music, German Classical music played by an invisible quartet, and the sermon to the catechumens by Professor Hauer, were very impressive.

## PROSPECTS OF THE MOVEMENT

Hauer's whole position rests on the assumption, which he takes to be proved, that an individual's religion is determined for him by his race and stock, and that so long as he follows the peculiar religious instincts of his own race, he achieves as much knowledge of God as is possible for him.

In the end, a religion must stand or fall by two things: its doctrine of the nature and character of God, and its treatment of the problem of evil. It is not unfair to Hauer to say that he definitely avoids the former issue; for he openly refuses to state any doctrine of God, and professes agnosticism on all ultimate questions. "We worship the God who is revealed to us by our native genius, and other nations do the same", he says; "It is impossible to know what God is really like, or to say anything about his ultimate nature and character at all!" It is difficult to resist the conclusion that he evades the problem of evil as well; for evil, in his description of it, ceases to be evil in any sense which corresponds to the moral consciousness of civilized man, for the conception of duty has vanished, and we are left only with the vague feeling that we are controlled by the forces of destiny and yet called upon to live a heroic life. And if we fall short of the heroic ideal, we are not promised any assistance in the recovery of our self-respect, except an exhortation to

strengthen that catspaw of destiny which, for the sake of convenience, we call our will.

Wilhelm Hauer was born in a village in Wurttemberg, South Germany, and was attracted in early life to the more pietistic section of the Protestant Church. He went as a young man to the missionary college in Basel, and later to India as a missionary. There he was noted for his mastery of Indian ideas and his skill in getting into contact with educated Indians; and, in order that he might become in due course the head of a Christian college, he was sent to Oxford to undergo a further period of training. He became a member of Mansfield College, and a year later won an open exhibition in Jesus College. He took a first in "Greats" in 1914, and was still in England when the Great War broke out. Later he was a pastor of congregations in Frankfurt and Strassburg, but was gradually moving away from the Christian position. He eventually formed a sect of "free" Christians, and after he had to all intents and purposes forsaken Christianity altogether, he became a professor in the University of Tubingen, where he still is. His lectures on "Race and Religion" and kindred subjects have drawn very large crowds and create a good deal of controversy.

# THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

BY DR. WILHELM HAUER

The German Faith Movement is as old as German history. What today is styled the German Faith Movement is only a phase of the conflict between native faith and a Christianity which has come down to us from an alien source. And the range of this conflict extends beyond the boundaries of Germany. For the whole conflict of the German spirit with Christianity, since the latter's invasion of the Teutonic area, is in turn merely a phase of the conflict of the Indo-Germanic spirit with the spirit of the Near-Eastern Semitic world, which in the form of the Christianity of the first centuries and of the middle ages allied itself with Rome. The struggle of these two worlds with one another extends over thousands of years, and all the West Indo-Germanic countries have been in a special sense drawn into it. In every single one of these countries the revolt of the Indo-Germanic spirit against Christianity, which is Near Eastern and Semitic, has made itself felt. The "Secularist" movement in France falls undoubtedly in this category.

The German Faith Movement, which was founded in Eisenach in July 1933, did not receive its name because we thought that there was a German God in contradistinction to the God of other nations; the name was intended to express the fact that we felt the constraining power of a faith movement springing out of the specific German nature, and the urge to set it over against Christianity, whose founded and

standard documents have reached us from a different racial and cultural area. The word "German" was not intended to mark off this movement from the other West Indo-Germanic nations. The distinguishing feature of this Faith Movement was, rather, to be the normative function assigned to moral forces which spring immediately from the nature of the German soul. We could have just as easily called it the "Nordic-Teutonic" Faith Movement. As I am convinced that the same fundamental forces in religion and morals are operative in the other West Indo-Germanic nations as well, I chose at first the title "Indo-Germanic". But this sounded too academic, and did not fit the spiritual situation; so it was changed to "German". For this word evoked a far more immediate response from the hearts of those who had been gripped by the National Socialist revolution.

The French or English translation of the name should, therefore, never be "Mouvement allemand de foi", or "German Faith Movement". The adjectives which come nearest to what is meant are "germanique", and "Germanic", so long as it is borne in mind that what is in view is a particular expression of the Indo-Germanic spirit, with its storm-center in Germany. Thus the German Faith Movement can never be a hindrance to international understanding - quite the reverse. It represents, among other things, a thoroughgoing attempt to bring out more and more clearly, and to render effective, the close connection that exists between all the West Indo-Germanic nations in their innermost nature.

The new phase of the German Faith Movement, which began with the meeting in Eisenach in July 1933, must be understood in close relation with the national movement which led to the formation of the Third Reich. Like the latter, the German Faith Movement is an eruption from the biological and spiritual depths of the German nation. National

movements are among the things which are subject to the rhythm of all organic life, in which the ebb and flow of creative powers alternate. The laws of this rhythm, which are fulfilled by vast age-long swings of the pendulum, are unknown to us. According to our view they are the will of eternal formative forces, which mold ever and again the whole life of a nation. This will is all-embracing, and dwells in the deeps, and from age to age it takes a fresh hold of a nation in all that it is and is about to be. It was therefore inevitable that the political movement in the German nation should be closely bound up with a philosophical attitude that should, in fact, arise from it. For a philosophy is, in the end, a vision of new purposes and the knowledge of the laws and forces out of which these spring and through which they can be realized. Thus a new religious movement as well as a political one was bound to be born at this time (that is to say, it had been born long before, but the revolution brought it into the clear light of day). Throughout the nineteenth century, and during the first third of the twentieth, essays at a native religion were constantly appearing, and men like Arndt, Lagarde, and in a certain sense Nietzsche, put forward the demand that religion and morals should be molded according to the essential German nature. But, the formation of small societies was all that resulted, and a real national movement did not arise. The novel thing about the German Faith Movement is that it is sweeping through the entire nation - although its numbers, in proportion to the sixty million Germans, are still very small.

It was a particular turn of events that drove all those who were fighting for a native German religion to unite themselves under my leadership for a common defense. Point 24 of the program of the National Socialist Party states that the party as such stands for positive Christianity. When

National Socialism came into power, the representatives of the Christian Churches attempted to make use of this item in the party program, and adopted every device to force non-Christian Germans back into the Churches. Tens of thousands of Germans who were non-Christians by religious conviction, were in this way dragooned into entering the churches once again and into acting against their conscience. Those of us who could no longer profess Christianity, because its doctrines had ceased to be an inner reality, had to protect ourselves against the use of force. Just like the Christians, we based our case on Point 24, the first paragraph of which runs: "We demand freedom for all religious confessions within the state, so long as they do not imperil its existence or offend against the moral feelings of the race". We were convinced that, despite its profession of positive Christianity, it was not the intention of the National Socialist state that anyone should be forced into a philosophy against his personal conviction, and that the Fuhrer would repudiate such conduct as soon as he heard of it. Count Reventlow and I put our case before the Fuhrer's Deputy, Reichsminister Hess. As we had expected, he knew nothing of these violent proceedings, and prohibited them at once by a decree of October 19th 1933, as follows: "No National Socialist may suffer any detriment on the ground that he does not profess any particular faith or confession, or on the ground that he does not make any religious profession at all. Each man's faith is his own affair, for which he answers to his own conscience alone. Compulsion may not be brought to bear in matters of conscience". This decree is the Magna Carta of religious freedom in the Third Reich, and guarantees it to everyone whose conduct does not endanger the state. The representatives of Christianity wished to follow anew, even in



the Third Reich, in the misguided footsteps of Charlemagne. But that path has now been blocked once and for all.

We must look upon it as a great achievement on the part of the leader of a totalitarian state, that he has combined complete liberty in questions of religion and conscience with the totalitarian claims of the State. The German Faith Movement was the occasion for the promulgation of this charter of freedom in the Third Reich. It claims, therefore, that it is the champion of this inalienable right of all Indo-Germanic peoples, and that it has taken up its stand at a moment which is decisive for German and European history. But the struggle which the German Faith Movement entered upon in self-defense has other and deeply rooted, positive grounds. Therefore the defensive struggle very soon became an offensive struggle for a philosophy and a religion which was German, in contrast to Christian credalism, which is alien, ecclesiastical, and dogmatic.

Let me now guard against an error which is particularly prevalent abroad. It is commonly supposed that we are anxious to restore the ancient Paganism of the Teutonic tribes. A fantastic story about a marriage ceremony which I am supposed to have conducted has become current in the press all over the world. According to this story, I took the service, to the accompaniment of old Pagan proverbs and hymns, clad in a bearskin or deerskin, and wearing a boar's head helmet! This story is pure imagination; the only foundation for it is the fact that I held a very simple marriage service for a young couple, with music, folk-songs, German poems and proverbs, instead of the usual church wedding. The whole thing had nothing whatsoever to do with the worship of Wotan or Freya. The reason for the mistaken view that we are attempting to reintroduce the worship of the ancient deities, in so far as it is not simply the desire to discredit us, is just

this: several of the earlier societies attempted to restore to a place of honor the heritage of ancient Teutonic and Nordic religion, and they often did it in a very romantic, even fantastic, manner. But such attempts are merely the accompanying phenomena which arise in the case of all great movements; they are mere caricatures of the real thing, and one is not entitled to judge the whole movement by them.

We have no interest in awakening the old Gods to life; we know perfectly well that they will never emerge from their twilight, and that each new age must mold its own religious forms. If we mention here and there old Teutonic deities, they serve only as symbols, just as classical deities have been used as symbols in art and poetry since the Renaissance; and the reason is the same in both cases: they express ideals in which we feel to be essentially akin to us. The figures of the Edda we feel to be spirit of our spirit, nature of our nature. Therefore we gladly absorb ourselves in these ancient poems, the creations of the Nordic spirit, for we feel that they have been born from the same racial soul from which sprung our own deepest moral and religious impulses. The figures in these poems are truly nearer to us than the figures of the Old Testament, the offspring of so different a racial character. But we should have to regard prayers to Wotan, or hymns and sacrifices to Thor, as a parody of German Faith. What we mean by German Faith is something very near to the present; it is an offspring of today, and adapted to today. At the same time we are convinced that this faith in its fundamental nature is as old as the Nordic soul, just as much as we are convinced that its fundamental nature is diametrically opposed to Christian credalism with its Oriental bondage to dogma.

# AN ALIEN OR A GERMAN FAITH?

BY DR. WILHELM HAUER

We are all convinced that the German Revolution is an eruption from the productive deeps of the nation, a creative movement of the whole people, which is gradually taking possession of one sphere of life after another. The German Faith Movement can be understood only in connection with that eruption, which has stirred into life, within the nation, those primal forces whose nature is symbolized by the words Blood, Soil, Reich. We are not a little band of crazed sectaries clamoring for existence; we are a national movement. We, who have united ourselves as comrades in arms, know that we are only the shock troops, and that behind us is advancing a broad front drawn from every section of the nation. We are a beginning, an eruption; and many of the charges which are brought against the German Faith Movement arise from that very fact. But we march forward unflinching, in the knowledge that behind us that broad front is pressing on, the multitude of those who wish to cast their life in a religious mold, and are seeking a German faith.

But the German Faith Movement has other connections also, which lead us back into the spiritual history of the Teutonic peoples. The modern German Faith Movement is only one phase of that conflict between German and alien faith, which has been waged through more than a thousand years of German history. I will mention merely two or three focal points in this conflict, separated by centuries. Resistance to

an alien faith raised its head for the first time at the attempt to evangelize the Teutonic tribes, and just in those regions where Teutonic customs and Teutonic faith were still alive; that is, among the Saxons, the Northmen, the Swabians, the Bavarians, and the Thuringians - for in those areas native genius had not yet been crushed by an alien world. Those Teutons clearly grasped the fact that something was invading them which was dangerous to their genius, and they offered a brave and strenuous opposition to the alien faith - despite the number of those who deserted to it under compulsion or of their own free will.

A second focal point is the life and teaching of Eckhart. Eckhart is one of the greatest of the essentially German masters of life and thought. Soon after Christianity had achieved external success, he won an inward victory over the alien, through the strength of his German nature - however much he still moved within the sphere of Christian imagery and thought-forms, and however little he was conscious of the fact that he really was not a Christian at all.

The third of the focal points is the German Reformation, for in one of its aspects it was the struggle of the German nature against Rome.

The way in which the German nature found its true expression at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the period of the Enlightenment to that of the great dramatists, demonstrated for the first time to the nation and the whole world that an alien faith and German genius stand in fundamental opposition to one another. Frederick the Great, Goethe and Schiller, Fichte, Kleist, and Hebbel were the outstanding figures until the revolt of the German from Christianity reached its culmination in Nietzsche.

Anyone who wishes to understand the innermost meaning of the modern German Faith Movement must see it in

the context of the age-long struggle of the German genius for self-expression. We are a movement which is rooted in the centuries of the past, and which points forward to the centuries of the future. The vitality of the German genius has persisted without intermission till the present day, and will persist without intermission so long as German blood pulses in German veins.

I must first of all defend myself against the reproach often made against us, that we are disturbing the unity of Germany. We belong to the number of those Germans to whom nothing is more sacred than the unity of Germany, and we are ready to sacrifice everything for it. But one thing we will not do: we will not betray the German genius, for we know that thereby we should betray the nation and Reich. That is why we had to take the field, in a decisive moment of German history, to do battle for the German genius. If we had not obeyed this imperative call, we should have offended against the vital energy of the German nation. I myself after the success of the German revolution made the attempt to guarantee the future unity of the Church . . . at that time I addressed an open letter to the nation administration of the German Christian Movement, and to the administration of the Evangelical Church, in which I put forward the suggestion that all non-Catholic Germans should form one national religious worship. I was forced to assume from the start that the Catholic Church would not and could not participate. But I cherished the hope that it would be possible to gather at least the Protestant section of the nation, if they were real Germans, into one great fellowship, in which there would be room both for those whose faith still finds expression in the Christian creeds, and for those who profess a German faith. I looked forward, in fact, to one great national religious fellowship, based on Protestant principles.

But, this hope was shattered by Christians. We were expelled as unbelievers from the fellowship of the faithful. I am not ashamed of having made this last attempt, of having put my faith in one Church, to be a home to all German believers who would not bow to Rome. But the way in which my call was answered made it clear to me that there is an unbridgeable gulf between Christian credalism, of whatever variety, and the German genius. The Church has left the nation, not the nation the Church. It was only when this bitter realization came home to me that drew the conclusion which I could no longer escape, and severed myself finally from the Church. I had long before been forced to emancipate myself from the Christian religion.

This involved adoption of the watchword: To battle for a German Faith! Would those who shared my faith have found a home at all, if we had not made the attempt to band ourselves together? And we could only band ourselves together by declaring war on a religion which claimed to possess the one and only way to God and repudiated other people as unbelievers.

We have no complaint to make against the Christians, when they declare that it is their task to preach the gospel to the whole nation, so long as they confine themselves to preaching the gospel and do not meddle in other matters. But these preachers of the gospel have no right to inform us that we must hold our tongues because we have no faith. We put forward the claim likewise that we have received from God a message to preach. We will allow no one to deprive us of our commission, least of all a Christian. Our faith is not disposed of as soon as someone defames it or pronounces us an infidel. We speak, live, and work because we are called. It has certainly not been easy for us at a time when all the national forces must be coordinated to spread among the

German nation this battle cry for a German faith. But for the sake of the nation we had no choice. The way to the true unity of the nation will not be found by cowardly silence or by treading softly, but by a courageous struggle for the things that matter. It is our conviction that the unity of Germany is not a fragile vessel over which we must keep anxious watch and ward, but a reality which must be fought for and won over with our life's blood.

It has been the fate of the German nation, in all the great epochs of its history, to live through a struggle for its faith and its outlook on the world. That is its commission in the world. That commission it must fulfill. We are of the opinion that by taking the field we have shown the German nation the way to true unity, through an honorable and fair contest, carried out by the best elements in the German nation, on behalf of truth and of that inner reality which should bear us on and guide our steps. Good men and true will recognize one another if we fight on these terms. This is the way in which a lasting fellowship will be built up. The fight must be carried on fairly, as befits the German nature and as is worthy of that which is at stake - the holy of holies, faith, God himself, if I may utter that word here.

As soon as we lay down the conditions for such a fight we see at once the antithesis between an alien faith and the German genius. We of the German Faith stand in respect before every man of genuine religious convictions, and so before the sincere Christian. We do not deny the fact of his "salvation". I know from personal experience that sincere Christians do exist, and I am grateful that my life has been so guided that I have known men who, because of their Christianity and in spite of it, were characters to whom I could look up, men with generous hearts that burned with love of the German nation. I repeat, I am grateful that I have known

such Christians, and that my knowledge of Christianity is not derived only from an experience of conflict with those of other faiths; for in that conflict it reveals itself in such a light that one is driven to despair of it.

But what is the attitude of Christianity towards those of other faiths? We have only to think of the way in which the Christians are carrying on the fight against the German Faith Movement, and especially against me personally. I should never have believed that Germans who asserted that they were fighting for their faith could have been so full of ill will and heartlessness, so ready and willing to distort and calumniate, as these have shown themselves to be in the course of this conflict. But even if we overlook the darker side of the Christians defense of their faith, and fix our attention solely on those who are ready to fight honorably according to German tradition, we come up against a spirit which cannot lead to freedom and generosity in religion. In the end, for these Christians too, those of other faiths are heretics, or worse, reprobate and damned, if they do not get converted to Christ. That is the genius of Christianity, which is incapable of letting go one iota of its credalism. For that spirit is rooted in the very nature of Christianity. It claims to possess the absolute truth, and with that claim is bound up the idea that men can only achieve salvation in one way, through Christ, and that it must send to the stake those whose faith and life do not conform, or pray for them till they quit the error of their ways for the Kingdom of God. Of course there is a difference between sending men to the stake and praying for them. But the attitude which lies behind both is much the same. In both cases the whole stress is laid on forcibly rescuing the man of another faith from the peril of hellfire, into which the pursuit of his own path would inevitably plunge him. It is the attitude which in some form or other



must necessarily grow out of religious intolerance. If this attitude and the conviction on which it is based, that there is only one road to truth and one way to God, form an inalienable characteristic of Christianity, then Christianity is fundamentally opposed to the German genius.

For this attitude and this conviction have never been and can never be part of the German genius. We are faced with a choice between an alien and a German faith. The German nature itself will decide the issue. It alone will declare the fundamental will of the German nation; and we can well afford to leave the decision to that court.

I will not dilate on all the miseries which have been brought to Germany through the control exerted by the various credal organizations - conversions at the point of the sword, the Inquisition, the trials of the witches, the perpetual heresy-hunts which have lasted till the present day. But one thing must not be left unsaid. The chaos of spirit and confusion of judgment produced by this alien faith made it possible for representatives of Christianity, even in the Third Reich, to venture on the attempt, under the cry of "Positive Christianity", to drive men by every sort of pressure back into the fold of the Church. And this process went on till the declaration of Rudolf Hess put an end to it. And much of what happens here and there under a genteel surface in the struggle for a native German faith can be traced back to the confusion of spirit foisted on the German nation by an alien faith with its false attitude to those of other faiths. We of the German Faith Movement see a great task before us, to assist in education the German nation to an attitude which corresponds with its genius. But it will require several decades to get rid of all the effects of this Christian credalism, and for the German spirit to completely find its feet again. Then and only then will it be possible to do battle for one's faith and

outlook on the world in a way worthy of the German genius. Meanwhile, inspired by our German Faith, we can do no more than give a practical example of fair play in such a fight, in the hope that an example will be more effective than mere exhortations. We can and must add, however, that it is not the Christians who have shown the German people how to carry on a worthy contest in matters of faith, but we, who are anathemized as unbelievers.

The reason for our attitude of freedom and generosity to those of other faiths is no superficial one. It is bound up with our sense of personal religious certainty, with our experience that the religious life of the believer has its source in the eternal deeps of his own personality. And we who hold the German Faith are convinced that men, and especially the Germans, have the capacity for religious independence, since it is true that everyone has an immediate relation to God, is, in fact, in the depths of his heart one with the eternal Ground of the world.

That is why we reject the whole concept of mediation, whether through a sacred person, a sacred book, or a sacred rite. We do not in any way desire to deprive those who still need that sort of thing, of any of their aids to faith. They must live their own religious life. But we are compelled to reject such things, not indeed because we deny the existence of God or of the eternal powers that govern life, but because we have found from experience that it is possible to have immediate contact with those powers. In taking up this position, we in no sense deny significance to religious leaders. Germany has been richly endowed with them throughout the course of its history. But the office of the leader is to help Man come to himself, to reach that inner core of his being in which the eternal reveals itself.

We are able to approach men of other faiths with the generous freedom which has always signalized the Teutonic and German genius, just because we base the idea of religious independence - which we oppose to that of mediation - on the immediate relation of men to God; that is, on the conviction that there is a divine spark in man which can be extinguished neither by sin nor death. Out of this religious experience arises the recognition that the religious destiny of individuals is as varied as their personal yearning. It is a true saying which an ancient sage puts into the mouth of the Deity: "According as a man seek refuge in me, so shall I also give myself to him". Such was German, Teutonic, Indo-Germanic teaching and experience for hundreds of years.

This faith in the immediacy of human access to God, and in the divine spark of man, must not be confused with a superficial belief in the moral perfection of humanity. Our opponents are very fond of reproaching us with plainly ignoring the sin and tragedy of life. One of them goes so far as to write that I must have had a very easy life, to hold a belief like mine. Does he not realize that it is just through sin and tragedy that a man fights his way to an affirmation of life? For it is sin and tragedy that assist us to become in the truest sense what we are. We know a great deal about sin and tragedy, only we do not, like Christianity, ascribe them to original sin; on the contrary, we believe that tragedy is one of the laws of the world. We are here to become heroes along the path of adversity, and along the path too of our mistakes, for which we are responsible and with which we must come to terms. We are thereby lifted above the levels of sin and tragedy, and in the silence of our hearts can make the great affirmation.

I think I have made it clear that our concern is with religion. What we have said is not the result of prolonged ex-cogitation or of wide reading; it is wholly a matter of personal experience. Do our opponents imagine that there is no inward momentum, no spiritual power, needed to maintain opposition to a religious world that claims thousands of years for its own? It will surely not again be necessary for me to refute the charge that we are an atheistic movement. Anyone who does not grasp that we are not an atheistic movement, but a movement of believers, must have a heart of stone. I ask our opponents to see us as we are - and not in the light in which they would like to see us, in order to dispose of us more easily. A man who defames his opponent must have a bad conscience and a poor confidence in his own cause. We are assured of the success of our movement, because its strength lies in the essential being of the German nation.

I should like in passing to deal with a reproach often made against us, that we are a purely academic movement - just because, by some dispensation of providence, a professor stands at its head. Firstly in that regard: is it not just feasible that even a professor could have a brain wave, and find the right road for once? And, secondly, most of those who reproach us with being a movement of professors are professors themselves. One of them has recently written against me in the "Reichsbote", maintaining that there is no real power to be seen in the German Faith Movement. All I can say to him is that he is too blind to see realities. Another of them has read my book, *A German View of God*, and can find nothing in it but a dozen "isms". If this is not professorial pedantry and academic religiosity, I have no idea where to look for it! Does he think he has disposed of a living man when he has shut him up in a cage of "isms", and that he has

rendered him as harmless as a lion behind bars of iron? The lion can still growl and even roar from time to time, they admit, but he can be inspected in perfect safety, of course through the use of professorial spectacles - for my noble critics were wearing out their eyes with study, while I was earning my daily bread with the sweat of my brow, and drawing my strength from my mother-earth. We have not got our faith from books, or from sacred scriptures (which in the case of many of my critics have to make up for the lack of a living faith), but from personal experience. This is shown by the fact that it is not the mass of intellectuals which is streaming over to us, but multitudes of ordinary people, who are not looking for the theological pedantries of professors, but for Life. I should like to compare my critics with soldiers shooting at a dummy, while the real enemy continues his advance unnoticed. He may be well on the way to his objective while they are still fighting their mock-battle. I should like to give these people the serious advice to take us seriously. They will discover that they have to deal with a spiritual force and not a mere flight of fancy. Those who reproach us with devising a religion out of our study chairs do nothing themselves but spend the whole day over their books.

Our concern is with religion. And in the end the question comes to this: Where does God meet us? Or, as Count Reventlow says: where is God?

Where is the reality in and through which we can have experience of God? The answer of Christianity is simple: in Jesus Christ, in the Bible, in Church and sacrament. But it has not been our experience that we there came into our closest contact with the eternal powers. We have been permitted to meet them in the realities of life, in history, in our own destiny, that is, in the things of immediate experience and in

the deeps of our own soul. We regard the attempt to limit our meeting with God to a particular area, indeed, to a particular point in time and space, as the expression of a religion alien to us. God meets us in the unmediated reality, in the moment in which we stand, in the spot where destiny has placed us in order that we may master life there. We believe in God's immanence in the world and therefore in his presence in history. God has not revealed himself only in the past, certainly not only in a "chosen people" in the far-off land of Palestine; he reveals himself everywhere in every great event, and especially when nations and races are molded by the achievements of great leaders. We believe that God has laid a great task on our race, and that he has therefore revealed himself specifically in its history and will continue to do so. In that history we trace the will of the eternal. God meets us in the realities of the world, of our Aryan world, in such fashion that we cannot escape him unless we live a superficial life. We do not want to fasten our gaze on the past, but on the reality of the present moment. Our piety is a faith in the realities of natural law, in contrast to the other-worldly piety of Christianity.

We must consider for a moment an important characteristic of the religious history of Germany. Every great epoch in the religious history of the world has a particular focus point where God reveals himself to men, the point (as it were) at which the divine spark is kindled afresh. Today, the spark has been kindled in the German people. This fact is indicative of a turning point, perhaps the end of a millennium, in the religion of the German zone. That the nation and history should have come to occupy the center of the stage, as they have done today, is a new thing and for us a

divine event. It leads us to believe that eternal reality purposes to meet us afresh, and to do so in the being and life of the nation to which we belong.

Out of this knowledge arises our religious attitude to the German nation and to the Third Reich. Here is the religious foundation of our positive acceptance of them. Why should any other history be holier to us and speak to us more of God than German history? The victory of Arminius over the Romans is to us a divine event, a revelation of the Eternal, and it stirs in our heart more powerfully than the swallowing up of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Why should the disaster which overtook them be sacred history, and the victory of Arminius merely a secular event? We want the German people to regard its history and territory with religious devotion. Every man should have the sort of sacred history that suits his genius, and we desire to injure no man's sanctities; but we have the right to call our own history sacred. Thus the German Revolution is for us an event born of the nation's primal will, an event in which eternal powers are revealing themselves by the accomplishment of newer and greater things. It is once again our experience that an urge, which is deep in the blood of the German people, is mounting to the surface and driving us on the pursuit of new ideals. We know of nothing which so challenges our devotion as this divine movement. We can see God advancing over German soil, seeking his instruments and, in spite of all opposition, molding events according to his purpose.

That is why German history is our sacred history, why Germany is our holy land; that is why our holy mountains are within the sound of German streams and German forests. That is why, when the beacons flare on these, our hills, our hearts are drawn up to the eternal spaces whence the light descended on the great figures of our nation's history.

But let no one tell us that this is an apotheosis of the earthly. We are aware of the dubiousness of the earthly, but we may nevertheless experience in it the presence of God, and that inspires our devotion and awakens our faith.

Our sacraments too must arise out of this reality. For us, national festivals are not only a ceremonial accompaniment of political events, requiring to receive the blessing of the Church before they obtain their religious content; they are in themselves the religious consecration of politics. Thus our sacraments grow up out of the reality in which we live. When we take a newborn child into our arms, as the bearer of our ancient racial heritage, we come face to face with the struggles, defeats, and victories of our forefathers, all their aims and purposes; and when we receive the child into the fellowship of the family and the tribe, with a form of words which is part of the nation's heritage, we are not aping a Christian custom, but molding a sacrament out of the reality in which we live. In the same way our marriage rite is bound up with the reality of the love of man and woman, which is sacred to us, and with the task which is given them on earth of being creative members of the national community. Such rites existed in German lands, long before the Church came to replenish these earthly realities with a "divine" grace infused from without. Such rites were born from the essence of our nation, molded by its primal religious will. And here lies their obligatory character, which, from a national point of view, the Christian sacraments do not possess.

When people tell us that we are looking at history and reality simply as filled by God, as an exhibition of the divine, and closing our eyes to the dark side of the world and of our nation, to the treachery(for instance) which has been committed in it in the past - our answer is that we have been misunderstood. We are quite conscious of the dark and



tragic side of the world. Nor do we belong to those who take an easy view of life. But it is the peculiarity of our faith that it is awakened by the very experience of tragedy, and that it discovers in and through it the presence of God in the world. When we quote the saying of Boehme, "You will find no book where there is more of the divine wisdom to read and ponder over than the green grass and the flowers of a meadow", one of our critics asks us whether we are unaware of the fact that stark cruelty reigns over the flowering meadow. What sort of a faith and philosophy is it, that sees nothing in the world but cruelty, because it contains strife, and does not realize that it is the strife and the tragedy of the world that drive a man to those deep places where God meets him? It is because our experience of the world is what I have described, and no mere superficial optimism, that we are so unself-consciously at home in this world, not because we have had an easy life and have seen only the brighter side of things, but because we know that even the darkest and bitterest experiences can be transfigured, if we see them through with dauntless courage. Nor do we look at our nation through the rosy spectacles of an unworldly idealism. Our eyes are open. We do not imagine that everything is as it should be. On the contrary, we realize that there is only too much which requires to be set in order by the primal creative will of the nation. But we also know that there exists in the German nation a living fellowship of believers, in whose hearts what I have called "the Ideal Will of the nation" declares itself. By "the Ideal Will of the nation" I mean that constructive will, that high national ideal which must be transformed into reality, and which, according to our conviction, has a divine origin and goes on calling and urging us until we obey it. That is what the presence of God in the nation

means to us. With deep strings of heart we listen to that inner call in the great moments of our life, and let ourselves be made ready to respond to the challenge. It is not the individual, empirical self with its pitiful limitations, that has the right to obey the Ideal Will of the nation, but the sovereign will which springs from the primal depths in us. Thus it is in living fellowship and in response to the demands of each day, that we seek and find the divine will. That is German genius.

The Ideal Will of the nation cannot be simply read off from a sacred book. When we were told that we had no laws which could be put alongside the Ten Commandments, we did not quite know what was expected of us. Let our answer take the form of an example. We are all convinced that the primal will of our nation demands a healthy people; but how is it to be decided what promotes the health of the people? It is to be from a sacred book, or through the attempt to discover in a living German fellowship, what is the demand, the eternal demand, of the nation? Take, for example, the sterilization law and the task of preventing the propagation of hereditary disease. Have the Christians, with the Bible, which should yield infallible guidance, in their hands, been able to find a unanimous solution? Some of them proclaim themselves in favor of this law, because they have been gripped by the reality, "nation", and its demands. Others find themselves constrained to conform, but have an uncomfortable feeling that it is perhaps against the will of God. And a third section, the whole Catholic Church, declares that the law is quite contrary to the divine will. It seems then, after all, that, despite the Ten Commandments and the lines of moral conduct so clearly laid down in the Bible, the Christians are in this instance groping in the dark. We of the German Faith have chosen another and a more certain path- the

path of unconditional surrender to the highest good of the nation. With this end in view, it is out of the question that we should allow the great mass of hereditary disease to increase. The will of the nation is here the will of God, and we obey it.

The Ten Commandments and the moral principles laid down in "holy scripture" do not suffice for the building up of society. It is not that we are aiming at a morality on a lower level, in order to suit our comfort, but that before us lies the goal of a Teutonic, a German morality which will rank higher than that of Christianity. This morality is grounded in the nature of men and in their very blood. The great fundamental laws - reverence for life, for property, for what is real; courageous and unhesitating affirmation of life; the duty of sincerity; the sacredness of parenthood - these four commandments are the universal foundations of a true morality. But we have something in addition, which is promoted by the German genius, in the same way as German law so plainly is. For what is the origin of our legal system? Undoubtedly the German genius, the creative German nature. We are convinced that German law is a living reality, which varies in detail according to the phases of national development. But we are also convinced that in it the same genius, the same creative urge to righteousness, is everywhere operative. Specific circumstances call for specific attitudes on the part of the nation. Thus German law arises from the nation's primal will, which is personified in our outstanding figures. Could a legal system for the German nation possibly have been deduced from the "sacred scriptures" of the Old and New Testaments? Such an attempt would have led nowhere.

Is it not the same with religion? In this matter too there is a fundamental factor which is universally present wherever there is religion. The believer is laid hold of by that ultimate reality of which we have spoken. But the way in which he experiences it, and especially the way in which he speaks of it and expresses it in words and symbols, his reaction to it, depends on the disposition which he inherits in his blood. And the nation whose religion does not find or re-find its native expression becomes confused and diseased in spirit, and is doomed to disaster.

I am quite aware of the difficulties which are bound up with the question of race and religion. I have studied this question carefully for years, and I am not one of those who talk glibly about it. But the conviction has driven its led home to me with more and more clearness, that race and religion, blood and faith, are as intimately connected as race and law, blood and morality. That is why the German Faith Movement is fighting for the recognition of this fact, for only such a recognition can create the possibility of a successful resistance to the alien.

I should like to illustrate by a few examples how the different dispositions of men cause them to have entirely different religious experiences. One man experiences God as One who directs affairs from another world and intervenes in human life, who is throned as Judge above history and who executes vengeance till he is appeased by a blood offering; another experiences God as reigning in the laws of the universe and in his own conscience. The God of the one who precipitates into hell the sinner who has not obtained grace through the blood of Jesus; the God of the other receives the sinner into a redemptive and creative fellowship, if he bravely faces his own guilt. Such differences in religious experience are grounded in the different dispositions of men.

One man regards death as a punishment from God, charged with the divine wrath and leading him to hell unless he finds a mediator; to the other death is the primal law of life. One man holds that death has plunged life and the world into tragic confusion; the other that life would be a poor thing were it not for the majesty of death, that death is the supreme moment of life, a law ordained by the creative will of the Eternal to insure that life should have no end - such differences are not accidental, but the inevitable consequence of a man's disposition, the necessity of his blood. And when people inquire of us, what we, with our conception of death, have to say to a man on his death bed, our answer is; what words can man utter in that moment when the eternal is speaking in majesty? The absence of words and a silent hand-clasp is the most sacred symbol possible in such an event. And there are really not so many Germans, as is generally supposed, who are unable to die without being comforted with a text. We know from the history of the Teutonic tribes, long before the coming of Christianity, that the Teuton knew how to face death unoppressed with the fear of what might come afterward. For what can come afterward but that which is already here, the presence of the divine in all that is great.

Such is the Teutonic, the German genius, contrasted with an alien faith. When this way of faith and life has once found and consummated for itself a living fellowship within the German nation, a German morality will grow out of it which will call out the best in the German people, as no Christian morality has ever been able to do, because of its incompatibility with the nation's primal will. If this fellowship is not achieved, the German nation will have failed to respond to the call which has come to it once again in the German Revolution and the appearance of a Great Leader at

a great moment of its history. This vital faith expresses our deepest longing, for we desire to act and not only to talk. If we do nothing but talk, we shall sin against the German nation. Of that we are aware, and our words are uttered with a sense of responsibility toward the nation; it shall judge us according to our deeds.

These few examples have made sufficiently clear where the great antitheses between an alien faith and the German genius are to be found. This is not the time to multiply such contrasts. The contrast is thoroughgoing, and will become more and more obvious as the German Faith finds the depths of its true self. The future will prove what the past has made clear enough - that Christianity, of whatever stamp, cannot free itself from the form which is native to it, and which makes us recognize it as an alien faith.

The position which we take up leads us to make certain concrete demands. The moral and religious heritage of the German genius, which has been incarnated in our great sages and men of action, must express itself much more effectively in the life of the nation. And we must devise ways and means to achieve this result. Here we come up against the Protestant and Catholic schools. We are compelled by our moral and religious convictions to make certain definite demands. These schools are the clearest expression of the Christian credalism which we have characterized as anti-German. For in them each communion comes forward with the claim to possess the one and only truth and the only way to salvation. In this way our children are introduced to the conflict of faiths on their first day at school, and a yawning chasm begins to divide German hearts in the earliest days of youth. Therefore the German nation of today feels the Protestant and Catholic schools to be an unbearable yoke and the most deadly peril to the German will to unity. We

want our children to experience together first and foremost that they are Germans, that they are nourished by German genius, that they are being introduced to the heritage of their forefathers and are to mold their lives unansweringly according to that model. We want to render unnecessary any further discussion of the nature of the German genius; we want it to issue from the coming generations like forked lightning and destroy all the forces of division. We demand national school. This demand has been greeted with thunderous applause not only in this great meeting, but everywhere I have spoken on this subject throughout the land. The German nation has clearly proclaimed its will. Let no one tell us that violence is thus being done to others.

If there are people in the nation who hold it to be their duty to bring up their children in a creed which makes the claim to possess the sole truth about God, they shall have the right to do so - but they must bear the responsibility for it themselves. And they shall teach and practice their creedalism in the place where it belongs, that is, in their creed-based convents. There they can instruct the children who want to come to them or are brought by their parents - and not in the state institutions which are for the services of the nation and are paid for by it. We decisively reject and relentlessly combat the claim of the Church to control education as the appointed guardian of German youth. The will of the German nation, rather than an antiquated tradition of the past, should determine who are to be in control of religious education.

The Church has forfeited its rights over the younger generation in Germany by the way in which it has used (or, rather, misused) the two years since the consummation of the German Revolution, and by its general attitude to that consummation. What we have said of schools applies also to

universities. We want our universities to be German, and if the Christian communions have anything special to teach, let them do it in the institutions which they support and control. Let me give one example of how Christian credalism affects our universities. The beginning of term is a solemn moment for teachers and students alike. Why is it that sectarian services are held at such a time in German universities, for the Protestant to go to one, and the Catholic to another, and for the majority to go to neither because they are equally untouched by both? Why do we not hold a service of consecration in which we can gather as Germans, so that we may enter on the work of the term together? How else can we feel that we are one nation, with a common German genius? Who would choose to be absent from that service, where the words of Fichte, Holderlin, and other great Germans were to be heard, instead of the texts and sermons of the sects? We will not rest in our fight for the German genius against an alien faith till every sphere of German life is emancipated from credal division, and from the domination that prevents German men and woman from following their conscience and their religious convictions. It is a scandal that Germans are still being forced to attend religious rites in which they are not interested. If I had charge of a parish, my Christianity would not allow me to preach to people who had been forced to come and hear me, especially when among them were those who lived by another faith. This compulsion, and the prejudices still operative against Germans who do not profess ecclesiastical Christianity, does not correspond with German genius, and cannot be brought into harmony with the order issued by the Fuhrer's deputy - an order which we are fighting to see carried out.

The consequences which I have drawn from our German Faith, for internal reconstruction in the State, are a



slight indication of the necessary practical effects of following the German genius. This much is clear: we are not putting forward our demands as sectaries who want their share in certain rights, but out of our sense of responsibility for the whole; that is, for the nation, and not only for the couple of hundred thousand who already belong to us. Therefore, setting aside all differences, we offer our hand to every real German, and call on him to join with us in the common struggle for unity. But we can never give up the struggle for the German genius and a German faith. And we live in the hope that a nucleus of those who have been gripped by this faith will form a fellowship which will penetrate the whole nation by the inner power which it has shown in contest, without any compulsion being brought to bear on any man's conviction or conscience. Only under conditions of freedom can real faith flourish and true religion be preserved. We do not call in the secular arm to help us, as the Christians have often done against us, despite their multiplied assurances that they put their whole trust into the power of God. We are satisfied with the fact that the Fuhrer has given us the freedom to proclaim our faith to the German nation, and we are grateful to him for it. We believe that the German nature, which is at work in the best elements of our nation, is itself on our side, and that in it the divine powers are active which endowed our nation with its character - a character which it will realize only if it returns to its own genius from the far country of an unnatural faith.

Therefore we call to the German nation: awake to the freedom of the German religious genius! Therein lies the only way to the realization of your true nature and the fulfillment of your God-given destiny!

# THE SEMITIC CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

BY DR. WILHELM HAUER

We are now finally obliged to ask the question, whether Christianity or German Faith can (or ought to) be the decisive factor in the religious life of the German nation. It has surely become clear from all that has been said that we at least are of the opinion that only German Faith can fulfill the religious destiny of the nation. We hold, of course, that in Germany as elsewhere a community of believers in Jesus will continue to exist. Nor will that community fail to make a special contribution to the area in which it is housed. But we are convinced that only German Faith can be the standard, normative religious force; for the era is practically over when Christianity could claim to be the norm of religion. There are millions of Germans today in whom this claim has ceased to awaken any response.

This conviction is the result of another, that the nature of Christianity, its form of spirituality, does not fit the creative genius of the German nation. We have called Christianity "Near-Eastern" and "Semitic" because it arose in that area, and because, however different it is in many respects from other semitic faiths, it bears, unmistakably and unalterably, the same fundamental character. We shall mention only a few traits of the Semitic and Near-Eastern race, in order to show that they are, although in a spiritualized form, at work in the very heart of the Christian religion.

One thing we must not forget, is that when we are investigating the Near-Eastern and Semitic religious area as a whole, we must not simply seek for superficial resemblances between the various religions, but penetrate into their depths, so that we may get a grasp of their fundamental nature. It is only when such an investigation has been completed that we discover that those religions are phases and evolutionary stages in the development of one religious spirit. How different, for instance, is the person of Jesus and his way of experiencing God from that of Moses! And yet the inmost character of their faith is one and the same, as Jesus himself felt. For his conviction, that he was the continuator and deepener of Old-Testament religion, is as surely ascertained as the conviction of all the New Testament writers that the "new covenant" was but a renewal of the old one, and that Christianity and Hebrew religion were essentially the same. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the classic illustration of this, in its presentation of the events which centered in Jesus as the continuation and final fulfillment of the cult-events of the Old Testament. The author has a most delicate insight into the relation between the two. Christianity is, of course, not identical with Hebrew religion; but in their fundamental content and spiritual structure they are alike. It is therefore utterly untrue to say, as is often said, that Jesus fought against Jewish religion. Jesus, rather, fought for Jewish religion, against degenerations which had set in. This is the meaning of the sayings: "I am not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them", and "Salvation is of the Jews".

We shall therefore attempt to sketch once more the Near-Eastern and Semitic character of the Jewish religion and its continuator, Christianity. It is typical of the Semitic race that they are markedly bound to this earth. This was the

cause of the nonappearance of a belief in immortality among the chief Semitic peoples, the Babylonians and the Hebrews, and perhaps also among the ancient Arabs, even at a time when other peoples had long held the belief in a highly developed form. Belief in a resurrection does not come to the fore till the post-exilic period. Such a belief appears on the surface to contradict the "earth-bound" character of which we were speaking. But on closer examination, the Jewish and Christian belief in resurrection really demonstrates it quite clearly. For late Judaism, and at bottom Christianity, is unable to conceive a true life after death or life from death, except by the miraculous reconstitution of the body, which has crumbled to dust, or its recreation by the lord out of the remains. This attachment to the "dust and ashes" shows an unmistakably "earth-bound" character. And it appears, in what for us is a most striking form, in the resurrection of Jesus himself.

Paul and the rest of the Christians grounded their conviction that Jesus was the redeemer and victor on the fact that he had truly risen from the dead. But according to the documents, "truly risen" means that the body of Jesus was literally resuscitated and ascended into the sky. And the resurrection of the faithful to eternal life is in the long run not a whit different. The clause, "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh", still stands in the Apostles' Creed, and holds good for all who believe the whole of the Christian religion and not merely an abridgement of it. Thus the fundamental "earth-boundness" of the Semite comes to light in every phase of his religious development. Its significance becomes clear when we think how Paul said that the whole of his faith would be shattered if it were found out that the body of Jesus had not risen. How different in a man from the Indo-Germanic religious area, is the attitude toward the body! For

him it is but a moment in the total development of his self. It is returned to the elements and goes the way of all elements, while his life germ takes on a new form.

Another facet of the mental and spiritual attitude of the Semite is his idea of keeping accounts with God, and, intimately bound up with that, his belief in sacrifice and particularly in vicarious sacrifice.

Sacrifice, especially the magical and sacramental form involved in substitutionary rites, is a phenomenon which belongs to the general religious history. But nowhere in the whole expanse of religious history is vicarious sacrifice so prominent as in the Near-Eastern and Semitic area. Take Hebrew religion, for example, where an animal (and originally, one may assume, a human being) was delivered over to the avenging powers as a substitute for the sin-stained people. A just God could only be gracious after accounts had been settled, and a vicarious sacrifice was necessary to achieve this end. There is no literal parallel in Christianity to such a vicarious sacrifice. But we can see how deep the ideas of "keeping an account with God", and of a vicarious sacrifice, have sunk into the Christian religion, when we reflect on the fact that the suffering and death of Jesus were inevitably looked at from this point of view. He vicariously atoned for the crimes of men, which they were incapable of making good by any atonement of their own. God had laid down a law and men had broken it. But by satisfying the claims of the law, Jesus made it possible for God to pardon the law-breakers. That is and remains the central Christian dogma. It is the same spirit, if in a new guise, which in the Old-Testament period created the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

Another fundamental characteristic of the Semite is his tendency to uniformity, to one-sidedness in matters of faith. This tendency is bound up with his intellectualism, and also

with that will to power which built up mighty kingdoms in the political realm, which later in the form of the Messianic hope led the Jews to dream of the religious domination of the world, and which finally showed itself in religious life and preaching in the claim (supported on a strong rational basis) to possess the absolute truth. This is a claim common to all the great Semitic religions - Hebrew, Christian, and Mohammedan. In close connection with this claim we always find the monstrous attempt to combine it with the claim to political power. Nowhere in the Indo-Germanic or Oriental religious area do we discover this pronounced religious characteristic.

Then, in the same connection, fails to be mentioned what we feel to be the stiff, unbending monotheism characteristic of Hebrew and Moslem religion. Of course a certain softening has occurred in the area of transition between the Near East and the Mediterranean world, in the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief in the God-bearing Queen of Heaven.

Semitic and Near-Eastern traits are united in the concept of a final irrevocable Judgment and an eternal damnation. Even in the Indo-Germanic area we find a so-called dualism, that is, the struggle between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, and a knowledge of the tension which exists between life in the world and the mysterious immanence or transcendence of the ultimate Reality. But the Indo-Germanic world always tends to resolve this dualism into a tremendous incomprehensible unity, while the Semitic world stresses that the opposition of Good and Evil, of redeemed and damned, is eternal. The terrific cleavages in the Near-Eastern type of man come here to the surface. On the one hand he sucks in the things of earth and gives himself over to them in sensual enjoyment. On the other hand he strives and strains to free himself from the earth altogether, as in the

Attis cult, where the worshiper got rid of sense and did a service to his goddess by self-emasculation, or in the monastic system, in which he tried by ascetic torments to quench physical impulse and to achieve redemption and saintliness. This type of man cannot succeed in harmonizing both worlds, and has to choose between them. There is no doubt at all that the yearning for redemption and the insistence on the Beyond which meet us in Christianity, are traceable to the same source, however they may vary from the original Near-East pattern. Research has brought to light. Not only did the Near-Eastern type of man in past ages inhabit the whole of the Near-East and penetrate almost into the heart of Persia; even today he is not merely a considerable but a dominating racial influence in many parts of the country. The rules of method fully entitle us, when employing race as a scientific criterion in the study of comparative religion, to ask whether many traits in the Persian religion - such as the accentuated dualism expressed in the Persian belief in a Last Judgment and a resurrection - are not to be accounted for by the subterranean influence of Near-Eastern blood. Moreover, the sharp contrasts in the geography and climate of the area undoubtedly affected the development of Persian religion. For we may not underestimate the influence of physical environment on the formation of racial characteristics, and so on the course which religion takes within a people.

It is not here our task to raise and answer all the questions which result from our contention that there is a definite Near-East and Semitic type of religion which characterizes all the faiths which have been born in that area. It was our intention simply to throw light on the scientific method we employ in treating problems of comparative religion, and to show that we are striving to perfect our method. It is by no means faultless as yet, nor are all its conclusions proved up

to the hilt. But though many of the details still await verification, the fundamental principles of the method are already beyond criticism.

From the above considerations it is clear enough that we, because of our German Faith, must protest against the claim of the Christian religion to be the religion of the German nation, or the religion of any Aryan nation at all. For its essence is determined by factors which are quite foreign to us, and which we feel to be repugnant and cramping. Precisely those points which we have declared to be typically foreign in that religion are the foundation stones of Christian dogma. We are not dealing with trivialities which lie out on the circumference, but with convictions which are absolutely central.

We have recognized that the spiritual plight of our people is due to the alien influence of Near-Eastern and Semitic elements. We are therefore carrying on a pitiless battle against them. We are convinced that there is no power capable of exorcising the evil except German Faith. It will show Germany the way of salvation.



