

BLACKFRIARS

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15 AUGUST, 1945; DISCREDITED POLITICS	The Editor	321
SOVEREIGNTY AND PEACE	Prof. George Leibholz	326
THE HEROIC CENTURY	Kenelm Foster, O.P.	332
THE HOSTAGES	Le Comte de Pange	341
CHARLES DU BOS	Mrs. George Norman	347
REVIEWS: Maurice McLoughlin, Mgr. John O'Connor,		353
Donald Attwater, A. Sylvestre, Edward Quinn,		
Walter Shewring, Daniel Woolgar, O.P.		

15 AUGUST, 1945.

ON the Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, when the whole Church turns to her in the depths of her peace and joy in heaven, this Queen of Heaven brought peace to England, the country which had attacked her for four hundred years. It is now the duty of all who do now recognise her to bring England to our Lady. The constructive side of the peace which begins at the cessation of hostilities will prove an unmanagable enterprise without her assistance. For the Queen of Peace has a rival claimant to the honours of Peace-maker. The Atomic Bomb has been hailed as the cause of our sudden victory over the Japanese. But more than that the Prime Minister of England has prayed that it may introduce a prolonged era of peace and prosperity. We must pray, he wrote, that "it may become a perennial fountain of world prosperity". And the President of the United States expressed a wish that "its power may be made an overwhelming influence towards world peace." Until now men have prayed God, the greatest and the omnipotent, that peace may reign. Now they are inclined to rely on the smallest particle of the world's substance for that ideal. If love and the grace of God have been unable to achieve peace and prosperity, perhaps fear and the immense destructive force of the minutest atom will produce these benefits autonomically, mechanically. The choice does lie far more clearly now between our Lady Queen of Peace and the Devil of Destruction. The Atomic Bomb has been used by the Allies—in the interests of peace. Hitler and the Emperor of Japan, Russia and Italy, have all claimed to be using force in the interests of peace. The Hitlers are now presented with a more powerful instrument for achieving their form of peace. The war has therefore ended on a note of deep foreboding, but it has cleared the air of confusion on the issues of war

Lovers of peace as opposed to fearers of war can no longer claim to use these modern weapons of destruction in the interests of their aim—concord among men. Love must now cast out fear; but it requires supernatural strength, the supernatural grace of charity. The Queen of Heaven has led the way on Victory Day; we must follow her or be obliterated by the split atom.

DISCREDITED POLITICS

A PECULIAR mark of the present age is the increasing discredit into which politics as a "profession" are falling. The sweeping Labour victory in this country may seem to indicate a respect for one party of politicians. But a close investigation would probably show that England does not differ so fundamentally from the rest of Europe where politics are at a very low ebb. France's main troubles in the last thirty or forty years have arisen from this curious anomaly, in which the people who are governed have no respect for the class of men who assume the responsibilities of governing. There can be little hope of stability in a nation when those in charge have neither the respect nor the confidence of those they are supposed to represent. The war may well have increased this suspicion of the politician in most European countries, since the common judgment of men still lays the responsibility of war at the door of the politicians rather than of economic laws or of an inevitable human dialectical "progress".

The divorce between people and governors does not arise simply from the effect of wars. It would appear to be a general result of the decline of civilization. In a healthy and vigorous state the governors do, in fact, represent the people, are identified with them; knowing what the people need as well as what the people want, the politicians seek with a certain purity of intention to fulfil those needs. The body politic in a healthy state has all its organs functioning together in one vital action. But when disease attacks it some of the organs cease to serve the body, become disorganised or dislocated; and as the body languishes so the individual organs tend towards a form of isolation. A parallel may be seen in the cells of a human body when attacked by certain diseases. But a more direct parallel may be sought in the history of the Mystical Body. When the Church has flourished most markedly, as in its first years or during the 12th century, her rulers have lived the life of the Church more fully even than the majority of the faithful who compose the Body of Christ. Monks, priests, bishops and Popes have been men of grace, as well as instruments of grace. There has been a real identity between them in their holy lives and the life of the Christian people they served. There has been a sympathy and unity between the people and the clergy. But as decline sets in,