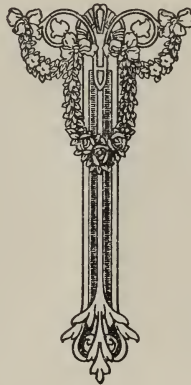


IT IS TIME
TO
TRY RELIGION

BY J. F. N.



Deacidified

It Is Time To Try Religion

The Body Politic Was Never So Ill

No one needs to be informed that the world is sick as a whole as well as in its every part. It has a veritable complication of diseases, economically, politically, intellectually, morally, religiously.

Such a diagnosis has been made by thousands of specialists, competent to judge; such a diagnosis could be made by you and by me from the daily reports of symptoms which come to our notice in the newspapers.

There is no question about the correctness of the diagnosis. The question of supreme importance is "are the ills of the world curable; and if so, by what treatment are they to be cured?" Even as a last resort, following the use of practically every other remedy, one would think the multitudes would "try religion".

Economists of the highest rank, captains of industry, presidents of big railway systems, heads of chain-stores, men skilled in agriculture, officers of Farm Board Organizations—all have been called into Conferences in the hope of obtaining a remedy for the ills of that portion of the world known as the United States of America.

International Conferences

The League of Nations, representing most of the powers of the world, is in session during many months of the year. Problems with which this august body deals are the material *health problems* of the various countries which form the League. Select men, who understand the body politic of their respective lands meet at Geneva for

a solution of their financial difficulties, but usually with little result. Self interests inspire the petitions of the little powers; self interests inspire the dictation of the big powers. There is a great lack of mutual confidence; there is a suspicion of ulterior motives.

Very recently the President of the United States induced England, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Japan to meet in conference with representatives of the United States for the purpose of considering Germany's case, as a means of reviving business throughout the world generally. Everywhere this gesture of President Hoover was praised, and it was believed that the beginning of the end of the business depression was at hand. The Conference was held; the Conference ended; the President's recommendation was accepted in principle; but this medicine hardly acted even as a stimulant. There have been numerous "disarmament" Conferences held during the last ten years without success. New ones will be proposed in the hope that national treasuries will not go bankrupt if money can be diverted from armaments to business recovery.

Of course, none of these Conferences is opened with prayer; none of their personnel realizes how helpless are all human efforts if the God of nations does not cooperate.

A Bird's-Eye Survey of the World Today

Even a cursory survey of every country in the world, and therefore of the world at large, would disclose the greatest unrest, poverty, suffering, and crime. Where people are not hungry because of lack of employment, they are, in most countries of the world, victims of apostles of disorder, or their freedom is stolen away from them by a dictatorship rule.

In England the Labor Government has been given a second trial after the Liberal and Conservative Governments were unable to furnish jobs for the unemployed. The unemployment dole is a heavy drain on the national treasury and calls for a constant increase of taxes. The country's ablest statesmen are much worried. This is more or less true of some other countries.

Germany's population is divided among thirty political parties, whose leaders keep the country in constant turmoil, and whose representatives in the Reichstag will not pull together for a united people. Several millions have had no steady employment for years.

Sweden and Norway have had serious labor trouble recently.

In Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, Roumania, there are not only the poverty and unemployment which exist in many countries, but utter dissatisfaction, on the part of large groups of people, with the boundary lines established by the Versailles Treaty. They would not be happy even under better material conditions.

Spain has exiled its king after a taste of dictatorship, and its political agitators have gone to the other extreme of demanding a Socialist regime.

The people of Portugal are ready for revolution at any time.

In Italy there is seeming outward prosperity, but nearly all the people, possessed of culture and self-respect, feel the slavery which is being imposed on them by the withdrawal of all liberty—of association, of the press, of speech.

Russia's one per cent still governs the ninety-nine per cent with an iron hand, shipping the products of the sweat of the brow of its victims all over the world, and

paying its agents everywhere outside of Russia to stir up strife.

China has recently been divided politically as between north and south. Communism is provoking otherwise quiet people to all sorts of works of destruction.

Japan is having trouble with Korea.

Turkey is suffering from worse depression than it has had for many years.

The people of Egypt are kept in subjection by force.

India's vast population has been stirred up towards rebellion.

Even in the Holy Land the Christians and Mohammedans are having their difficulties with the Zionists.

The greatest unrest exists in Mexico, Central America and in most of the countries of South America.

What Remedies Have Been Tried?

Economic measures, diplomatic measures, frequent changes of governments, dictatorships, new loans, new forms of taxation, each has been tried in turn without any noticeable improvement in the patient.

Education has been tried. In fact a few years ago when there was more peace it was predicted that education would not only cure all the present-day ills of society, but would prevent new ills. But we have had the anomalous situation that the more education has been pursued and extended the more aggravated has become the disease.

A New York banker told the writer recently that he had been connected with a big financial institution for forty years; that he had gone through several so-called panics, but that he had never witnessed a situation such

as that in which the world finds itself today. He declared that in our own country big banks are overflowing with money, but are making no money; that big industry is operating at a loss; that the railroads are barely meeting expenses; that the giants of finance are bewildered; that the prophecies made from time to time have all proven false; that there is nothing to do but to wait for better times which must come ultimately unless the whole fabric of civilization collapses.

Everything has been tried except national prayer.

The Lord Is Waiting for An Improvement In Morals

While statesmen may not be able to lead the world out of financial distress; while the individual may not be able to build up his own business, people are competent, with the grace of God, which is always at hand, to improve their own morals, which is a greater thing in the eyes of God and a more important thing to each individual concerned.

But the moral standards of the age have been attacked, and their overthrow is openly advocated with the connivance and even encouragement of governments. In nearly every Christian country in the world the birth rate has fallen fifty per cent within a decade, which means that many millions of lives were snuffed out at their beginning or prevented by a deliberate frustration of the natural law. Wholesale murder calls for punishment.

May not the Lord, Who alone can bring peace and prosperity to nations, be waiting for the world to return to the observance of His Commandments, for individuals

to "seek first the Kingdom of God" before He will "add the other things"? It were well if the rulers of nations and all their subjects should commit to memory the second Psalm of David, which has a greater application to-day, because of the greater number of rulers in the world, than it had in his day, when the number was comparatively small.

"Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things?

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against His Christ.

"Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us.

"He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh at them; and the Lord shall deride them.

"Then shall He speak to them in His anger, and trouble them in His rage.

"But I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His Commandment.

"The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.

"Ask of Me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

"Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

"And now, O ye kings, understand: receive instruction; you that judge the earth.

"Serve ye the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto Him with trembling.

"Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way.

“When His wrath shall be kindled in a short time, blessed are all they that trust in Him.”

On the other hand the Lord’s attitude towards those who do His will is well expressed in the very first Psalm of the Royal Prophet, as follows:

“Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence.

“But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night.

“And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit, in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off; and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.

“Not so the wicked, not so; but like the dust, which the wind driveth from the face of the earth.

“Therefore the wicked shall not rise again in judgment: nor sinners in the council of the just.

“For the Lord knoweth the way of the just; and the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Why Has Religion Such Little Influence?

A decline in morals is always accompanied by a weakening of religious influence. Religion then represents a constant rebuke to the lives of the people.

Of course, people cannot get away from religion altogether, but they can do what the Israelites did under the very eyes of God. They can leave the true God and make gods of their own, usually gods “created according to their own image and likeness,” gods who will be easy on them, who will not dictate, but obey. Religion is often turned into anti-religion, which is propagated with a re-

ligious zeal and intensity worthy of apostles of the true faith. Communism, in this sense, is a religion; Socialism, in this sense, is a religion; Humanism, in this sense, is a religion; worship of the state, in this sense, is a religion; over-emphasized nationalism, in this sense, is a religion.

But every substitute for the very definite revealed religion of Jesus Christ, every state policy which is at variance with the standards of justice and morality taught by this religion, is a defiance of the God of the Heavens which calls for vengeance, rather than for mercy, on a world which has brought on its own trouble.

In some countries the religion of Christ is officially persecuted by the civil powers, not because it is a hindrance to material prosperity or to the best interests of the citizenry, but because its conscience would be forced to criticize and rebuke and oppose the immoral measures which the civil powers would enforce. Think of governments going so far as to forbid the instruction of children in Christian principles, to make the practice of religion almost impossible by curtailing the number of clergy. Think of governments refusing to punish those who murder ministers of religion in cold blood, who set fire to religious institutions. Yet that is what is going on at the present time in this enlightened twentieth century.

Traitors Within the Christian Ranks

The Church of Christ is commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature and to insist "in season and out of season" on the observance of the Almighty's code of laws governing the conduct of man.

Religious organizations which separated from the historical Church four centuries ago, together with their

many subdivisions and their more modern offshoots, have withdrawn their loyalty from the Teacher from Heaven, and transferred it to the people whom they are supposed to lead and guide. They have become followers instead of leaders. Unable to enforce the eternal standards of morality, they have surrendered to the demands of those who insist on their repudiation. Most of the Protestant religious organizations in the United States, and particularly all those of large membership, are affiliated with the "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America," which has gone on record as favoring what Holy Scripture represents as "a detestable thing," what nature itself severely condemns. Crimes of various sorts, divorce and birth control, which offend against God's law, are condoned, while things less evil, and even things neither moral nor immoral in themselves, are condemned vehemently by various sects.

Like the worldly-minded laity, thousands of clergymen representing all but two or three Protestant organizations, measure the good or evil of human acts by temporal considerations.

Take the one subject of Birth Control. He who is motivated by the dictates of faith, whether he be clergyman or lay person, will think of parenthood as a blessing to those who give as well as to the one who receives life here, because of life everlasting in prospect. Children may occasion inconveniences, hardships, worry, expense; but is bliss eternal, to which every child is destined, not worth the sacrifice? Good people are shocked when they hear that religion advocates selfishness, comfort, ease, and even self-indulgence rather than disinterested self-sacrifice, or the exercise of those virtues which made mothers glorious in the history of all nations. Most parents slave and save in order to leave their children a tem-

poral competence. On the same principle, they should, if they have faith, be ambitious to place an eternal fortune within reach of many.

Waiting for the Nations to Come to Their Senses

He, to Whose Son "all the nations were given as an inheritance," Who ordered all nations to "observe all things whatsoever the Church was commanded to teach," within Whose power it is to bless or withhold blessing, is likely waiting for His children to recognize their helplessness and His indispensability.

Anyone, who reads history at the foot of the lamp of faith, must needs observe that no nation which has ever persecuted God's Church, which has ever officially sanctioned immorality, has enjoyed more than a temporary prosperity. History is principally a record of one civil ruler undoing what his predecessor had done. Persecution by one ruler has always been followed by strenuous efforts on the part of his successor to make peace with the Church; or vice versa Concordats, which followed in the wake of earlier disagreements, were broken by the civil power after a generation or two. Nations of old which combated the eternal moral standards, as many are doing today, are only a memory now.

In our own country, the Church and the civil power have never yet come into conflict; but we have here in America large groups of followers of practically every agency which is attacking religion in other countries, or which is directing its forces against the traditional Christian standards of morality.

Three times during a single year the head of the

Catholic Church has spoken to the people of all nations in the name of Him Whose place he holds as Vicar. He has pointed out the great ills amid which the next generation must live unless religion becomes a vital part of the education of youth. He has indicated that society and Christian civilization must disintegrate unless its component units, the families, remained "joined together" and unless the primary end of marriage be respected. He has pointed out the economic ills from which society is bound to suffer unless social justice be the basis on which the relations of capital and labor will be determined. Through the latest modern means of communication, the radio, the voice of the Holy Father has reached the uttermost parts of the world, but it has not been sufficiently heeded, because the world has not yet decided to try religion.

Christ Himself had trouble with Caiaphas, and with Herod, and with Pilate. Therefore, we are not surprised that the Pope has trouble with Mussolini, or that his legates have been opposed by civic rulers elsewhere.

In the past, when economic depression or pestilence or some other evil challenged the power of civic rulers, it was customary for them to call on the people to take part in public prayer or to proclaim a fast. This was done even by Presidents of the United States. But proud and agnostic rulers of to-day have not thought of that, or if they have thought of it they have not had the courage to recommend it.

How Easy to Arouse Universal Prayer!

It would be a thousand times easier to-day than at any time in the past to arouse all people of the world to fast and pray simultaneously. If the recommendation emanated from the President of the United States, the

head of every nation in Europe and of Asia and of South America, and of the world for that matter, could have the information in fifteen minutes. Every one of these in turn could, through the newspapers published on the same day and through radio broadcasts, acquaint all their subjects with the proposal that the world get down on its knees, acknowledge its incompetency to extricate itself from its ills, whether economic or moral, humbly implore the assistance of Heaven, and resolve to have an open mind for proper religious guidance and direction in the future.

Catholics constitute by far the largest Christian organization in the world; their religion is the only international one; their religion has the most powerful official prayer in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Yet even Catholics do not pray unitedly, do not pray seriously. Even Catholics, who know the divine law better than do members of other religious groups; who have had their consciences formed in accordance with the Savior's teaching; who, by their example, should be "the light of the world," are following instead of leading the uninstructed, the indifferent, the irreligious. They allow their Church to be publicly maligned without protest; they behold their brethren in other countries persecuted, without any exhibition of sympathy; they are "neither cold nor hot." and therefore are not a pleasing spectacle in the eyes of their God, Who has done more for them than for others.

MORAL to Catholics: Let there be consistency between your belief and practice. "Be instant in prayer"; live morally; live religiously; "seek first the Kingdom of God" as the surest way to have "other things added unto you."

MORAL to Others: Try religion; investigate the claims of the oldest Christian faith.

