

France. Here are the leaders of the new allies whom a minister of the Gospel of Christ welcomes with a fraternal embrassade and a pulpit benison: Premier Clemenceau, whose blasphemous attack on Christianity, on June 19, 1906, caused a sensation even in the hardened French Chamber of Deputies. One of the greatest 'charms' of Clemenceau's character is 'his unscrupulousness, his inconsistency'. Thus, with less than faint praise did his friend Mr. Laurence Jerrold (author and journalist) damn him in the 'Contemporary Review'. Then there is the rawer and less experienced, but by no means less aggressively atheistical, Minister Briand. This interesting personage it was who declared to the teachers in congress at Amiens: 'We must put an end to Christianity' ('Il faut en finir avec l'idée chretienne'), and who boasted at Lisieux (in words quoted in our last issue) that they had hunted Christ out of the army, the navy, the schools, etc., and that 'now we must hunt Him out of the Government'. Another leader of the new allies is Viviani (Minister of Labor), who recently vaunted in the Chamber of Deputies that 'the work of irreligion'—the work of destroying 'faith in a future life'—now carried on by himself and his fellows, was 'only beginning.' Says the 'Quarterly Review' for January, 1907:—

'The quasi-official boast of the Minister of Labor, in spite of its rhetorical form, expressed a plain truth—that the Radical-Socialists wish not merely to check the pretensions of clericalism and to assert the superiority of the temporal over the spiritual power, but to stamp out the influence of revealed religion within the nation'.

We prefer not to quote here the blasphemous defiance of the Almighty uttered in the Chamber of Deputies by the Socialist leader, Jaures, one of the framers of the new law of proscription and confiscation. 'To do these atheists justice,' says the 'Saturday Review', 'they have for thirty years shouted their beliefs in the market-place.' 'They have', says the same non-Catholic journal in its issue of December 15, 'marched steadily on to their goal, which is the transformation of their country into not only a non-Christian, but an anti-Christian, nation'.

Such are the new allies. As to the methods of their warfare 'against the Lord and His Christ', we prefer, as less uncivilised, the scalping knife and the fire-stick of the red savage tribesman. The atheist war against religion is a war without quarter. Its searching thoroughness is sufficiently evidenced by the recent erasure of the name of God ('God protect France') from the coinage of the Third Republic. Under the pretext of disestablishment or the separation of Church and State, the Radical-Socialist 'machine' that Tammanies the country has adopted the following means in the hope of 'putting an end to Christianity' in France:—

1. The abolition of the bilateral treaty called the Concordat, to which the honor and fidelity of the nation was solemnly pledged—the contract being repudiated without consultation of, or notification to, the other party to it.
2. The seizure, plunder, and confiscation of the whole of the material resources of the Church in France—lands, funds, buildings of every sort, and chattels down to the pokers and tongs in the presbyteries and the iron spoons in the convent kitchens.
3. The abolition of the religious Orders.
4. The abolition of the Christian schools.
5. Rending, by schism, of what the 'Saturday Review' calls 'the only form of Christianity that practically counts in France'.
6. The gradual abolition of the parochial clergy.
7. The gradual abolition of public worship.

(In subsequent issues we will point out in detail how the legislation of the past few years has provided, on the broad lines indicated above, for the abolition of religious faith and worship in lodge-ridden France). 'We are ready', said the Pope,—and the hierarchy, clergy, and faithful of France are in full accord with him—to submit to separation from the State, but it must be a fair separation—such as obtains in the United States, Brazil, Great Britain, and Holland—not subjection'. But 'a fair separation' is just what the leaders of French Atheism do not desire. The object of these persecutors is not—as was the case with Domitian, Marcus Aurelius, Julian, and Diocletian—the supremacy of one form of religion over another. The object of the Radical-Socialist 'Bloc' is the destruction of all religion. But 'persecution,' says Sir Thomas Browne, 'is a bad and indirect way to plant religion'. In an article on the French tyranny, the 'Bombay Gazette', a secular paper, said in its issue of December 29 (we quote from the Bombay 'Examiner') :—

'Never, in any recorded instance, has persecution fulfilled the hopes of its perpetrators. The persecution of the first three centuries of the Christian era shows this in particular. Again and again nations and Churches arose and cast off the yoke. And always the oppressors go down before that vital resurrection. . . . All have to confess, sooner or later, that "the Nazarene has conquered". Persecution, toleration, adoption, are the steps to permanency. Constantine was glad to make a policy of Christianity, and Philip of Spain was glad of a "Pax" with Holland. It is astonishing how the lessons of history seem for ever unlearned. . . . All struggles for liberty appeal to the human heart. The struggle for religious liberty most. Martyrs' blood vitalises.'

'The modern anti-religious movement in France', says the same paper, 'is now a war, neither against priests nor Church, but against God'.

Time and human feeling are, however, on the side of the persecuted. The old pagan persecutors are gone. The Church remains. Greater and more masterful men than Clemenceau have gone to Canossa. The Nazarene will again conquer.

Notes

'God's Own Country'

This week's 'Outlook' asks: 'Is New Zealand "God's own country"? Mr. Race, the Canadian Commissioner, thinks that such a claim for any country must depend primarily upon the character of the citizens. Let our aim be to become "God's own people."'

Well said, Brothers Race and 'Outlook'!

The Wrong Conclusion

'I recently had to examine some boys', said the Rev. Mr. Garland at the Methodist Conference in Christchurch last week, 'and one of the questions asked was the names of the Apostles. One of the boys replied as follows: "Peter, the Virgin Mary, Pontius Pilate, Timothy, Matthew, Mark, Moses, John, Barabbas." No doubt,' added the speaker, 'that boy is a disciple of the "New Theology"—and probably he has a large heart.'

The inference drawn from this really fine schoolboy 'howler' is that the Protestant version of the Bible should be taught, on Protestant lines, in the State schools, by State officials, and that Catholics, Jews, and other dissidents should be compelled—under the usual alternatives of distraint or imprisonment—to contribute to the cost of the proceeding. The conclusion is not contained in the premisses. A much easier, more direct, and more natural inference is this: that