

WORLD DOMINION

The World Dominion Movement advocates Informed Continuous Co-ordinated Evangelism to reach everyone at home and abroad. Its basis is belief in the Deity and Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the World's Only Saviour, and in the Final Authority of Holy Scripture.

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The Scriptures in Rumania

'FIGHTINGS without and fears within,' no words could better describe in brief both the state of things in Rumania as a whole, and also the psychological condition and the circumstances of the Rumanian citizen in particular, than this apostolic summary of a situation long ago. People coming to the Bible Society Depot in Bucarest have repeated those words of our Lord, 'Men's hearts failing them for fear,' adding the exclamation, 'Alas! is it not so with many of us?' Others, however, come in with a braver face and say brightly, 'Let us lift up our heads, for the Master has bidden us do so!' Still others say, 'True, the sky is lowering, very lowering, yet let us give God thanks, for He has helped us hitherto, in spite of many national sins.'

Grave dangers last year threatened the throne: there has been sinister plotting against the person of the King. Stern measures were accordingly taken towards the close of 1938 to suppress the activities of the Rumanian Fascist organization known as the Iron Guard. There was little doubt that the Iron Guard enjoyed the patronage and favour of the German Reich. The Rumanian people felt that King Carol, though compelled by the exigencies of the times to assume the role of a Dictator, stood for something very different from the two great Fascist and Nazi rulers, to say nothing of their near neighbours, the Russian Communists, piloted by Stalin. Thousands have thanked, and do thank, God, that it is clearly not the purpose of the monarch to make any attempt to cut off Rumania's peasant millions from trust and hope in the living God, who 'giveth to all life and breath and all things.' For, as a matter of fact, King Carol has been taking a very practical interest in the dissemination of the Scriptures. Indeed, the 'royal Bible,' published under the patronage of the King a few months ago, has been selling freely from the railway bookstalls. We

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bought one thus recently, and the young man told us that he had sold ten from his stall within a few days. Strange that, while the Sovereign himself has clearly given an urge towards the wider circulation of the Bible, many of his subjects in outlying and sequestered villages should be persecuted, imprisoned and fined for reading it, and thrown into gaol for no more heinous offence than essaying to obey its principles and precepts. Fascists have encountered grim and determined opposition, Communists have been discountenanced, though escaping much more lightly, yet simple and unoffending believers in Jesus have been sent to prison for avoiding the 'ideology' of both! Government authorities may declare to the world press that in Rumania there are equal rights for all in matters relating to religion, but if this be so, all one can say is that practice and theory often disagree.

Here in Rumania many of us have been glad to observe that the American President has declared that he regards the godfearing man, to quote his own term, as the surest guarantee of a people's happiness and well-being. It is this same conviction which has sustained those who have been engaged in circulating the Scriptures on the field during the past year, in all their manifold toils, hardships and difficulties, not only amongst evil-disposed men in general, but also among the purblind, the prejudiced and the bigoted; it has sustained them in facing the blinding blizzards and impassable roadways of winter, following on the heat and dust of summer, out in those wilds where dust and mud alternate. 'Though rain may bring water enough, thick mud will very soon follow,' so sings the peasant. All honourable mention to the Bible Society workers that they succeeded in circulating more than 13,000 complete Bibles, 43,000 Testaments and 10,000 smaller portions of Scripture during the year 1938.

In regard to politics, and nowadays politics touch the life of every one of us, the new régime in Rumania cannot be said to follow blindly any foreign system whatever. Though the Sovereign is our 'Dictator,' all through 1938 Patriarch Miron Cristea, who died recently, was our

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Premier. It has to be remembered that in past days a nominal 'democratic' freedom was frequently no freedom in actual fact: not so, at least, when a bludgeon was used to prevent the voter arriving at the polling station!

In Rumania there is theoretically, and on paper, absolute freedom of worship, and thousands are praying that the new régime will see to it that theory does not lag so far behind practice, and that those rights of conscience which [now exist upon paper may be accorded in fact. In any case, it must not be forgotten that the general line of policy now in force took shape in face of grave national peril from within, and that grave internal perils have always a tendency to curtail freedom. In such circumstances, local functionaries, dressed in a little brief authority, make the most of their power, frequently setting small store by the fundamental laws of the Constitution. The British and Foreign Bible Society has spared no pains or expense in giving to the public a most attractive edition of the Rumanian New Testament and Psalms, bearing the special authorization of the Holy Synod. Yet so little are the Rumanian people, even in pious circles, acquainted with the Scriptures at first hand, that the colporteurs of the Bible Society are often made to suffer for circulating the Synod's own authorized version.

Every generation must bear its own burden and must often fight its own battles afresh, and we are cheered upon our way by a Rumanian patriot and scholar who tells us that the work of the Bible Society, during the past twenty years especially, has been tending to strengthen the true foundations of the national life and welfare. A well-known personage in Rumania told me that he had himself distributed a large number of Rumanian Testaments during an electoral campaign, 'For there is no book that can do so much good among our people.' Moreover, proof upon proof has come to hand at the Bible Society's Bucarest Depot during the past twenty-one years of our work—to go no farther back—that thousands have been freed from enslaving sins and brought to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple.

THE SCRIPTURES IN RUMANIA

Rumania is for the most part a land of farms and woods and cornfields and peasantry, and the peasants often have their minds fixed very shrewdly on the essentials of things. Millions of them declare to-day that the Rumanian daily papers present to them the world as a revolting and repellent scene, and if there is no help to be got from God and Christ and the Scriptures, there is no hope of getting help anywhere. Many of these peasants are at a loss to understand why the officials and representatives of institutional religion are so often found ranged against the spread of a knowledge, by means of the printed page, of the mind and teachings of our Lord. In one village a peasant was injured for life by a blow from the butt-end of a rifle by one of the district *gendarmerie*, simply for going to a prayer-meeting and singing some hymns. The injured man, who was certainly no physical weakling, took his lifelong misfortune in so beautiful a spirit that the *gendarme* sought him out in sorrowful repentance. A radical change has taken place in the life of that armed policeman; a representative of the Bible Society saw him standing in prayer by the side of the man he had injured.

Rumania naturally cannot remain unaffected by the proximity of Germany, and what is going on in the Reich is, in like measure, a matter of spiritual concern to us here. Multitudes of men and women, with their families, for the sake of race or faith—or both—are being bereft of home, of ordinary decencies, and of all hope. There is an anti-Semitic current also moving in Rumania, and the colporteurs are sometimes confronted with ugly expressions of it. They sometimes find themselves classed as 'pro-Jewish,' on the ground of having circulated the Scriptures in some village. The human mind, like Nature, abhors a vacuum, and if truth be denied, error will soon creep in. Thus it is that sects and companies with peculiar views, such as theosophy, occultism and Millennial Dawnism make rapid spread in Rumania. Religious functionaries are often confronted with a situation which they did not expect. An Orthodox parish drier was completely discomfited in

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public debate with a Seventh-Day Adventist, and the priest, after great loss of face, came to the conclusion that it was time for him to get to know something of the contents of the Bible. Simple men and women perceive that a Church, if moved by hatred and malice, is in no position to speak to a world plagued by the same maladies. The distribution of the Scriptures alone has, during the past year, brought light and life, joy and peace of heart, love and spiritual emancipation, to many. And by so much is Rumania the richer, for whatever modern science may invent, whether for our convenience or our destruction, we believe that, in the long run, righteousness will still exalt a nation and that 'the law of the wise is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.'

J. W. W

Refugees in England

At the end of March, 1939, there were 19,053 Jewish refugees in England, consisting of 8,371 men, 6,278 women, and 4,404 (or fewer) children.

Some 22,000 to 23,000 refugees have arrived in England since the Nazi régime, but many have passed on, and probably from 11,000 to 12,000 of employable age are left. A considerable number of refugees had, some years ago, taken the precaution of investing their capital in England. Some of these have now opened factories in this country, and it is calculated that they are employing some 15,000 persons in England who were previously unemployed.

* * *

Among the various relief organizations, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance is grappling with the problem of relief for persecuted and refugee Hebrew Christians along the following lines: direct relief to individuals in Germany and outside; maintenance of two refugee hostels in London, where refugees can stay, awaiting emigration visas, or from which they can pass into employment; the furnishing of passage and landing money for overseas settlement. Refugees to ten different countries have received this help recently, five of which are in Latin America. The re-training of refugees for agriculture in connection with the scheme maintained by the Society of Friends, and also in Sweden, is being maintained. The education of doctors and missionaries at various colleges is being assisted. One of the principal needs is to devise various means for caring for aged refugees. The children are fairly well looked after and there are already about four thousand in the British Isles.