

CORRESPONDENCE

'FLOWERING RIFLE'

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—I read in BLACKFRIARS that the publication of 'Flowering Rifle' has 'supplied Marxists with ammunition which they have used with considerable effect.' May I point out that the book was not written to secure the applause of the British literati who have made their Eldorado, in the best-selling line, out of that Red Volcano of Blood and Pus, Red 'Spain,' which has just collapsed from internal putrefaction, to be handed over by a revolted populace to the victorious bread-giving regime of General Franco—exactly as predicted in 'Flowering Rifle'! May I also point out that no attack has been made on 'Flowering Rifle' that was not made from under the protecting wing of friendly editors, conditionally to the suppression of the briefest reply on my part to columns of vituperation: and that these replies with the 'ammunition' expended are about to be published, so that it is premature to judge the value of this 'ammunition.' In the *only case* in which the lists were inadvertently left open to my challenge, and where the *protection* under which British writers have previously (and since) fired this 'ammunition' was removed, there was absolutely no answering fire. When I was given so much as a momentarily equal footing with the Marxian collectivised Goliath of 'Brid-dish' verse, he was nowhere to be found. You could have heard a pin drop then, for all the reaction that came from the Marxist camp when the challenge was open. This happened in the *most public place* in modern English literary journalism; that is, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which almost simultaneously published four articles (including two *leading* articles) on the British Poets and myself in relation to Spain. Disconcerted by the apparent neutrality of the Editor, the British Collective Bard refused to exchange any fire with me then, when, in a long letter, I proved to their faces that British Left Wing literature was the work of gilded plutocrats who could only thrive sympathetically, like bluebottles, on squalor: and who depended on propagating such conditions as existed in Red Spain, of famine and misery, in order to farm the type of humanitarian sob-stuff that fetches most success in the best-

selling line. This was a serious accusation, made in the most public place, in the very centre of your national literary arena. It cannot be pretended that this challenge was scorned on account of any inherent 'spinelessness,' since by frequent reference to it from safer quarters your left writers show they know it by heart. It was advertised as a main feature of that number of the *Supplement*, and the platform was open. The only answer that was made to it, which shows how deep the percussion went, was in some thirty or forty references that have since been made to it (by those who funk open challenge), always under the cover and artificial protection of some Left Wing editor elsewhere. In the *Times* itself there was an eloquent hush. As I have always, in my editorial work in the Dominions, conceded the very fullest space for argument or retaliation to English writers, the more so that they were foreigners reviewed in a different country, and have regarded this as a law of honour whatever it cost me in blows, I consider that silence on this point would be more honourable on your part than to reproach *me* with the fact that *your* own English literary papers are not open to the briefest replies or argument on the part of the writer attacked: and that in the only place where such a reply was granted to me, I was not faced by a single one of those of your English writers who have since, almost obsessively, repeatedly referred to this letter, as if they know it by heart, whenever they have since fired back from under the skirts of their protective Mother Grundy. No English left writer has ever faced me openly since I exposed how left wing reviewing is done in 'Satire and Fiction' No. 1 in 1930. Though this pamphlet received as much as two columns of attention at a time in many leading contemporary periodicals, there was no reaction in the quarters against which it was directed. Marxist 'thought' and Marxist 'action' can only operate against defensive tactics: against *attack* Marxism is helpless as a hen and will never come back to open challenge. BLACK-FRIARS may enjoy its immunity while I have yet another cheek to turn. Influenced as I am by the almost perfect union of Spanish Catholics, I will not quarrel with fellow Catholics, however tempting or easy it would be to break their stick on their own pates—even when, to me, they seem to acquiesce, through ignorance, or 'spinelessness,' in the wholesale defilement of the Sacrament, the slaughter of half a million unarmed Christians, and the godless imposition of foreign formulas on their fellow Christians in Spain. You may search 'Flowering Rifle' in vain for any sort of reciprocal feeling to that which I have aroused unwillingly in your pages by my own special brand of

spinelessness, cowardice, etc., etc., to fellow Catholics who have opposed and harmed the cause of Spain.

Yours, etc.,

ROY CAMPBELL.

[It should be recalled that our reviewer criticised the 'spinelessness' not of Mr. Campbell, but of his verse. Our readers must judge for themselves whether the quality of Mr. Campbell's 'ammunition' is better calculated to serve his own cause or that of its opponents.—THE LITERARY EDITOR.]

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE SERVICE OF GOD. According to the Teaching of the Reformation: The Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Aberdeen in 1937 and 1938. By Karl Barth. Translated by J. L. M. Haire and Ian Henderson. (Hodder & Stoughton; 12s. 6d.)

THE HOLY GHOST AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By Professor Karl Barth, D.D. Translated by R. Birch Hoyle. (Frederick Muller; 5s.)

Holding that 'it cannot really be the business of a Reformed theologian to raise so much as his little finger to support the undertaking in any positive way' (*i.e.* the undertaking of Lord Gifford of 'promoting, advancing, teaching and diffusing Natural Theology'), Professor Barth was put in a difficult and anomalous position as Gifford Lecturer at Aberdeen. Perhaps the Gifford trustees, in inviting him so insistently, had hoped to give him an opportunity for an elaborate frontal attack on Natural Theology by a clear and detailed statement of his case against it. Such a response might have clarified what is perhaps the most obscure item in his teaching, and at the same time have provided the 'natural theologian' with a worthy opponent with whom to measure the strength of his own case. Professor Barth, however, was of opinion that to take such a line would not be in accord with the obligations of good faith towards Lord Gifford's will. He has preferred to use the opportunity for another summary of his own theology—this time in the form of a running commentary on Knox's *Confessio Scotica* of 1560—in the belief that he might thereby render some indirect service to the 'natural theologian' by enabling him to