# Divine services

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" Government of the People." The old phrase leaves " the People " undefined. It says nothing about their belonging to a particular race, nothing about their being inhabitants of a particular territory, nothing even about their historic identity. We infer that these things, though obviously important, are yet not essential. The essential thing is just that those subjected to a particular Government are in fact one People, able to live in loyal fellow-citizenship one with another. That perhaps is the real truth contained, along with much that is vague and puzzling, in the doctrine of Rousseau that it is the existence of a " General Will " which makes a " Sovereign People." But if true Democracy implies this deep harmony and a sense of unity so firmly rooted that men can, as we say, " agree to differ " without the unity of the People being impaired, then it follows that Democracy does not require the continuance of political unions on grounds of geography, or race, or history, if the harmony and the sense of unity are in fact wanting. We may agree with Burke that political unions are not like mere business partnerships " to be taken up for a little temporary interest and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties." But, as with the union of husband and wife in marriage, so also in regard to political states, the more deeply we feel that a real union of hearts is necessary, the more we are bound to recognise that legal unions should not as such be indissoluble. The principles of Democracy were not violated by the American Declaration of Independence, nor by the severance of Norway and Sweden, or by the creation of the Irish Free State; and those principles are not in themselves necessarily opposed to the severance of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. But to the believer in Democracy the case for the Sudeten Germans rested not on the racial contrast between them and the Czechs, but on the absence of a common will. There is racial diversity in Switzerland, but Switzerland provides the finest example in the world of a People whose common will and sense of unity transcends the differences of race and language and religion.

It is only on the grounds of fundamental principles that we can really explain the attitude of Democracy to the grave issues of Peace and War. The thought of war is loathsome to all men of good will; and if we say that the cause of Democracy is the cause of Peace we may seem to be claiming a monopoly in humane feelings and common sense for those who believe in Democracy. But though the love of Peace is strong in the hearts of many whose social and political outlook is far from being democratic, and though in the ardour of youth or impatient old age some sincere believers in the democratic ideal may at times appear strangely bellicose, Democracy is none the less more essentially pacific than other political creeds. Based on a belief in reason, reaching its decisions by free discussion, settling differences at the ballot box, and treating minorities with consideration, so that men may in the deepest sense of the words " agree to differ," Democracy necessarily implies the use of peaceful methods in domestic politics. Naturally it works in the same way in international affairs. The believer in Democracy does not deny that totalitarian methods may sometimes win quicker returns, but he distrusts the politics of impatience and coercion, doubts the value and stability of the best such means can achieve, and is passionately convinced that no external or material success is worth the sacrifice of freedom. Whatever its object, whatever its chances of victory, an ideological crusade would be alien to the spirit of Democracy. Every war is a war against Democracy. More than that. The outbreak of hostilities is itself a defeat for Democracy. In war " Government for the People " can no longer be " Government by the People." Commands take the place of discussion. On the field of battle the less wise decision instantly made, issued as an order, and obeyed without question, is always preferable to a wiser decision attained at the cost of protracted discussion. All war is totalitarian in method. And in modern warfare the whole country becomes a field of battle. Free choice disappears from farm and factory. The Press is muzzled, since secrets must not be revealed to the enemy. Youth, because of that very adaptability which makes its freedom of choice so glorious and full of hope, is reduced to the level of the old man in his decrepitude, of whom it is said " another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." In wartime it is the old and the rich who manage to retain some vestige of freedom.

To those who do not understand Democracy the attitude of democratic states towards war is puzzling. Their intense reluctance to take up arms seems pusillanimous; and when war comes and the people who shrank from it display that " deliberate valour," which is

" firm and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,"

a baffled enemy seeks for an explanation of the contrast in the hypothesis of perfidy. But in fact there is no contradiction. It is just because Peace is so precious to Democracy that Democracies show this unbending determination in war, for the outbreak of war is itself a stinging outrage to the democratic ideal and as such steels the will to endure. Democratic states have a power of endurance unattainable by nations whose ardour feeds upon emotion and whose political impatience makes them dependent upon the gratification provided by rapid success.

But the peace which is precious to Democracy is something more than avoidance of war. In the political life of a democratic people, freedom of discussion and free criticism of governments are essential; but when international relations are strained and nations are suspicious of one another, much has to be done in secret, and Democracy is impaired. When preparation for possible war is a main concern of the state, the spirit of war which makes this necessary is already in many ways undermining the bases of democratic government. Democracy is on the defensive, and even in retreat, under such conditions. But it belongs to Democracy to advance. For after all we are only on the road to Democracy. "Government by the People, for the People " is a phrase which may serve to describe very roughly the form and method of government in this country and in some other countries. But the phrase really points beyond forms of government to a social ideal. It implies an educated people and it implies a concentration of government upon social welfare and all that we mean by advancing civilisation. But education and social welfare cannot advance very far if the thoughts and resources of the nation are absorbed by a race in armaments. For that reason, too, the peace which Democracy needs is more than avoidance of war. If the world is to become, in President Wilson's words, "safe for democracy," it must become, in the fullest sense, what his successor has described as " a world of neighbours." It is part of the faith and hope of Democracy that that ideal is not unattainable and that the attaining of it should be the aim of us all.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

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aura lieu Mardi le 2 mai au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

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| | |
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Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).

Le Comité

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Thursday, April 27th, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y. M. C. A. — Bible Study — at Westgate House, 28-29, Bedford Place, W.C.1. " All young Swiss invited."

Tuesday, May 2nd — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — (preceded by dinner at 7 p.m. sharp) at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Wednesday, May 3rd, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Sunday, May 21st, at 4.30 p.m. — Swiss Y. M. C. A. — Anniversary — (Tea will be served — Ladies and Gentlemen are cordially invited) at Westgate House, 28-29, Bedford Place, W.C.1.

Saturday, June 3rd, at 2.45 p.m. — Swiss Sports and Garden Party — at Herne Hill Athletic Grounds, Burbage Road, S.E.24.

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Dimanche 23 avril 1939:

11h. Culte M. M. Pradervand.

11h. Ecole du dimanche.

7h. Culte M. M. Pradervand.

8h. Répétition du Choeur mixte.

MARIAGE

Le 14 avril, Michel Perreten, de Lauenen (Berne) et Gwen Jackson, de Sheffield.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur, M. M. Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. (Téléphone Mountview 5003) Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

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**St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.**
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Sonntag, den 23. April.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.

Mittwoch Nachmittag: Schwyzerchränzli von 2.30 an, 15, Bedford Way (Zwanglose Zusammenkunft der jungen Schweizerinnen im Foyer Suisse, wozu alle Schweizerinnen freundlich eingeladen sind).

Anfragen wegen Religions — bezw. Konfirmanden Unterricht sind erbeten an Herrn Pfarrer E. Bommeli. Sprechstunden: Jeden Dienstag von 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche, Jeden Mittwoch von 5-6 Uhr im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

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