

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

SIR,

I know that resentment is not a philosophical emotion, but I am compelled to express the feeling of indignation with which I read Professor Ritchie's article on the "Ethics of Pacifism" (or, as he calls it, "Pacifism"). He sums up by saying that the case for being prepared to fight depends on political expediency, while the pacifist's case rests on the moral ideal. I write as the father of a young man who was killed at Dunkirk, and who was not unacquainted with philosophy. I know what motives actuated him, because his mind was disclosed to me. The question of political expediency had no place in them. There was a growing indignation against the wrongs which were being committed with a high hand, culminating in a decision that anyone who could do anything to stop them and refrained was a contemptible coward. That boy died for justice as he saw it. I believe that this motive is not only the most widespread but also the most respectable. "Indignation against successful vice," Butler told us, is a necessary element in the good life, and here he was only repeating what Aristotle had said about *νέμεσις*. This transcends political expediency. I am willing to believe that some pacifists are honestly following the moral ideal as they see it, but I am not prepared to agree that men who stay in safety while the cause of freedom is at stake are on a higher moral plane than those who have given their lives that others may be free. I thought that perhaps Professor Ritchie equated justice and political expediency, but a reference to his article shows that he does not. I am therefore at a loss to understand his conclusion, unless he does not regard justice as a part of the moral ideal. Do I do well to be angry? I think I do—it is the expression of indignation against successful vice.

W. R. MATTHEWS.

THE DEANERY, ST. PAUL'S, E.C.4.

June 27, 1940.

INSTITUTE NOTES

THE Annual Meeting of the Institute was held on July 16th, when the Report of the Council and Statement of Accounts were presented and adopted.

It will be clear to Members that the exceptional conditions created by the war make it impossible to arrange for public meetings at present. Should it become possible to organize any special courses of lectures in the day-time, during the Session, an announcement will be made in due course.