BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*)

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EDITORIAL

SINCE this is the 200th number of BLACKFRIARS it marks at least a Dominican anniversary and gives occasion for us to re-state our purpose and to attempt to outline our scope.

This may have more than a personal interest. During the last decade the proportion of literary talent among English Catholics has grown high, the level of scholarship has been raised notably, and at least in literary Catholicism there is a new spirit of co-operation between laity and priesthood. All this has had an influence symbolized by the greatest of the Catholic weeklies in its second spring. The number of Catholic periodicals has much increased. Has the number of their readers? Perhaps the primary need of the Catholic press is co-ordination by differentiation.

In the first place the character of BLACKFRIARS is determined by the nature of its purpose, not by the imagined interests of an illusive public. Our purpose is determined by the fact that this is a Dominican paper edited by English Dominicans. It is our hope to parallel in England the work of the French Dominicans for French Catholicism. BLACKFRIARS combines at least in intention the contrasted functions of *La Vie Intellectuelle*, of *La Vie Spirituelle* and of *Sept*.

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That one paper should try to do the work of three is a temporary necessity since we have neither the numbers nor the resources of the French province. That our method of approach should at times be very different is a permanent necessity, since we hold that a literary form to live in England must suffer a sea-change in the Channel. Yet we are conscious of a complete unity of will between Juvisy and Oxford, for since we are all Dominican we are Thomist. No more than in France does this imply in England that we are departmentalists intent on little spheres of thought; St. Thomas has left to his brothers a world view as well as a text. Thomism is not only a sacred canon but the application of a single principle to a universe of knowledge. There is no truth that cannot shelter within the architecture of the *Summa*.

We hold that all that is greatest in our tradition has been summarized in our motto "Veritas." We recognize that we will fail as Dominicans and as Thomists precisely in so far as we fail to seek and state the truth. We would have been taught, had there been need of teaching, that the statement of the truth does not always meet with the same encouragement as the search for it. But then, the first of our editors excused the coming of BLACKFRIARS with the phrase "one does not intrude into a battlefield."

The first of all BLACKFRIARS editorials outlines the end that we still follow, the limitations of which we are still conscious: "We shall try to tell relevant truth and insist on those truths that are either unknown or neglected or in danger of being forgotten." "Whether it be to give news, to amuse or edify, every journal professes to exist for some definite purpose. BLACKFRIARS will not seek to entertain or necessarily to edify its readers but will take as its aim and endeavour to state and defend truth. It is an ambitious ideal and one that we quite expect will not always be realized. In this human world, where man's one consistent quality is to err, aspiration unhappily does not always tally with achievement. Still the effort to attain will bring the ideal nearer and will help to stimulate thought."

Because we realize the weakness as well as the splendour of reason we keep our dogmatizing for the doctrines of the faith. The masters of our spirituality have never confused unity with uniformity. An article by an English Dominican

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in BLACKFRIARS will not necessarily coincide with the viewpoint of a province or even with that of an editorial board. It will only show that we have all of us enough certitudes to welcome opinions.

Looking back through two hundred numbers we realize our handicaps in the past and know that we have them still. Compared to French Thomism English Thomism is embryonic; our expression of the truth has often been obscured by the lack of an English vocabulary for Thomist terms. Our search for the truth has been affected not only by individual vagaries of thought but by individual specialization. Because Thomism is not only the application of a principle but the preservation of a canon we have never been without our trained mediævalists, and our reviews of mediæval thought will be, if authoritative, perhaps disproportionately technical. Because we have never been uprooted and because the traditions of our province run unbroken for seven hundred years, we have the limitations as well as the strength of a national past; there was something very Dominican in that Catholic Englishry of which Father Bede Jarrett was the symbol and the glory. We will still suffer the penalties of spontaneity; discretion has never been a Dominican virtue and we have often failed in cautious prudence. It is long since we had Dives as a friend, and in each crisis the papers of every province in the Order seem to betray an instinctive bias for the unprivileged and the dispossessed. Because we have been bred in the *Summa* we will continue to look for the truth rather than for the error in non-Catholic theory, holding that it is better to seek for the real than for the unreal since through reality lies the road to God.

Because BLACKFRIARS is an English Dominican review it has represented and will represent a half-attained ideal. Below we reprint the greater part of an article by Father Vincent McNabb on the aim of truth. It was the first article in our first issue and may again serve as editorial when the two thousandth number of our review is edited from an Oxford Blackfriars. By then our purpose may have been achieved; it will have stayed unchanged.

EDITOR.

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