

## COMMENTARY

RELIGION AND RELIGIONS. In the present issue of **BLACKFRIARS** an anthropologist, a lawyer and two theologians consider what at first may seem widely divergent subjects, but which in effect present a single dilemma: what has religion to say about religions? At every level, from the beliefs of primitive peoples to the organised Christian doctrines of bodies divided from the jurisdiction of the Roman See, there are reflections, however clouded or hard to perceive, of the truth which in Catholic tradition is uniquely to be found in the Church. An ecumenical attitude, which is to say an attitude that pursues the truth under the inspiration of charity, is in no sense an 'economy', avoiding what is awkward in the interests of a superficial agreement. But it is an attitude which is none the less reluctant to score an easy advantage: it is concerned first of all with establishing the knowledge which must precede judgment.

From its earliest days **BLACKFRIARS** has enjoyed the support of many who do not share the religious allegiance of its editors. And, equally, this review has considered its function to be one of reconciliation. If it is the truth that sets men free, as the Gospels promise, then the patient pursuit of it is the evangelical condition for man's beatitude. But it is a total work, and it demands more than the resolution of paradoxes which are grievous to the tidy mind of the scholastic philosopher. The theologian cannot judge, for instance, of the developed mystical life which largely exists outside the bounds of Christianity without an exact understanding of its nature. Still less can he be confident in the field of anthropology, where above all the evidence is still being laboriously assembled. The task of interpreting the accumulating material, whether it be tribal ritual or Barthian exegesis, is an urgent one; it is perhaps the first concern of the Church's missionary vocation—a mission to all, not some—and to acknowledge it is to begin the work of its realisation.