

# BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated The Catholic Review.)

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## EDITORIAL

BLACKFRIARS has at times been unjustifiably praised (and condemned) for its 'broadmindedness.' It is not broadminded. Its unwritten sub-title, which is also the motto of the Dominican Order, is Truth, and truth is as far removed from broadmindedness as it is from narrowmindedness. Like virtue, truth is not to be found in excess or defect. It implies, indeed, that the mind is measured but not by a broad nor by a narrow mind-gauge; the golden mean of adequation which truth connotes is determined by reference to objective reality and fact. Where truth is concerned the mind is not to be measured quantitatively; that would be like measuring virtue with a foot-rule. It is to be measured qualitatively, as goodness is measured by comparison with Supreme Good. A mind is not true because it is broad or narrow, or even medium, but because it faithfully represents objective reality which in its turn is the mirror of the Divine Intelligence. A broad or a narrow mind, like a badly focussed lens, must inevitably distort reality and so fail to find truth.

To sum up these philosophical platitudes, excess, whether on the side of bigotry or of latitudinarianism, in any sphere of thought must foul the truth. For the bigot all who are not of his narrowness are unprincipled; the prohibitionist tends to regard all who are not teetotallers as abandoned reprobates. For the latitudinarian all who are not of his too easy breadth are denatured dogmatists; the freethinker tends to regard all Catholics as hidebound fide-

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ists. He who has the courage to seek the truth will evoke the anger or the approval of both sides; his one concern must be not to fall into the embrace of Charybdis in shunning the teeth of Scylla. But there must be no bias. It is a blind bigotry that sees no good in a co-operative effort amongst youth towards a higher ethical standard merely because the Group Movement may and does lead to excess and hysteria. It is a suicidal policy that condemns all criticism merely because many would-be reformers have so easily become actual heretics. Conversely it does not follow that a Catholic is prepared to yield on the smallest point of doctrine merely because he is prepared to treat Protestants as brethren, though separated, and as possibly in good faith. The Reds must not think to claim me as a blood-brother in Atheism because I hold that Capitalism may well have become a curse, nor should the B.U.F. expect BLACKFRIARS to approve *The Black Shirt* because the Holy Father has deigned to speak well of the Fascist rule in Italy.

The simple fact is that a multitude of issues, not immediately determined by revealed truth or the teaching of Holy Mother Church, remain obscured and it is the purpose of BLACKFRIARS to discuss such issues in an intelligent way without fear or favour. This bold policy is not in fact so presumptuous as might at first appear, for our Review leans for its support in these matters against the solid structure of the Thomist synthesis of truth. Only if the truth is one (and any other postulate leads to chaos) can there be any real approach to the good, for the true is the measure of the good: and, in the classical phrase, the good is what all men seek. The common good of mankind is proportionate to his nature and conditions of life, spiritual life, family life, social life, political life, and the truth that measures and determines it is the one Truth whose eternal and unchanging principles are vouched for by the Church of God and embodied in the teaching of Aquinas.

It has seemed opportune to offer this re-statement of the unswerving policy of BLACKFRIARS at a time when a new hand must take the wheel following the loss of that great Dominican apostle and late Editor of this Review, Fr. Bede Jarrett. R.I.P.

THE EDITOR.