

BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*)

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EDITORIAL

IT seems natural to devote an issue of BLACKFRIARS to the most practical of all modern problems, the search for peace, since Thomism is not merely speculative in its scope but, by giving rules of thought, brings rules of action. It is natural also that we should choose a Christmas number for such a purpose. For, apart from the slightly creaking sentiment that surrounds it, Christmas maintains its liturgical significance as a reminder that the Incarnation is not simply an event in one phase of history or in one form of culture but belongs as much to our present as to our past, and that the phrase *in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis* has an eternal relevance precisely since it comes from outside time.

This emphasis on peace as the sequel, not the prelude, to good-will must govern our approach to pacifism. To the Thomist peace is something more real and therefore more divine than the quiet absence of hostility. Behind all the Thomist doctrine of peace lies the fundamental distinction in the *Summa* between *Pax* and *Concordia*: "Wherever there is peace there is concord, but where there is concord there is not necessarily peace." For peace is not the agreement to disagree or the agreement imposed by force. It implies the

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union of human wills and a unity in aim, since it is the tranquillity that follows upon order.

The distinctively Thomist criticism of most contemporary pacifism would therefore seem to be not that it is pacifist but that it is not pacifist enough. It is too little concerned with peace, for it has too often failed to grasp the true nature of its own objective. We cannot be indifferent to efforts to avert war—indeed as Catholics we should be in the forefront of such efforts—but we may reasonably question whether they deserve to be dignified by the name of pacifism. Rather they would seem to be mere commonsense efforts at self-preservation. If they fail it will be because they have so seldom penetrated beneath the surfaces of controversy. Peace propaganda too often still relies upon the dissemination of fear and on an over-emphasis on the significance not of human life but of human death. A Christian who should not shrink from enduring the physical evils of modern war must shrink from the moral evil of inflicting them. It is not death that is the central tragedy of war, but the neurosis of a civilization and the tides of hatred. A transient concord, a sudden tension of opposing aims, may come to us through self-interest, peace can only be the by-product of love. No human love is strong enough to bring it to us, only the love of charity that is of Christ. A phrase of St. Thomas in his *Commentary upon the Hebrews* still has its modern relevance; Peace is no other thing than the union of all desire. But divine love alone is great enough to engage all a man's desires, and divine love is God. The search for peace will end and will begin in the realization of the Incarnation not as past event but present fact.

The articles in this issue begin with our first principles, close with their application. Father Franziskus Stratmann and Father Vincent McNabb treat of the peace of Christ in Christ's Kingdom, the peace that is the result of charity and the effect of prayer; Father Gerald Vann writes of the ethics of war under modern conditions; Father Edward Quinn treats of the Catholic standpoint in international relations; Mr. John Eppstein, Mr. Bernard Alexander and Don Luigi Sturzo discuss the utility of modern peace policies. The perspective thus shifts from article to article and with each change the application grows more concrete. The purpose and the principles stay the same.

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Yet one problem at least has been left quite untouched, class struggle. It is not that we under-estimate its significance; as Thomists we see in it the reality that underlies so much high politic and we hold that it is social injustice which by vitiating our culture thwarts us of peace. It was St. Thomas who suggested in his *Commentary on St. Matthew* that since peace is the tranquillity of order it must presuppose that each part in a society must be in due proportion and in possession of due right. Among so much tangled thought and easy platitude Thomism and Marxism stay mutually intelligible, linked even by the closeness of their disagreement. If we do not deal with class struggle in the present number it is merely that we may deal with it in more detail in the next.

EDITOR.