

BLACKFRIARS

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THE LATE CARDINAL

BLACKFRIARS, a month late owing to war conditions in production, wishes to join its voice with the innumerable tributes that have honoured and mourned the passing of Cardinal Hinsley. Catholics all over the country have expressed their gratitude to him for making Catholicism acceptable to their fellow countrymen, showing that it is no 'Italian Mission' but has continued as much a part of England from time immemorial as his Catholic village home in Yorkshire. They have recognized the great qualities of this old Country Catholicism incarnate in the Cardinal, essentially straightforward with a hatred of the underhand and a love of fair play which represent the best in the English tradition. Many have recalled how this Yorkshire directness was elevated by a strongly Christian life that grew out of a deep personal love of our Lord and made his actions clearly Christo-centric. It was this Christian life that explained his warm-hearted attitude to non-Catholics which was already clear in his teaching days at Ushaw and culminated in his personal relations with Dr. Cosmo Lang and Dr. George Bell in particular. BLACKFRIARS can add nothing new to what has been said in this way, but we are grateful to Dr. Bell, Bishop of Catecheter, for consenting to write the memoir of this issue and so enabling us to pay our own tribute to the Cardinal's memory in a way that he would appreciate. We are grateful, too, to Sir James Marchant for contributing another generous Anglican tribute. May the co-operation that the Cardinal implemented continue to bear an increasing fruit as a permanent memorial to his name.

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THE POOR IN SPIRIT

The other contributions to the present issue of BLACKFRIARS serve to stress an essential aspect of Christianity, easily forgotten in our present search for security. The only true security taught by Christ was the security of being poor in spirit through complete reliance on the will of his Father; and it was only those who were willing to lose their lives who would find life.

Frequently people object to the Church's teaching regarding the individual right to property that it only leads to selfish possessiveness, evil competition and greed. Miss Dorothy Sayers in another of her brilliant essays¹ has shown that the sin of greed and that of covetousness are if anything more outstanding vices of the modern world than so-called 'immorality.' Advertisements and all the modern ways of creating wants are based on gluttony and increase it. Avarice or covetousness is its counterpart. 'It was left to the present age to endow covetousness with glamour on a big scale, and to give it a title which it could carry like a flag. It occurred to somebody to call it Enterprise.' Miss Sayers applies these deadly sins to our present industrial system with a clear insight until one may wonder whether our insistence on the right to private property and social security has a particularly Christian flavour. It should never be forgotten that when the Popes insist on property rights and the like the fundamental Christian doctrine of self-denial and sacrifice is pre-supposed. It may be said that the social Encyclicals grew up from a soil soaked in the Blood of Christ who lived without material possessions and gave his life as the example of complete security.

The comments of the Patriarch of Lisbon, Cardinal Cerejeira, on the disestablishment of the Church in Portugal are significant in this respect.

We must rejoice that the Church took this opportunity to set us such a splendid example of her disinterest in material matters in an age which is marked by insatiable ambition . . . Do not let us be afraid to exalt poverty. The world seems to have forgotten that it is in reality a blessing. It purifies, it liberates and magnifies the clergy, makes them more evangelical. The mission of the clergy then appears more divine before the suspicious eyes of men. Blessed be poverty. At the root of some of our present-day evils lies man's disdain for poverty. Capitalism and communism, both anti-Christian, are identical in their pursuit after worldly goods. Was it not in their name that this war was declared? The first task is to change man's heart: so long as he searches with famished clamour after the riches of the world, making them his supreme aim, there will always be wars. All the riches and goods of this world are not sufficient to satisfy the heart of one man. We certainly applaud from the bottom of our hearts the doctrines of the social encyclicals, clamouring for profound reforms which will assure justice, give every worker and his family human conditions of existence and a more equal share of manu-

¹ *The Other Six Deadly Sins* (Methuen; 1s.).

factured goods . . . But there are certain propagandists, who are communists, who seem to join together the economic problem with the secret of happiness. We want to assure all men a minimum in social economic life, without which man cannot live a human existence. Yet it is necessary to possess the Christian ideal of life, which will moderate our appetites, enable us to take up our burdens with a light heart, make us cultivate modesty in our ambitions, accept our crosses, resign ourselves to necessary privations, exalt work, feel the dignity of humble origins. Let us love poverty . . .²

The importance of this statement can hardly be overrated at the present time when we are all fighting for security. The difficulty of stating this view, as Miss Sayers points out, is that it may appear to acquiesce in oppression and grinding the face of the poor. But the Christian who has acquired the riches of poverty of spirit will exert his powers in securing the rights of others; he will be detached from his own. Even in fighting for others' rights he will be ruled by a supernatural rather than a natural end. 'We ought to distrust all those high ambitions and lofty ideals which make the well-being of humanity their ultimate end. Man cannot make himself happy by serving himself—not even when he calls self-service the service of the community; for "community" in that context is only an extension of his own ego. Human happiness is a by-product, thrown off in man's service of God.' (Dorothy Sayers, *op. cit.* p. 27).

Social security is thus balanced by Christian renunciation. Aldous Huxley has made it clear that the ethic of 'non-attachment' has been preached by all the great religions and philosophers for the last 3,000 years; he has shown too that 'non-attachment is negative only in name. The practice of non-attachment entails the practice of all the virtues.' (*Ends and Means*, pp. 4 and 5). But for the Christian this positive spirit of poverty has been made concrete and tangible in the person of Christ who emptied himself for the salvation and happiness of man. This self-denial of Christ's followers begins in the social order of external life lived with his fellow men; it leads through stages of growth and development to the complete 'self-annihilation' of which the mystics speak, often in language purposely exaggerated to convey a taste of union with God. Hence the importance of the mystics to our own day, an importance sensed by many outside as well as inside the Church. By their final abandonment to the will of the Father in the utter desolation of the Son on the Cross they perpetuate the Christian ideal.

² From the address delivered on November 18th, 1941, and partly translated in *The Commonweal*, February 5th, 1943.

Christian religion below the level of the mystic may be used by the politician for his temporal gains and his material security. For the Christian religion throughout, from the Head down to the extreme and dumbest member, is formed by obedience, i.e. obedience to lawfully constituted authority. An easy prey to the wolf politician. But this wolf is powerless before the utter poverty of spirit expressed in this abandonment to God's will. By this means captivity is led captive; the death of the Cross becomes the life of Resurrection; and Christ himself, not Caesar or the Jews, is Victor. The politician can and should use the papal social encyclicals; he can make little of S. John of the Cross and is overcome by S. Catherine of Siena. Blessed are the poor for they shall possess. The Christian leaven must work, but only through obedience, renunciation and detachment, until having nothing the Christ of here-and-now does possess all things.

CARDINAL HINSLEY.

THE death of Cardinal Hinsley brings a sense of grievous loss to innumerable men and women outside his own flock. His championship of right, his outspokenness, his love of England, his pity for the suffering, all inspired by a deep religious faith, combined to make a remarkable impression on the public mind. A story he told me of his first meeting with Mr. Churchill throws a flood of light on the bonds which bound him to his fellow countrymen. It was just after the fall of France, when there was a widespread belief that anything might happen. 'I am glad we're alone,' he said to the Prime Minister, 'and have not to rely on France.' 'Why?' asked Mr. Churchill, much surprised. He replied, 'Englishmen fight best when they have got their backs to the wall.' It was very fitting that when the Cardinal died, nearly three years later, Mr. Churchill should express his deep sympathy with English Roman Catholics 'in the loss of a leader of character and courage, a great patriot, and a true lover of justice and freedom.'

There is another campaign in the leadership of which the Cardinal's death will be most keenly felt. It is the campaign for a regeneration of Britain and Europe and a building up of a new social, economic and political system on just and moral foundations. Staunch Roman Catholic though he was, he saw that in a world so divided as our own the gathering of all forces looking in the same direction was indispensable for such a purpose. Accordingly, in August, 1940, profoundly stirred by the moral collapse which caused France's down-