

furnace at Blackfriars, Oxford. The fires were banked—but still they burn. The other was that sword of division, the civil war in Spain. And it was here, because we could not make a crusade out of the mixture of causes, that we were accused of being pink, or worse.

Yet we were not political. Some of us were post-communists, some had Tory heads and Labour hearts, some applied Labour tests with Tory tastes, the acting editor thought of himself as a Catholic Whig, a valued regular contributor signed himself 'Jacobin', and another 'Penguin', both for Dominican reasons, for this was before Sir Alan Lane's famous paperbacks. We stood for an establishment, but it was not one that a sociologist would have recognized, though had he also been literary and philosophically minded he would have noticed the burden of humanism.

How old fashioned it all seems now. Those were the days when divines who wrote for us took D. H. Lawrence seriously but not solemnly, and perhaps Mr Aldous Huxley solemnly but not seriously; when liturgists were rubrical rather than evangelical; when poetry began its lines without caps; when the ecumenical were beginning to be good-mannered on both sides about the Petrine Claims and the nature of Church authority. Those were the days when the French Catholics were beginning to discover the Bible, but the word kerygmatic was not yet heard. Those were the days, and Hitler was not the only locust to eat them up.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

## THE FUTURE PROSPECT

In the course of its relatively long life BLACKFRIARS has evolved—its process of growth, as in biological evolution, has shown occasional deviations indeed, but also an effective progress, gradually and in spite of difficulties fulfilling the pattern of its true nature and making its aims more clearly evident.

This is not the place to speak of the struggles necessarily involved in keeping a small review alive and vital, fulfilling its purpose on limited resources both material and intellectual, of money and man-power. Those who have been engaged in past years on this work know what effort and sacrifice that entails. They are surely entitled to our genuine gratitude and commendation. It is the place, I think, to look to the future and what we hope for in going forward to and reaching our thousandth number.

Basically BLACKFRIARS is a Dominican review. It aims at thinking and writing in a spirit bred of living in vital contact with Dominican thought. This is not to be understood in any exclusive sense. St Thomas Aquinas is the possession of the whole Church, but the Dominican family has a special responsibility for fostering and guiding his philosophy as he himself employed it. For him it was not a closed system so perfect that it could not profit by the investigation and weighing of all philosophy ancient and contemporary, but a dynamic of thought, ready to incorporate all truth, to see things in the fresh context of new truth, and to welcome fresh insights whatever their origin, so long as they were a vehicle of truth. All this to be applied, in theology, to the data of revelation, so that the living truth of God's word should be made to live for the human intellect and will, and, because it so lives, to be vitally engaged with human life itself.

This vital engagement elevates the scope of natural knowledge, which gains its full significance only in the believer. Apart from faith its importance is strictly limited. Reason, while retaining its proper autonomy, is purified by faith, its purification allowing the believer to see the glory of God in the principles he lives by and the things that he thinks and makes. The work of philosophy thus becomes an act of adoration and obedience, rather than of human self assertion, autonomous in its own sphere though it is.

No question therefore is *exclusively* theological. It is true that the *Life of the Spirit*, a child of BLACKFRIARS, is more directly theological in its approach than its parent. The reason for this is that its aim and task is to help build up that inner contemplative life which is the correlative of the apostolate that BLACKFRIARS serves. But *omnia abeunt in theologiam*, the knowledge of God is the key to the understanding of all things. The ecumenical movement, which has long been one of the preoccupations of BLACKFRIARS, is to-day becoming wider even than the scope of the World Council of Churches. Its dialogue, on the philosophical level, is extending to fruitful contact with non-Christian thinkers of goodwill.

Such dialogue may well lead in the end to the realization of the relevance of theology to the whole of reality, because God's Word underlies the true understanding of human life. In creating he did not create one individual man and woman, but the human race. A society came out from his hand in the act of creation. All mankind proceeds from God's creative word. Since this is so, the human race is closely bound to him, even though through the Fall a weakening and partial disintegration has resulted. Humanity is no longer basically a society, it

has broken up into individual groups and almost into an agglomeration of single individuals. The crying need for an integral society may well be the starting point for the recovery by our world of the wholeness of reality in God.

Whether human life as it is can be subsumed under sociology, psychology, politics, economics, aesthetics, morals or religion, theology is relevant to all of it. Here lies open a wide field for the future. May BLACKFRIARS take its place there even more fully and effectively than it has done in the past.

A graceful and enduring tribute by all of us of congratulation on its five hundredth number would be to support it and its work to the utmost, by reading it and making it known to others.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

## The Laity and the Council

GREGORY BAUM, O.S.A.

In this article I wish to show first, how the laity is involved in the Council and secondly, how the entire life of the Church is marked by what is called her 'collegiality', the co-operation of all in the acts of a few.

In preparation for the Second Vatican Council a great number of theologians and other specialists are examining the problems of the Church's life in the areas of doctrine and discipline. This work is not confined to the relatively few bishops and priests who have been appointed to the preparatory commissions at Rome. Theologians in general, in many parts of the world, are concentrating on matters dealing with the council and studying the problems that are likely to be discussed during the sessions.

This work is of utmost importance. It must not be forgotten, however, that the ecumenical council itself is the business of the apostolic hierarchy. Theologians may propose themes and elaborate plans for a council, but during the actual sessions responsibility lies entirely with the bishops acting as judges of faith and rulers of the Church.