

# Commentary

Five hundred appearances can at least be counted a mark of endurance, and this number of **BLACKFRIARS**, while taking a modest interest in the event, is more concerned to look to the future. In the first issue, forty-two years ago, Father Vincent McNabb was given the task of describing the aims of this journal, and his defence of the claims of truth—reprinted now—has lost none of its importance.

It can scarcely be said that the prospects are brighter now than they were in 1920. Then, in the optimistic dawn of Versailles, it would surely have been inconceivable that human hopes should be so cruelly betrayed, that a generation later should live under a shadow of destruction and evil so much more terrible than anything man has known before. Thomas Merton's prophetic account of a world divided—and, still more tragic, of man divided—as well as Peter Benenson's 'Appeal for Amnesty', are all too appropriate as texts for our time. But so is Father Gregory Baum's examination of what the forthcoming Council must mean for the life of the Church. It is a providential thing that Pope John XXIII should have seized on such a moment of sadness in human history to reaffirm the Church's mission and the hope of reconciliation and pardon that is hers to offer to the world. A Christian optimism is unlikely to think that evil can be ended this side of eternity or that men will learn wisdom apart from God, but it knows that in the last reckoning evil will not prevail.

In the meantime there is a work to be done, a truth to be served and a charity to be lived. And the part that a review such as this can play, small though it may seem against the huge landscape of the Church's work in the world, can only be fulfilled if it can count on the good will of its readers. They are not just the passive recipients of whatever the editor may happen to provide. Their support, and certainly their criticism, can sustain the purpose which **BLACKFRIARS** has tried to fulfil over the years. And, more important, it is they who can help to extend it, to match the needs of the years to come.