

# BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*)

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## EDITORIAL

CHRISTMAS is commonly deformed into *Xmas*, and that is a sign of the times. In almost every context, from Algebra to the law-courts, *X* stands for the unknown quantity; and for many it stands thus in the ugly combination "Xmas." We do not suggest that this is a conscious declaration of agnosticism; no doubt, indeed, in the beginning the *X* was a Greek and not a Roman letter, the initial of Our Lord's title in its Greek dress. But the fact remains that there are many who celebrate Christmas with feasting and joy, but without Christ. This is often due to ignorance, though sometimes to indifference or blindness; for it is not merely a question of knowing, but also of living and being—and it involves self-sacrifice. Another title of Christmas is *Emmanuel*, God with us, God sharing our lives that we may share His, God sharing in human nature that we may be partakers of the divine. It is rightly regarded as a time of rejoicing, of fellowship, and of peace—desirable things not readily attuned to the uneasy restlessness and suspicious hostility of Christian peoples to-day. The simple truth is, of course, that these good things cannot be without Christ; and if the evil in our midst is to be combatted, Xmas must again become Christmas, in reality as well as in name.

## BLACKFRIARS

The Abyssinian war, with its grim menace to Christendom, is a terrible commentary on modern Christianity. BLACKFRIARS has not felt called upon to offer judgment on the causes leading to the dispute, but it has followed the lead of the Archbishop of Westminster in condemning the means adopted for its settlement. As a result of this attempt to be objective and Christian on that particular point, we have been accused (in a letter published in this issue) of "helping England to drift still further towards the enemies of Christendom," and (in private letters) of tendencies to "Communist ideals that Fascist Italy is fighting," as well as of sheer anti-Italian prejudice. But surely all this (apart from the fact that it is untrue) is clearly beside the point. The peculiarly Christian and Catholic point is whether *this war* against *this people* is a Christlike undertaking, or even whether it is just. In condemning the Italian war of aggression, we do not condemn the Italian people, for they are indubitably moved by a sense of justice as well as of loyalty; but we do condemn their leaders who have so warped the nation's view of justice and taken so mean an advantage of its sense of loyalty by outrageous propaganda, that this fine Catholic people is persuaded it does a service to God and humanity by letting loose the horrible monster of modern war within the precincts of the peace-seeking League itself. The Italians may not now be in a position to examine the point dispassionately in the light of Christian ethics, but that should not prevent others from retaining a sane objectivity in regard to it.

Our only purpose in noticing the criticisms levelled at BLACKFRIARS is to emphasize the need, on the part of individual Christians, of accepting in actual fact the significance of the Incarnation, implied by the word *Christmas*. This includes, as primary and essential, a willingness to accept Christ our Lord as a norm of individual conduct and a determination to judge of natural actualities by supernatural standards. The Incarnation must be accepted as a fact, and not merely as a fact of history but as a present reality, translated into terms of modern needs and individual effort. Christmas must be more than just a remembrance of Bethlehem; it must mean *God with us*. The coming of the God-man brings peace to men of good-will; and good-will is born only of Truth.

EDITOR.