

BLACKFRIARS

Vol. XVIII

MAY, 1937

No. 206

EDITORIAL

In our brave new world wherein popular emotion is so ably generated and controlled at the power stations of Fleet Street and Langham Place, one is perhaps tempted to stand aloof from any chorus of collective enthusiasm, and even to sound a discordant note of protest. Not from any priggish sense of superiority, but because it is abhorrent that human feelings—the feelings of millions—should be turned off and on with mechanical efficiency by the power of interested organs of propaganda. More especially are we on our guard when the direction given to public feeling is so patently open to commercial exploitation as is that which prepares for the coming Coronation.

Yet the commercial exploitation of what is sacred is no new thing to those versed in history; and the Catholic, however much he will deplore that exploitation, knows that it does not derogate from the sacredness of what is thus abused by human avarice. The pathetic survival of the ancient rites for the sacrificing of a King possess the sacramentalist with a deeper sadness.

Propaganda may atrophy the exercise of intelligence and will, but it cannot yet destroy memory. With recent memories still so fresh it has adroitly diverted public attention from the symbolism of Crown and Orb, Sceptre and Sword and Holy Oil, and bids us see in the ceremonies of Westminster Abbey some "Act of National Dedication." But if this interpretation of the Coronation is not also to be merely sentimental and unreal, the Nation must know to What or to Whom and how it is to dedicate itself. To that neither Fleet Street nor Langham Place, nor yet Lambeth, seems able to reply in any certain tone.

Those to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, of which temporal kingship is the vice-regency, may see a deeper significance in these voided rites and acclaim them with no less sincerity because with greater understanding. In the Regalia they see the symbols of the God-Man's majesty, lordship and power, and in them revere

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the Idea of Authority exercised in the name of the Living God in accord with His commandments and for the temporal and eternal well-being of His people; they will take occasion thereby to consecrate themselves anew to the service of that Kingship and to its coming on earth. In the persons of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth they will revere a King and Queen whose example of self-sacrifice and public service in an acutely difficult and anomalous position should be an inspiration to us all. Aware how history has rendered it well-nigh impossible for the Man and the Woman to embody the Idea, their *God save the King* will be no bombastic anthem but a humble and earnest entreaty before the Throne of Omnipotence.

Trinity Sunday, May 23rd, is to be observed in many if not all the dioceses of England and Wales as "Press Sunday." Our Bishops ask the clergy "to bring to the notice of the faithful on that day the importance of the Catholic Press and the duty of the faithful to give all possible support to our Catholic writers and journalists who are doing the work of Catholic Action and counteracting the poison of Communistic and other immoral literature."

We would express the hope that our readers will find a way of celebrating the occasion which will make BLACKFRIARS itself more widely known and read.

Incidentally, BLACKFRIARS is not to be found in many public reading-rooms. Local librarians are usually very open to suggestions and advice from ratepayers. And even from non-ratepayers.