

BLACKFRIARS

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EDITORIAL NOTE

MISSION Sunday is celebrated towards the end of October when in the northern half of the globe Nature is decaying. The Church has perhaps chosen this season for a re-awakening of missionary effort because in the south, whither the Faith spread last, the new life of spring is well advanced. The Missions are so important today because when the true religion is languishing in one part of the globe it must be growing with new vigour in another. The Roman Catholic Church is not limited to one continent any more than to one culture. And if it is over-run by materialism and new paganism in the West it will spread out triumphantly in the East.

But more especially should we now turn our eyes towards the Missions because of the occurrence of the feast of All Saints, when we are reminded of the heavenly destiny of all mankind and our present association with those whom Christ has loved and who dwell with God.

Having these ideas before us we can approach the present issue of **BLACKFRIARS** not only with respect for the honourable and noteworthy contributors, but also with an understanding of the need to break away for a time from our pre-occupation with our own Western troubles. As we jolt heavily along the road leading from the war and we can see nothing but fog and threatening clouds around and ahead,

we should raise our eyes to look further afield. There is something away in the distance; the whole wide world lies open before the missionary zeal. Now we have little of civilization or culture to offer the non-Christian. Now we can perhaps receive more of these great natural benefits, a new zest for human nature and life, from the peoples of the East. All that the West has to offer now is, perhaps, the Faith, the inestimable treasure of true Christianity. It is therefore imperative to learn from them as well as to tell them of Jesus Christ.

It is a great honour for BLACKFRIARS to have the case for the Missions put forward by His Grace the Archbishop of Port of Spain; an honour also to have the Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford to show the importance of learning from other peoples and religions; and also by a happy chance the most distinguished of any non-Christian writer known to readers of this review, Dr Coomaraswamy, recently sent a contribution which was reserved for this number, as it shows the work that can be done in opening a way to natural understanding between East and West on a philosophical plane. No missionary to the East could afford to neglect the profound work of Dr Coomaraswamy, who is one of the very few to attempt to introduce the *philosophia perennis*, baptized by the Church, to the philosophy that has supported for so many centuries the religion of his own land.

THE EDITOR

SHOULD FOREIGN MISSIONS GO?

THE title of this article has been borrowed from one in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January 1944 by the Reverend Phillips Endecott Osgood, Rector of Emmanuel Church, Boston. In his opening paragraph he records that 'at a recent conference at Columbia on Science, Philosophy, and Religion two delegates voiced the pungent opinion that "the entire missionary movement should be stopped"'. They raised a vigorous demurrer to the axiom that "the post-war world can be built successfully only on the basis of Christianity" and categorically denied that "we are fighting to save Christian civilization". Granted that only two of the delegates exploded this bombshell, nevertheless there are persons not delegates to this august conference who would second the motion—both at home and, more understandably, among the nationalists in the non-Christian countries'.

The rest of his article is chiefly taken up with an examination of that nationalist attitude in Japan, India, and China, and while he seems to be in general accord with the familiar Catholic thesis that 'the Church can then only be said to be founded in a region when it is