

merits of word order appear to be evenly balanced and perhaps unimportant, but, read in their context, the thoughtful African would find a difference.

In the matter of vocabulary, the preliminary choice, of course, falls upon the European, until such time as there are Africans versed in Hebrew and Greek. But where there is a selection of vernacular words it is the African who should be the final judge of their respective merits, e.g. *singiza* and *nenea* in St. Matthew v. 11 ' . . . when men shall . . . say all manner of evil against you '.

This new translation should provide an opportunity for the fullest collaboration with African Christian leaders.

E. O. ASHTON

International Discussion Group

DR. MARGARET MEAD addressed a meeting, arranged by the International African Institute and the School of Oriental and African Studies, on 4 October 1943. The title of her address was ' An American looks at Colonial Administration ', and Dr. Mead began by pointing out that in any discussion of the international implications of colonial administration, it was necessary to devise a medium of communication—a verbal currency, as it were, of known value; the use of false analogies, such as a comparison of the British handling of Indian problems with the American attitude to the Negro population of the United States, only tended to obscure the questions at issue and was a bar to real understanding and fruitful discussion. Dr. Mead went on to indicate certain fundamental differences characteristic of the American and British attitudes, not only to colonial administration but also to other questions, such, for instance, as the bringing up of children. The American attitude towards dependent nations and young persons showed a tendency to increase the pace of their advance to adult status by every possible means; the British, on the other hand, tended to favour a slow and gradual development. Not till these differences of attitude were recognized and taken into account could colonial relations become a coinage of international communication.

In the second part of her address, Dr. Mead, speaking as an anthropologist, dealt with the problem of fitting pre-literate peoples to take their place in modern world society. From her studies in Polynesia, New Guinea, the Netherlands Indies, and among the Indians of North America, Dr. Mead had formed the opinion that among those peoples where, owing to the great variety and the orthographical difficulties of the vernacular languages, primary schooling had been given in English, the pupils' capacity for handling the English language, especially in writing, remained definitely below the level of their general intelligence; in writing English they tended to relapse into vernacular idiom, even though they had never learned to write their own language. This experience was confirmed by the results of experiments carried out in the early 1920's among Welsh-speaking children. In the Netherlands Indies, however, where the attitude of Dutch administrators to the teaching of language is entirely different from the British and American, the education of the child started in the vernacular in the village school; later he learned Malay and Dutch, and generally attained an astonishingly correct and fluent command of Dutch and often of other European languages.

Dr. Mead considered that these studies of the teaching and use of language had a bearing on the wider question of what form of education would best prepare a simple, pre-literate people to take its place in the modern world. Experiences such as she had described suggested that if people were made conscious and literate first in their own culture and their own language—in particular, if the crucial step from speech to writing were taken in the language which, as children, they used in their own homes, it was much easier to make them participants in a more complex civilization.

A lively discussion followed Dr. Mead's address, in which Professor Julian Huxley,

Dr. Audrey Richards, Dr. Lucy Mair, Professor Daryll Forde, Mr. Ekere, Mr. H. S. Scott, Dr. Tucker, Miss M. M. Green, Mr. Greenidge, Mr. Korsah, and Dr. Fortes took part. The points raised included the desirability of forcing the pace of development, and of imposing European ideas on an unwilling people; the use of a second vernacular language in place of a European one; the necessity of considering modern developments not merely in terms of economic and technical changes but also in terms of human happiness.

Politique générale de l'Afrique Équatoriale Française

In a circular published at Brazzaville on 19 January 1941, and approved by General de Larminat, Haut-Commissaire de l'Afrique Française Libre, M. Éboué, the Governor General, issued a directive addressed to officials in French Equatorial Africa. In his preface, M. Éboué states that it is necessary to decentralize administration and to increase the sense of individual responsibility in officials, whose first aim must be the good of the colony. In the view of the Governor General, a centralized bureaucracy kills initiative. He announces the appointment of departmental inspectors, who will travel widely, advising local officials, and also acting as advisors to the Governor General. M. Éboué further emphasizes the need for a combined effort directed towards improving the health of the people, and points out the importance of a regard for the existing social structures of the African peoples, for, he says, ' Les indigènes, eux aussi, ont une patrie, et cette patrie est symbolisée et maintenue par les institutions politiques, fussent-elles rudimentaires. Même les abus d'un chef légitime sont préférés à l'absence de chef, parce que ses sujets connaissent, en lui obéissant, qu'ils sont chez eux. L'individualisme économique, au contraire, en paraissant favoriser l'indigène, le laisse finalement désemparé; il a peut-être acquis un certain confort, mais il a perdu en retour le sens de la propre vie '.

MARGARET WRONG

United States Church Conference on African Affairs

THERE is an increasing interest in African questions in the United States, one evidence of this being the Conference arranged by the Africa Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.¹ Delegates came from many Christian communions and among those present were a number who had worked in Africa, including Dr. E. W. Smith, a member of the Council of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. Papers and discussions at the Conference showed a realization of the need for study and research on African life and cultures. The importance of a thorough knowledge of African systems of land tenure, as well as of indigenous customs and systems of education was recognized. In considering the building of the Christian Church, emphasis was laid on the necessity for understanding African conceptions of God, African forms of worship, and African music and architecture. The need for studying the place of witchcraft in African life was pointed out. A number of recommendations were made about the building up of a Christian literature in African languages, developments involving studies of the structure of African languages and of the relations between various dialects, in order to discover which might become languages of literature. The encouragement of African authorship was strongly urged, as well as the necessity for training Africans for literary work. These and other recommendations show that study and research, such as this Institute has initiated, are required, and it is to be hoped that in following up these recommendations American Societies will invite the Institute's collaboration.

MARGARET WRONG

¹ *Christian Action in Africa*: Report of the Church Conference on African Affairs, Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, June 19-25, 1942. New

York: Africa Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. \$1.00.