

'WORLD SCOUTING': 'Missionnaires' (Duckett; 9d.)

This special edition of *Missionnaires*, an international missionary review edited by the Society of Jesus, was specially brought out for the Jamboree which has just taken place in France. It gives a vivid pictorial account of the Scout movement throughout the world and particularly on the mission field. It is good to hear of the more serious side of scouting as a method of education and social service. The French have been quick to discover the potentialities of scouting as a movement of Catholic action. It has produced many vocations to the priesthood and it plays quite a notable part in their national life. The next few years will be crucial for the movement, for it is experiencing serious growing pains. Is it a mere passing enthusiasm or is it called to play a responsible part in the reconstruction of a war-broken world?

S.B.

E X T R A C T S

MAN'S DELIVERANCE is the theme of the latest *cahier* published by *Jeunesse de l'Eglise* (Petit-Clamart, Seine: 160 francs). Two hundred large pages provide an ample arena for a discussion which has those qualities of intellectual alertness and apostolic confidence which mark so much French Catholic writing today. Marxism, Existentialism, intellectual freedom, the artist's self-sufficiency: all these are described. And the answer: God the deliverer, considered in modern Protestant theology, Islamic tradition, Hindu mysticism, and, above all, in the Christian life of grace.

The life of the spirit can too easily in the imagination be shut off from the life of the created world, which, in its degree; no less certainly reveals the providential work of redemption. Prayer itself is never ultimately private, and the sacramental mystery affirms for all time the unity of all the things that God has made—one in their need of deliverance, one in their dependence on its single source. And history itself has its part, as Père Montuclard emphasises in his introductory essay on 'The Mediation of History and the Mediation of the Church'.

'The Church and History draw mankind in different directions, directions that are sometimes contradictory. But there is only one salvation for humanity and we have the assurance that it is towards that salvation that the Church is infallibly advancing. Where then does History lead us? Towards the abyss, towards destruction? Are its works only ephemeral and useless? Is History condemned, because it follows its own ways which are not those of the Church, to remain wholly outside that design through which God accomplishes the true realisation of mankind and of the universe? Or

rather do the Church and History collaborate, each according to its fashion, in the Salvation—the same Salvation—of man and of humanity?’

Such is the dilemma, and it is the basic one of our time. If it be true that the secular world ignores the central truth of Christian redemption which alone gives meaning to its life, it may be equally true that Christians have too limited a view of the horizon of grace, which may extend far beyond the ‘private’ territory of their experience. It is a sane corrective to a ghetto pietism to recognise the infinite range of redemption. ‘To believe that in Christ through his Cross the enmity of the Church and human History is surmounted and conquered is for man the revelation of Salvation. That is the perspective of the Christian who wills, in all he does, to be the collaborator of God in the working out of his unique design’.

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SAINT BENOIT LABRE was born in 1748, and his bicentenary has a special meaning for us today. This extraordinary saint, who failed in all he did by human reckoning, who wrote no books, founded no order, in fact *did* nothing but wander over Europe as the poorest of pilgrims, is, says Jean Riverain in a most original study in *Etudes* (October), a reminder of ‘the true internationalism’: he was at home everywhere he went because he was at home with God.

‘The great evil of our century, from which Europe is suffering not only in its economy but in its spirit too, is that of closed frontiers, that dark nationalism which is perhaps more dangerous to the Christian community than even Marxist propaganda. Christianity needs movement and mutual exchange for its very life. Not enough for it to know that it is universal: it must live its universal life’.

And Benoît Labre challenges all those comfortable compromises which are the façade of a weakened faith. ‘A man must have three hearts’, he used to say: ‘one of bronze for himself, one of flesh for his neighbour, one of fire for God’. He would, one supposes, be surprised to find himself hailed as the patron of ‘Christian internationalism’. For him, God was to be loved and served everywhere, by everyone. His pilgrimages expressed his three-fold heart, and the fire of his love had all a fire’s contempt for frontiers.

Who is my brother? Catholics, by their very name, have the primary obligation of prayer for their brethren wherever they be, whatever race or place is theirs. Perhaps, after all, the Marshall Plan may find St Benoît Labre its best patron.

PRAEGRUSTATOR.