

EDITORIAL COMMENT

When a new journal for the study of Hellenic, Patristic and later Christian philosophy is added to the large number already existing, there is need for some explanation of its appearance. In Canada certainly there is not a philosophical journal especially for the study of older philosophy. But neither is there reason there should be a Canadian journal in this area, if it were only to distract our students from international scholarship or add to an already unacceptable burden of secondary reading.

There is in this country, as elsewhere, a profound dissatisfaction among the ablest students and young scholars with the present state of these studies. The dissatisfaction is the result of a separation of the historical study of our intellectual tradition from contemporary culture. An unhistorical, unintellectual philosophy is widely prevalent in our universities, and a naturalistic individualism which is the equivalent in the practical of this analytic philosophy. Older thought is dead history from this standpoint; our religion and secular institutions are referred to individual feeling and not known in their objective and rational principles. Against an ignorance and oblivion of the tradition and the anarchy of practical life intelligent students demand a more accurate and philosophical knowledge from historical scholarship than sufficed a more orderly age.

To have hold of their tradition and proper culture, while it is a common need at the present time, is peculiarly necessary to young Canadians. This country subsists in independence of the United States so far as Canadians have another and a more conservative relation to the common European tradition than that which they receive from the United States. There only now begins to be an indigenous historical scholarship in Canada, and that at a time when the political unity of the country and its cultural survival are uncertain. If this scholarship will interest the most intelligent students it must appear to them as a response and alternative to the anarchic empiricism of the present time.

Not only philosophical writings but poetical and other literary works, religious doctrines, institutions can be made accessible to the intelligent reader by a more objective and philosophical treatment. We expect to publish such contributions.

To combine sound scholarship and philosophical insight is a difficult art. *DIONYSIUS*, it is hoped, may encourage the attempt, particularly among younger Canadian scholars. In the interpretation of ancient literature, as well as of the philosophers, there is impatience both with endless growth of minute inquiries and with

a naive reading of modern attitudes and assumptions into the ancients.

DIONYSIUS, despite its name, will in certain respects look beyond Classical antiquity and the Christian Fathers to medieval and modern thought. It is difficult in the specialization of modern learning to observe the continuation of ancient thought, as also to appraise rightly the innovations and departures from it in medieval and the older modern philosophies. The interest and need of contemporary students is to make out better the connection of their present culture with the ancient tradition.

To encourage an independent Canadian scholarship in the common tradition and to strengthen our relations with the philosophical scholarship of other countries appear to us parts of the same policy. As in this first number, *DIONYSIUS* will keep a certain balance between contributions from Canadian scholars and those of scholars from other countries. We recognize the bilingual character of this country in publishing articles in either English or French.

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