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tractions from the main issue. And where a pseudo-apostolic zeal is connected with any littleness of spirit, or the faintest savour of smallness of character, it is certain that something is basically corrupt.

This is no academic thesis. It will ultimately determine our cosmic course—to hell or heaven.

Any unsound, inwardly unprincipled “muddling” along, with a plethora of external activities, however admirable as phenomena, will leave them uninspired by divinized love, and hence non-existent as supernatural realities, intrinsically mendacious as sheer phenomena. For the apostolate is to be an overflowing diffusion to all mankind of that Christ-like generosity and soul-delineation which means the presence of grace and an apostle walking with Christ: “*Contemplata aliis tradere.*” All other considerations are straw, unless this is effectively remembered and actualized.

It is a searching thesis—it is Christ’s.

And Fr. Leen has produced a fine study of the detailed mode of its application in the spiritual life. The book is magnificent “spiritual reading.” And the chapter on the Last Supper, especially, is superbly delicate—nor is its dramatic colour and pathos sentimentalized, but is strong and beautiful appreciation of the exegetical givenness of the Gospel text.

NORBERT DREWITT, O.P.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Its Reality and its Shadow. By E. C. Merry. (Anthroposophical Publishing Company; 3/6.)

We are invited by certain apologists to contemplate with dismay the “dangers of spiritualism.” Emotion enters into this approach and clear reasoning has at times to give place to a form of journalistic sensationalism which leaves the real problem pretty much where it was. It is refreshing, then, to come across a criticism of Spiritualism which arises from a completely different standpoint and attacks a certain Occultism in the name of authentic occultism. Eleanor Merry’s interesting and thought-provoking little book shows us a spiritual philosophy condemning spiritualism precisely because it is not spiritual. By the *détour* of heaven knows what “masters” of occult science, this Steinerian philosophy rejoins an unflustered St. Thomas.

This book finds spiritualism, as it has developed during the last century, guilty of gross materialism in its outlook, its guiding notions, its methods and its aims. In place of the austere call of a Rudolf Steiner to change our life, exert our faculties, redouble our spiritual endeavours, spiritualism offers us the easy solution of sitting in an armchair and listening to mediums and

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clairvoyants. Hence, where the question of our destiny is concerned, "spiritualism is of all methods of enquiry the least able to solve the problem, for it brings the life after death into the sphere of materialistic thought-pictures. . . . The clairvoyant or the medium may have glimpses of another world; but if they are not initiated, their glimpses will be only in the form of images carried over from the sense-world, which conceal, rather than reveal, the reality of the world of soul and spirit."

The impulse which originated modern spiritualism had good in it. It aimed at bringing to men immersed in a materialistic civilization a conviction, engendered by methods of experimental science, of the existence of a supersensible world. But its effort, in the last resort, has amounted to an attempt to prove that the spiritual order is . . . material.

Mediumship is a trespass on forbidden ground—that is, on the wrong ground. It is a "pathological state which releases certain subtle emanations from the physical body to a highly unusual degree, by reason of the loss of ego-consciousness. These emanations are of such a nature that they pass over directly into the sphere of astral influences, which then control them."

Moreover "only certain kinds of elemental beings make use of mediums and to some extent also of other persons attending a séance." The other world, thinks Miss Merry, is largely peopled with souls still tainted with the materialistic outlook of the age in which they died; their influence can only be exerted in the same sense.

"In every public séance, or in private sittings with a trance medium, a certain emotional tension is never absent. This tends to increase the activity of the emanations of all present. In the case of the medium this is most marked, because of the complete absence of Ego-control. The emanation of the so-called fluid element in the medium (glandular secretions, sweat, etc.) oversteps all normal limits and, in conjunction with the other emanations makes its visible appearance as the so-called 'ectoplasm.' "

The use of machines such as the Reflectograph and the Communigraph—seeking, that is, "spiritual forces through the agency of external physical appliances . . . is crossing the threshold of black magic."

Miss Merry is as convinced as we that "the spiritual world has its evil inhabitants." Like us she sees that spiritualism "attempts to establish a conception of the spiritual world entered by the human soul after death, which is to all intents and purposes a kind of glorified copy of the earthly world."

Spiritualism, therefore, is a perversion of the true approach to spiritual reality. There *is* a true clairvoyance. There *are* things to see, wonders to be revealed, but "for every step taken towards

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supersensible knowledge two steps must be taken in moral progress." There is, too, a necessary technique through which we come to realize, and enter into conscious enjoyment of, the "etheric" and the "astral" body, consciously capturing the sub-conscious. But all this is of no avail without high and selfless love and devotion: "Selfless love and devotion may often be rewarded by the reception of absolutely true impressions from the so-called dead. And when these are allied to spiritual training and self-discipline, then free and unshadowed intercourse with the dead may be obtained."

The essence of the process which adapts us for spiritual intercourse is "Initiation," an experience of "mystical death," where-in the awakened soul is mystically united to the powers of resurrection inherent in all existence. This "mystical death" the author, in another passage, declares to be brought about "through the long process of the transformation of our thinking, feeling and willing."

The occultism of Steiner is at once spiritual and scientific, inspirational and experimental, poetic and exact. While we admire the spiritual and intellectual energy it displays, may we not complain of the large assumptions we are expected by its exponents to take on faith and ask that the dogmatic basis of Anthroposophy be at least as positively and securely established as that of Christianity?

We have endeavoured to give an objective account of some of the main features of Miss Merry's book. We found her style somewhat diffuse. There are, here and there, traces of a certain naïveté, as for instance when she says (p. 65): "People are fond of remarking: 'Man is a microcosmic image of the Macrocosm.'" This remark is rarely heard in our suburb. Maybe the gentle reader is more fortunate (or unfortunate). But one must not cavil at an earnest attempt, in the wake of Rudolf Steiner, to challenge Spiritualism in the name of the Spirit.

CYPRIAN RICE, O.P.

THE REVIVAL OF PASCAL. A Study of his Relation to Modern French Thought. By D. M. Eastwood. (Oxford University Press; 12/6.)

The period of French thought and letters which is covered by this book is, for practical purposes, the last decade of the nineteenth, and the first of the twentieth, centuries; or, in other words, from the end of the "Reign of Science" to the late war. A first and rather surprising impression which the book produces is that this period has "dated" even more decisively than the positivist period which it superseded: which prompts the reflection that the generation which was thought to be extinguished by Bourget's