

## BLACKFRIARS

### REVIEWS

#### RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

IN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST. By Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., M.A.,  
D.D. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

In Christ is all fulness of redeeming might, in a marvellous synthesis of supernatural and natural—grace and exact psychic adaptation to human needs and the structure of a human soul. We are drawn through His extended hands and heart by supernatural grace, and on the way we know Him and love Him as a human character infinitely lovable and fascinating. This synthetic power of the Personality of Jesus, working through the grace that flows from It, and the human nature that subsists in It, compels our submission to the transcendent preciousness of a life of utter conforming with that divine archetype of the spiritual life. Our entire life, and through it the specifically supernatural efficacy of our apostolate, are moulded by that realization. For to approximate to the likeness of that vision for one hour, for one brief flash, is worth more than all the rest of our activities, since one little act of divinized love is a greater thing than all created beings taken together. It makes the souls of men “deiform.” For grace, working spiritual transformation in the soul through contact with the Sacred Humanity of Christ, achieves far more than the action of a mere healer “patching-up” disintegrate mankind. It does this indeed, but, achieving it, passes onwards, in positive activity, to transform a world, fashioning souls like to Christ in His Humanity, and, through His Humanity, in His Divinity. And, from our souls, His hypnotic touch transforms all our actions, attitudes, tastes, our relationships with one another and with the universal harmony, by a complete “interpenetration” between His life, His characteristic bearings and attitudes, to the world, as it flowed about Him in Galilee, and its individual, endless, re-expression in us. The world is given a divine orientation in this gathering up into the Humanity of Christ. And it leads (this truly “humanist,” cosmic vision of Christianity) to a characteristic nobility of soul in its participants. For this Christ-spirit of supernatural greatness is the beginning and end of the apostolate. It is the drive behind a valid apostolate, divorced utterly in spirit from the moral indifferentism of a secular partisan politic. Ultimately nothing else matters. The seizing of opportunities, propaganda, schemes of instruction, education, all the externals of Catholic Action, are just relative. This thing, this end, of unchallenged greatness in every action, moulded upon Christ, is absolute. All those other things are either contributory to its attainment, or they are valueless, even meretricious dis-

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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