

The Life of the Spirit

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The Life of the Spirit	1
Philosophy and the Catholic Student	3

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

With the present issue we conclude the first year of the regular Supplement to BLACKFRIARS, *The Life of the Spirit*. It is therefore a suitable occasion for explaining the nature and purpose of this gift to the readers of BLACKFRIARS.

For a long time this review had been trying to run a double course. It was originally founded to meet the needs, on Dominican lines, of the average man educated to live a Christian life in paganizing surroundings. First in the scale of topical needs stood the intellectual and moral problems, in which are also included the literary in so far as these bear on sociological and cultural movements of the age. In this sphere a Dominican journal was necessarily involved from the outset, and it had here secured a quite considerable hearing. There was however another sphere equally important, yet more neglected in England, a sphere that embraced the problems of the spiritual life, of grace, prayer, mysticism and religious life. In France before the war these two sets of vital problems had been met by the Dominicans in two separate reviews, *La Vie Intellectuelle* and *La Vie Spirituelle*. Both of these were scientific without being academic, popular without being cheap or vulgar. BLACKFRIARS had sought to combine the fields of action represented by these two French periodicals. In fact, however, the scope became restricted to the "intellectual life" owing to limitations in space as well as to the imperative demands of the times. Although Italy and one or two other countries had started their own versions of *La Vie Spirituelle* before the war, nothing of that nature had appeared in England. With the outbreak of war *La Vie Spirituelle* was itself removed, and at the same time it became impossible to begin any new periodical in this country.

It was under these circumstances that BLACKFRIARS

started to publish its series of supplements, and the editors seized the opportunity of preparing the way for a separate publication to deal with the principles and practices of the spiritual life. And so BLACKFRIARS hopes to be able to present the public with a fully fledged periodical, *The Life of the Spirit*, as soon as the restrictions on paper are removed. At that propitious moment the review will be able to return to its pre-war size and will be compelled to drop its young one, which it has been carrying kangaroo-like in its pouch. By that time we hope *The Life of the Spirit* will have become known and appreciated sufficiently to justify separate publication and a new subscription list.

But the initiation of *The Life of the Spirit* is no easy matter. The additional expenses have left in the balance each successive appearance of the Supplement. The enforced restriction to sixteen pages has not left enough room for the character of the future periodical to be methodically developed or clearly seen. For these reasons *The Life of the Spirit* has not in fact been as successful as was anticipated. But the greatest difficulty lies in the dearth of contributors with authority to deal with these spiritual subjects. Those who are most practised in the spiritual life are of necessity disinclined for "publicity". Their growing humility combines with their suspicion of the Press to impose silence. The editors however hope that in the coming year the Supplement will find its feet. In order to do that it will need concrete encouragement from both contributors and subscribers. The Supplement may be purchased separately and the demand for separate copies will be some indication of people's appreciation of *The Life of the Spirit*.

Finally some apology is due for so suddenly interrupting Fr. Corbishley's valuable translation of Fr. Przywara's *Majestas Divina* and the Stanbrook translation of Luis of Granada's works. The two studies which we publish in the midst of these series may at first sight seem rather remote from the character of *The Life of the Spirit*. But a closer reading of them will show a real value for the interior life of students of all ages. The two studies should help the student and the scholar to integrate their lives, to bring their prayers and their intellectual life into a lasting partnership.