

VALEDICTORY

THE EDITOR

WITH the conclusion of the tenth volume and the publication of the 120th issue of THE LIFE the first Editor retires to allow the new vitality of another to strengthen this still growing child. Ten years and more are sufficient for one man to elaborate his ideas in one journal, which can well grow stale through over-elaboration or repetition of thought. So it is with a sense of a new and greater future for THE LIFE that the original Editor relinquishes his chair, but also with some regret both at saying 'Farewell' to his child and at the thought of how much greater that child might have been today had he been able to nourish it as it deserved, had he been able to fulfil all its promises.

At this point it may be worth recalling the origins of the review. In 1940 the Editor was given the care of BLACKFRIARS and in his original commission he was asked to continue the policy of that review, already twenty years old, of combining the two outlooks of the French Dominican journals *La Vie Intellectuelle* and *La Vie Spirituelle*. But at that time the control of paper and publications necessitated by the war made it an almost impossible task to cover such a wide field in a matter of twenty pages every month. After a year or two, however, it became possible to insert a separate eight or even sixteen page leaflet into the journal, so that BLACKFRIARS continuing the 'intellectuelle' line gave birth to the 'spirituelle' insert. A deal of deliberation was given to the christening of the child. There seemed to be no satisfactory name comparable with that of the parent review, a single name which for centuries had summed up the life and work of the Dominicans in England. Rather weakly, therefore, it was decided to translate the title of the French review, though there were other sister reviews which would have stood in English as 'The Christian Life' (from the Italian) or 'The Supernatural Life' (from the Spanish. The child then was christened 'THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT' with a subtitle to indicate its parentage, 'A Blackfriars Review'. It was some years later that the length of the name appeared too clumsy, and with some undertones leading to misunderstanding

(now and then it was mistaken for a journal concerned with psychic research); so that emphasis was laid on the first part of the title. The review became *THE LIFE* with the qualification of the Spirit as a kind of subtitle—after all, *Life* (*Vie, Vida, Vita*) was the common denominator of the sister reviews on the Continent.

And so, as soon as peace-time relaxations permitted, the child was weaned from its parent and began its individual existence as a separate journal. The first issue of the now independent *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* appeared in July, 1946. From the beginning it was intended primarily as a review for the laity, since apart from the Sunday sermon and a very occasional retreat the layman was given little nourishment for his spiritual life. But it soon became clear that priests and religious were keen to subscribe, there being very little else among English journals that catered for this side of the Christian life. Articles were therefore incorporated into the monthly issues specifically written for the clergy and the cloister—indeed some of the laity came to complain that the review had become almost exclusively a 'religious' journal. Always it was a question of space—the paper control had been withdrawn but there remained the financial control which has meant that the review could seldom afford to publish more than 48 pages an issue. If there were twice as many subscribers the review could be twice as large and then the original intention of including in each issue separate sections on the scriptures, spiritual theology, the Fathers and Masters of The Life, the Saints, 'Lay Spirituality' and Religious Spirituality—as is to be found in the Italian *Vita Christiana*, for example—could be realised.

Meantime rivals in the field appeared as a stimulus to the Editor, but also as possible alternatives to the readers—in particular we may mention our effective and admirable sister reviews, *Doctrine and Life* from Ireland, and *Cross and Crown* from the United States. Readers of all types are now more handsomely served in matters of the Spirit than they were in 1946, which is perhaps an additional reason for a new and more vigorous policy in *THE LIFE*.