

If our spirit is to be revitalized, our will strengthened and our heart inflamed, it must be through the action of God in our daily life.

Miss Graef presents us with a timely, practical, and sound guide for bringing the power of God into play in our daily lives. The book is written to fill the needs of the everyday Catholic, the housewife, the working man, the student or the office girl. The author, in pointing out the road to sanctification adheres to the traditional methods within the reach of all. Her work explodes the myth that the spiritual life is only for religious. The theme tracing its way from cover to cover is that holiness should be a normal development of everyday Catholic living. Common sense is portrayed as a basic need in our quest for a closer union with God. Those seeking the extraordinary or abnormal in their spiritual life will find no encouragement in this latest work of Miss Graef.

The book is divided into three parts with an epilogue. The first part treats of our everyday life with its basic needs. In this section the fundamental activities of everyday living, such as, work and recreation, joy and suffering, are given their proper place in the true Christian life. The second part treats of prayer and penance. This section includes advice on spiritual direction, spiritual reading, recollection, and prayer itself. The theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and their place in our everyday life, are presented in a manner within the grasp of all. The third part treats of Praying with the Church. Here we follow Holy Mother Church, ever solicitous for the salvation of her children, through the liturgical year of joys and sorrows to the very bosom of the Trinity, our true home.

We recommend *God in Our Daily Life* to all those who are endeavoring to live their daily life in God. Miss Graef, closely following the masters and constantly referring to them, presents the framework for a normal, happy, healthy, and holy life. Her work is written in a contemporary style which will appeal to all. Common sense is the keynote. The common, ordinary, everyday life of the average workaday Catholic, with sound sense applied to it, is the way to holiness and heaven for the majority. *God in Our Daily Life* should be an excellent guide along the way, pointing out the means, avoiding the pitfalls, and ever urging us on to the end for which we were made: union with God.

C.A.F.

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**The Seminarian At His Prie-Dieu.** By Robert Nash, S.J. Westminster, Md., The Newman Press, 1951. pp. 312. \$3.50.

Father Nash tells us in his introduction: "the only reason for this

book at all is to help those young men, so loved by the divine Master, to taste and see for themselves how sweet He is, how condescending is His love, how swift is His response to the soul that begins to thirst for the water that He alone can give."

The author of "The Priest At His Prie-Dieu" and "The Nun at Her Prie-Dieu" would have the seminarian attain to a quasi-experimental knowledge of Christ through prayer. He seeks to eliminate the situation wherein Christ "can be remote, too, from the seminarian and later from the priest. There is intellectual belief in His divinity. We know the arguments and all the answers to the objections. We carry off prizes and distinctions and degrees in theology, and remain, or can remain, in ignorance of the science of the saints."

Unless the seminarian gains this quasi-experimental knowledge, he will not stand up before the chilling or, perhaps, heated opposition he may meet in the priesthood. In Father Nash's words, he will wilt when "assured in a patronizing tone that he will 'learn sense' when he is a year or two ordained, by which prophetic utterance it is foretold that he will settle down in a rut and abandon all initiative."

We have a prejudice against meditation books, generally speaking. The gospels and epistles were intended by God to inspire each of us. It is better to receive first-hand the wisdom of God than to receive that wisdom as meditated by the mind of another. However, it remains true that many do not seem to be able to "take and eat" without guidance. They need someone to show them in a practical way to meditate. Father Nash does that in his introduction.

There follow thirty-eight meditations, examples of what the author prescribes in his introduction. Each meditation follows a fixed form. There is 1) a preparatory prayer; 2) the setting, or scene that is the basis of the meditation; 3) the fruit intended to accrue from the meditation; 4) the development of three or four points; 5) a summary of these three or four points; and finally, 6) the tessera, a literary tag that sums up the whole meditation.

The meditations are, of course, apropos for the seminarian. Many of them were originally intended as retreat conferences for seminarians. They have substance, the substance of the epistles and gospels, and are well related to the every-day life of levites.

Some may object that the meditations are too restrictive—the steps too formalized. For those who are naturally contemplative that would be true. Some may complain that all the meditations are based on imaginary scenes, in the Ignatian manner, while there are other ways to meditate. Again, that is true. However, the point is that Father Nash wishes the seminarian to learn at least one way to approach God

through mental prayer, and he advocates a method that has led many to sanctity.

This latest volume of Father Nash should prove helpful to any beginner. Certainly seminarians will find the book inspirational for it skillfully applies the gospels and the epistles to the problems of their daily life.

V.M.R.

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**St. Bernard on the Love of God.** Translated by Rev. Terence L. Connolly, S.J. Westminster, Md., The Newman Press, 1951. pp. xii, 259. \$2.75.

This book, first published in 1937, is the work of one of the great Doctors of the Church, St. Bernard. A Doctor of the Church is a man eminent in learning and orthodoxy, possessed of a high degree of sanctity, and declared as such by the Church herself. Who, then, would be better qualified to treat of so specialized a subject as the Love of God than a Doctor like Bernard?

The book, although entitled "On the Love of God," treats of this work of St. Bernard in but 65 of its pages. The remaining 167 pages contain fragments from St. Bernard's Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles. The first section of the book treats of the motives which should impel us to love God; the degrees and perfections of love of God; and finally a brief summary of the degrees of love. All fifteen chapters of this first section are quite short and thus lend themselves to the daily spiritual reading of those who find long, involved chapters tedious.

The second section of the book is composed of fragments of sermons of St. Bernard on the Canticle of Canticles. The chapters represent compilations of various sections taken from sermons on the Canticle of Canticles and grouped according to the point of which they treat. The references indicate the sermons from which the selections have been taken and also the section of each particular sermon according to the redaction entitled "Fragments from a Fragment," done by Coventry Patmore and his wife. The last twenty-six pages of the book contain a set of excellent notes for each of the two treatises.

Father Connolly has indeed done us a service in translating the original work of St. Bernard which has long been a classic on the subject. His translation has been done with the same artistic sense and sound judgment manifested in his standard edition of the works of Francis Thomson. Let us hope he doesn't stop here.

R.M.G.