

van Zeller, O.S.B., composes his essays. Unquestionably attack is the note of the essays. Apologia may mean defence, but sometimes attack is the best method of defence: nowadays when we must needs defend our Christian heritage against the infiltration of paganism, it is good to expose the unreality, or rather apparent reality that disguises the evil in our midst.

But even if the author explodes rather than exposes some of the specious theories whereby the near-Christian seeks to justify his apathy, the author is not just out to destroy. It may first be necessary to pull down the superstructure, dispose of the rubble and then build afresh, if we would build wisely and well. Thus in the matter of prayer, for example, a number of 'willies' are allayed, and encouragement is given to put forth fresh effort, even if it be no more than persevering effort. And who will belittle persevering effort? Everyone can derive help and hope from the essays on 'the Prayer of Stupidity' and 'the Prayer of Futility'.

Apart from the essays on prayer, we have others on the social life of the Christian—Friendship, Engagement, Work, Generosity, On Being Bogus—as well as essays on particular topics. In all there is evident display of acute and penetrating observation and insight into contemporary spiritual ills. These are diagnosed and prescribed for uncompromisingly, helpfully: and, be it specially noted, lucidly. The book does not soothe, the points made are too telling and probing, although it does not console the heavily laden. There is nothing enervating about the essays: they are all stimulating and bracing.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

LE SAINT DU JOUR. By Abbé Henri Berthet. (Lethielleux; Paris: 260frs.).

Daily the Church offers her—and our—sacrifice of praise in honour of those of her children who, grown to the full stature of Christ, already share his glory in their Father's home. What do we know of these 'fellow-citizens' who will be our companions for eternity? Many are hardly names to us, few little more than that. These vignettes of a saint for each day, brief yet comprehensive and effectively catching the essential characteristics of each, will surely help many towards a sense of kinship with these glorified members of Christ's Body, making it easier for us, exiles still but strangers no longer, to have our conversation in heaven as St Paul exhorts us. And if they further lead even a few readers to realise that as these men, women and children were like to us in the weakness and sinfulness of fallen nature, so we, called to be saints and vitalised by the same grace of God, can become like to them in holiness, then the author's labours will not have been in vain.

S.M.A.