

jokes and the rest. Within that terrible solidarity differences of class and mentality are perfectly clear and comparatively unimportant.

Can the sick indeed be effective charge-holders, in spite of the managerial assumptions of the fit which tend to relegate the unfit to the position of minors? There can be no doubt of the facts here either, once it is realized that the sick may have very strong characters indeed. Strength of character, after all, may very well be for them an occupational likelihood.

Is there a need for widespread and thorough spiritual education of the infirm in their vocation?—where, Père d'Argenlieu remarks, they will always be novices. Can a void cry out? The magnificent and humble stoicism of the wards is, of course, evident. But the spiritual life therein seems to be numb, or at most a mere ache. Meanwhile the chronically ill or disabled accumulate and wait, a great, grey, hidden *Pays du Mission* indeed, spiritually something of a tundra region. May it yet blossom like the rose!

## REVIEWS

A MAN APPROVED. By Leo Trese. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

All who enjoyed *Vessel of Clay*, as well as many who were irritated by the literary form there adopted, will profit from Father Trese's second volume on the priesthood. This small volume was originally given as conferences at a priests' retreat.

His ideals are high, but, as we should expect from the writer, he is severely practical in his application. The application in a few cases is not very apt when transferred to English conditions; as, for instance, when we are warned of the unfittingness of a priest indulging in Chryslers and Cadillacs or expensive summer 'cottages'. It will be a pity if the English priest decides that he already is a poor man, and so the chapter does not apply! It is not hard to see that Father Trese would rightly condemn any excessive pandering to personal comfort and love of possession.

The greater part of this little volume deals with the distinctively priestly work, which is the same in all parts of the world. He has a telling way of impressing us that nothing matters like the Mass. Because of the Mass, the neglect of a single morning meditation brings irreparable loss. Nor should we be content to say Mass anyhow. If we take the trouble to say it with exemplary care and reverence, each Mass is a silent sermon on faith.

Confessions, Father Trese reminds us, must never be hurried. The salvation of the eternal soul before me may depend on the loving care with which I listen and help it.

Nor will Father Trese let us be careless about our sermons. I am glad

to see him condemn the over-short sermon. Our Masses are so arranged these days that we frequently merely allow ourselves seven minutes. Should we not arrange for the epistle to be read as the priest says it at the altar, and the gospel likewise, and for notices to be confined to the notice-board in the porch, so that the priest at early Masses can have time for a proper sermon? Father Trese, rightly to my mind, declares that a good sermon is hardly possible under ten minutes. Even if we had the genius to do it, how could we include the stories and examples and illustrations needed to drive our point home? Normally, says Fr Trese, fifteen minutes is the desired optimum.

We are warned in these pages of the scandal caused by the priest's will, which has a large fortune to distribute.

The pages of this small volume abound in common sense and sound psychology. He chastises us for giving such good advice in matters of obedience and good temper, and for being such unwilling subjects and such nagging masters ourselves.

The importance of encouraging the lay apostolate, of the liturgical movement, of the theology of the Mystical Body are duly underlined. Yet, with all this emphasis on the practical and apostolic, the author does not forget the importance of study. We say we have not time; but how much time we waste on the popular press!

I hope that all priests will stimulate their spiritual understanding of the priesthood by reading this little book. But don't merely read it; you can do that in an afternoon—meditate on it, examine your conscience, and keep it by you until God sends another reminder of how easy it is to become disillusioned and forget one's early ideals.

H. FRANCIS DAVIS

FAITH AND PRAYER. By Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., with a Preface by the Very Reverend Hilary Carpenter, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 13s. 6d.)

Eight lectures on Faith and eight lectures on Prayer given by Father Vincent McNabb at Oxford just fifty years ago are presented in a single volume under the title *Faith and Prayer*. When first published they were styled 'Oxford Conferences' and they substantially represent the Sunday sermons preached to undergraduates during two university terms. Please do not allow this description to mislead you into thinking that here you have ancient sermons rehashed after half a century. Both subjects are as simple, as necessary and perennial as bread and a primary need for the world of today, and Father McNabb's treatment of them is such that we are surprised that the books have been allowed to remain out of print for so long. Father Vincent wrote them when he was Prior of Woodchester in his early thirties and they are the first fruits of an acute, young,