

ity, still fails to give us what perhaps only Denifle could have achieved had he lived long enough, an exhaustive and serious estimation of the debt of Tauler and Ruysbroek to Eckhart and to Eckhart's sources. But if such a study ever comes to be written, its author, even though he will be obliged to cover territory not explored in this work, will find none the less that Fr Axters has immensely eased his way there.

ERIC COLLEDGE

SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR PRIESTS. From the French of Rev. A. M. Meley, C.S.S.R. Translated and adapted by Rev. John J. Doyle, C.S.S.R., (M. H. Gill and Son Ltd., Dublin; 15s.)

A little book of this sort is needed and could be a ready help to many priests who have good desires and good will in the matter of mental prayer. It could especially help those unfortunate priests who might be tempted to think that there is little or no time for meditation in their busy, breathless days. For the meditations presented, besides being adapted to the clergy generally, are short, and could form the matter of 5-10 minute meditations. At the same time, because of the many Scriptural citations which give so much more 'content', they could serve as outlines for the customary half-hour or longer meditations.

Less happy is the adaptation from the French which has resulted in much standard phrasing and conventional religious language, all of which detract from the effectiveness of such meditation-plans (for such they are), making them much weaker instruments of spiritual result. For many, however, the most serious deficiency would be a seeming lack of more properly theological order. It is true that the various meditations are grouped under headings (thus:—I. The Priest—His Virtues—His Duties—His Failings. II. The Great Truths. III. Jesus Christ—The Great High Priest. IV. Mary—The Mother of the Priest. V. The Priest's Models). But there is a much more essential ordering of all, including meditation subjects, under God, and more precisely in their proper place in the total return of all creatures to God. And then this very ordering in itself, in its profundities and complexities (for God writes straight even with crooked lines) serves to mirror the mind of God, and becomes a wonderful theme for meditation, not least when we think on Christ our Lord who is *Via nobis tendendi in Deum*.

FR. ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

LES INSTITUTS SÉCULIERS. By Jean Beyer, S.J. (Desclée de Brouwer; 150 frs. b.)

The rise of those pious associations now known by the proper name

of Secular Institutes shows most clearly that the Church is very much alive with the Spirit of God, and that it has as a living organism the power within it of adaptation to the changing conditions of society. History shows that a number of nameless organizations without any official status in the general law of the Church by a mysterious impulse sprang into being, largely among the laity. They were all impelled by an apostolic zeal and a desire to live the religious life under vows whilst living in the world, and usually continuing to wear secular attire. Pope Pius XII in his apostolic constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* 1947 not only gives these societies official recognition, but has given them their proper legal title and the charter of their foundation.

This book is an important contribution to the study of these Secular Institutes which have become an outstanding institution in the life of the Church today, and tend to increase and multiply, under the initial impulse which gave them being. This is a subject which will attract the interest not only of those who belong to these institutes or to societies which are on the way to receiving the status of Secular Institutes, but to all those who wish to understand their aims and way of living, and the manner in which they have gradually developed. As is shown, the first great pioneer in this field was Père de Clorivière, who in 1791 founded two societies—one for men and the other for women. The former comprised in its membership priests and laymen. The book is well documented and to be recommended.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

SHEPHERD'S TARTAN. By Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 9s. 6d.)

Whether it is Divine Providence or sheer serendipity Mr Frank Sheed seems to have an uncanny flair for the real vintage writer and to find his way unerringly to the one who can turn words into magic, phrases into features and paragraphs into works of art: Caryll Houselander, Lucile Hasley, and now Sister Mary Jean Dorcy.

The present book is a bubbling description of the experiences of a girl in the process of becoming a nun (Dominican) followed by a series of idyllic but piquant, penetrating essays, in a sort of film-shot manner, on various phases and aspects of real life in a real convent: a very Pied Piper of a book that should draw hundreds of girls to the convent gate, and further. It is also a portrayal, effective because indirect, of the heart and soul of a nun.

All sorts of incidental reflections on life in general—for instance a commonsense chapter on the way mere human sorrow enters into the life of a nun—make it a useful book for others besides girls who want to know what a vocation to the cloister means. In fact the incidental