

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,

vigorous mind and they display his characteristic method of masterly analysis and synthesis. One is tempted to ask: Were the undergraduates of those days different from their bright young grandsons of today? Were they such philosophers and theologians as to be able to assimilate such strong meat? The answer is provided by Father Vincent in the Prefaces he wrote to the first editions where he explains that by choice and circumstance the Conferences were spoken extempore and written up afterwards. So what we have here is not exactly a series of published sermons, but two very profound and lucid theological treatises on two most important subjects.

As Father Hilary Carpenter in his Preface writes, 'It is probably true to say that these Conferences were the most studied and formal of his whole life'. Later on, force of circumstances and the immediate apostolic need constrained him to change his technique or rather left him no time for studied formality, especially when his pulpit was in the open air. This did not mean falling into a slap-dash habit, lowering the standard or cheapening the message, but only making it more real and spreading it more widely. In *Faith and Prayer* we have two careful, finished expositions by a theologian steeped in the teaching of St Thomas. Father Vincent appears (rather unfamiliarly) in academic robes speaking from the doctor's chair, and we are given a glimpse of what might have been and how his apostolate might have developed if he had not become convinced that the essential work of the preaching friar was to obey the injunction which did not say, 'Lecture from the professor's chair', but 'Feed my sheep'. He claims to give us nothing more than an introduction to the study of these subjects so vital for our spiritual life; but those readers who are not yet able to take their Aquinas neat will find it just the introduction they need.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By Père Gardeil, O.P.
(Blackfriars Publications; 9s. 6d.)

There is a similarity between Father McNabb's book and Père Gardeil's. Père Gardeil gives sixteen retreat Conferences, preached *ex abundantia cordis*, taken down as spoken and afterwards carefully revised. His subject is one he has already treated in his *Structure de l'âme* and a lengthy treatise on the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The book is complementary to what he has already published on the three theological virtues and the four cardinal virtues and here he shows how the Christian needs the seven gifts in order to live the spiritual life in its completeness. Nowadays we are becoming familiar with radio talks on the Third Programme by experts who very wonderfully bring down to our level the mysteries of such subjects, for instance, as astro-physics, atomic energy and nuclear