

purifications of solitude and suffering. The book does not however attempt any full analysis of these degrees of silence, and in particular we miss the fulfilment of the whole process which should terminate in the 'Silentium' which is a positive gift from God. However the book is full of good things and there are some beautiful passages of the 'Silence of Praise' and the Apostolate of Silence.

ECRITS SPIRITUELS D'ELIZABETH DE LA TRINITE. Lettres, Retraites et Inédits présentés par R. P. Philipon, O.P. (Seuil, Paris.)

Père Philipon has already done a great service to the name of Sister Elizabeth as well as to the furthering of the spiritual progress of many by his book on her spirituality. Here he has collected 154 excerpts from her writings, many of them published now for the first time, in the form of a treatise on the spiritual life beginning with her natural life with its instinct for beauty and ending as the 'Laudem Glorise' in 'the womb of the tranquil Trinity'. He speaks in the introduction of the mass of documents from which he chose this very striking and logically assembled anthology. But it encourages us to hope that the letters, retreats etc. of Sister Elizabeth will soon be published in order and in their entirety. Meanwhile the editor of the series *La Vigne du Carmel* in which this volume appears is to be congratulated in the work of bringing such masterpieces of spiritual doctrine within easy reach of the average reader.

SISTER XAVIER BERKELEY (1861-1944). By M.L.H. (Burns Oates, 1949.)

An attractive life of an Englishwoman who became a Sister of Charity and worked in China for fifty-four years. Her life should be read by those who criticise missionary work and one feels that, so long as people like Sister Xavier are raised up by God, the apostolic work of the Church cannot be resisted. Difficult days lie ahead of the Church in China, but the foundations have been well laid by holy men and women, from John of Montecorvino to Sister Xavier, and it is not too much to hope that the Church will emerge from the trial strengthened and purified. IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE PRIEST AT HIS PRIE-DIEU. By Robert Nash, S.J. (Gill; 12s.6d.)

The redeeming feature of this book of meditations is that the author clearly intends no reader's prayer to be tyrannised by them. There are fifty-two chapters, and though it is tempting to think of them as pabulum for a year, the introduction forestalls this. The usual methods are employed 'to get the will going as soon as we can', in the author's own words—composition of place, setting, anecdotes and so forth. For the most part these are all well done. Sometimes the anecdotes appear commonplace and unmoving, but there is often a telling phrase—'Jesus stands in the queue with the other disciples of John, waiting his turn to be baptised'. So the scene is set and the rails all clear. Perhaps it is also wise to remember that the spirit of prayer is not only like that which drives a railcar; it has been known to become airborne. GERARD MEATH, O.P.