

when she wants repose stirs up its desire for prayer as being the easier thing and conducive to refreshment. The work, too, profits by the change; for the soul will soon get back to it from prayer; since she gets depressed if she remains too long occupied with the same thing.' (*De Volunt. Paupert.*, 24; 999A,B.) 'Truly, laziness is the cause of many evils and uses leisure to make habitual vices worse and teach new ones. For it is a past master in the art of inventing new evils. Those therefore who under the pretext of perpetual prayer reject manual work do not only not pray—for the mind cannot always remain fixed on the object of its desires without relaxing—but are distracted beyond what is normal by many unseemly things.' (*Ibid.*, 26; 1001C.) Nevertheless we can follow the command to pray always for 'even in the midst of occupations the prudent and pious mind can always retain the thought of its Creator.' (*Letters*, 238; 169D.)

(To be concluded.)



CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

SIR,—The account given in your September issue of the Carmelite Lay Institute at Venasque provides a further interesting contribution to the recurring discussion on Contemplation whilst living in the world.

One cannot fail to admire the courage and devotion of these tertiaries; but two queries arise:

First; it seems to be assumed that a good soul might voluntarily choose to become a contemplative, and that this end could be attained within a training period of two years.

It would appear that the word 'contemplative', like the phrase 'inferiority complex', is acquiring a different meaning in general use from that assigned to it by the technical experts.

Do not all the mystical writers insist that contemplation is the work of God in a soul mysteriously initiated by Him, and often unperceived in the early stages, even by the spiritual director? The very nature of the preliminary purgation renders the course of illumination unintelligible to the developing contemplative soul herself.

We are told that the duration of the successive 'nights' varies a great deal, being very rarely brief, and often extending over a number of years.

Thus it would seem extraordinary that such an experience could be in any sense 'regimented', even by traditional mystics like the Carmelites.

Secondly; though contemplation might indeed result from a two-

year retreat of this kind (one learns that almost all enclosed nuns do in fact become contemplatives) is it wise to transfer into the atmosphere of the world a contemplation developed within the cloister? The author of the article seems to hint that the rub does indeed come just at this point.

It seems to me reasonable to expect that such degree of contemplation as it is possible to maintain in the world would be infused into the chosen soul in the course of her daily duties in the world.

It would, of course, engender a craving for peace and retirement, and it might be legitimate to satisfy this to some extent.

But if the prospect of a complete retirement for the space of two years appeals to the soul with such compulsive attraction, surely this indicates an incipient vocation to the cloistered religious life and should be considered as such.—Yours etc.,

GLADYS M. STANFORD.



REVIEWS

THE BOOK OF DANIEL in the Westminster Version. By Fr Cuthbert Lattey, S.J. (Browne and Nolan, Dublin; 12s.6d.)

It is indeed a pleasant thing that we are able to welcome this first of the Greater Prophets to appear in the Westminster Version. As is well known, the Westminster Version is the great English Catholic undertaking which sets out to present the Scriptures in a translation made from the original tongues supported by introductions and notes. The Version appears in two recensions, a longer with fairly full notes and elaborate introductions and appendices, a volume to a book or group of books, and a shorter with much abbreviated introductions and notes and in a smaller format comprising a whole part of the Bible in a single volume. The New Testament began to appear in fascicules in 1913 and finally (by 1935) the complete New Testament in four large and handsome volumes in the long recension. In 1948 a short recension of the New Testament appeared in a smaller format.

The Old Testament began in 1934 with some Minor Prophets in separate volumes in the long recension, and then similarly the First Book of the Psalms (1-40(41)), which was shortly afterwards followed by a complete Psalter in a short recension and small format. Many obstacles, largely financial, prevented a more rapid succession of Old Testament volumes; and it is therefore particularly good to see *Daniel* appearing.

The Westminster Version is under the general editorship of Fr Lattey and many contributors have been invited to take part in its production, each contributor being totally responsible for the books allotted to him under the merely general supervision of the general editor.

The medium of translation is 'biblical English', which by reason