

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

Dear Sir,

In almost every article on the Lay Contemplative that has appeared in *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* it appears to be assumed that the Lay Contemplative can follow his vocation no matter what his worldly employment may happen to be. This I feel is a mistake.

We need to distinguish between living a devout and holy life in the world and living as a Lay Contemplative in the world, and that difference turns upon this question of employment.

The man (or woman) who desires to live a devout life in the world will make that life fit round his (or her) daily life. They have other interests besides religion, although religion enters into and controls the other interests.

But the Lay Contemplative on the other hand has but one single interest—God. He is in fact in love with God and that all-powerful love alters his entire outlook on life. Everything must give way to the Beloved. Nothing must come between him and God. Therefore whatever earthly employment he has must be such that he can weave into his life of contemplation. It cannot be an unwelcome break in that life.

That being so the scope of employment for the lay contemplative must be very limited and the remuneration will also be limited.

To my mind the life of the welfare worker mentioned in the August number of *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* is that of a devout person living in the world but not that of a Lay Contemplative.

But perhaps I have misunderstood what you are driving at.

Yours faithfully,

V. DE CETTO.

REVIEWS

THREE BYZANTINE SAINTS. Translated by Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes. (Blackwell; 21s.)

The history of the Byzantine empire having been written too much in terms of war, court intrigue and diplomacy, Dr Dawes and Dr Baynes have translated the biographiēs of three Byzantine saints 'to suggest the significance as historical sources', especially for 'the thought and the life of the common folk of East Rome', of this class of literature. The lives chosen are those of St Daniel the Stylite, St Theodore of Sykeon and St John the Almsgiver, for all of whom the documents are contemporary. Daniel, who died in 493, was a stylite outside Constantinople—the most outstanding successor of