

NOTHING IS QUITE ENOUGH. By Gary Mac Eoin. (Hodder and Stoughton; 12s. 6d.)

There is nobility as well as humility in this 'story of a soul'. The author describes in detail his daily life, as novice and student, as a member of a modern religious Congregation in Ireland, from his entrance at the age of eighteen until the eve of his ordination. He describes the régime and the principles which inspired it, writing with simple delicacy and quiet humour and very little—sometimes perhaps too little—criticism. Just before ordination he is told by his superior that he is not in fact to be ordained, ever, and that he is not to know the reason for this decision. He is then left to adjust himself to life in the world—and to the task of making a living in it.

This *dénouement* is described without bitterness; yet what an extraordinary state of affairs it implies! Two things stand out very clearly, if the author's account is to be believed. First, a religious Order may or may not be right in rejecting a subject, even without warning and at a very late date, but at least when it does so it should treat him as a human being, a rational animal: it should give some rational grounds for its decision. God deals with all things according to their natures: it is tragic when men, in the name of religion, seem to try to go one better than God.

Secondly, what is implied here is the assumption—to be met with, alas, in other contexts also—that if in every situation there is no *legal* contract, there is no *moral* responsibility either. Thus legalism drives out theology—and indeed religion. This is an issue, surely, of the most profound importance in the contemporary life of the Church; and it is well that it should be brought to our attention in a book as humble and as courageous as this.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

THE DEMON OF PROGRESS IN THE ARTS. By Wyndham Lewis. (Methuen; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Wyndham Lewis is writing about modern art. His own part in the movement as the originator of Vorticism and its journal *Blast*—ventures which he has since repudiated—not only adds zest to his vituperation, but makes him acutely sensitive to the dangers of its more extreme manifestations. For he envisages a point when art will become so 'advanced' that zero will have been reached; then, a canvas resplendent only in the virgin whiteness of its priming will be offered as the ultimate goal of pictorial expression. He cites the *Nouvelles Réalités* in Paris and the more ephemeral factures exhibited in Dover Street to support his argument. However, this is not a reactionary book, and there are enthusiastic words about several contemporary British artists, while also perceptively remarking that they, too, may at any