

REVIEWS

A MANUAL FOR INTERIOR SOULS. By John Nicholas Grou, S.J. (Burns and Oates; 15s.)

This work is published in the Orchard Books series with an introduction by Father Donal O'Sullivan, S.J. Father Nicholas Grou belongs to that group of French spiritual writers whose existence proves that the last days of the Ancien Régime were not quite so bereft of spiritual vitality as is sometimes believed. A young priest at the time of the suppression of his Order, Father Grou continued to work on in Paris until the Revolution, when he accepted the invitation of Thomas Weld to live at Lulworth Castle, where he died in 1803 after having been able to renew his vows in the partially restored Society. Both during his years of active apostolate in Paris and during the time of contemplative retirement at Lulworth Father Grou was a prolific writer. The Abbé Brémond decided to call him a 'Berullian Jesuit', which, whatever else it might mean, was, in the context, intended as a compliment. Others place him in the line of great seventeenth-century Jesuit mystical writers such as Lallemand or Surin whose teaching bore fruit in the lives of the heroic missionaries of New France. The *Manual for Interior Souls* is not, perhaps, the greatest of Father Grou's works, but it is by far the most popular, having been translated into several languages and having attracted the attention of non-Catholics. Father O'Sullivan contributes an interesting introduction and has added a little-known treatise on prayer by Bossuet. He has added this, he tells us, because he was afraid that certain opinions of Father Grou might seem to smack of Quietism unless it be made clear that Bossuet, the arch-enemy of the Quietists, shared those same views. This is a book for those who practise *Lectio Divina*.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

THE CHOICE OF GOD. By Dom Hubert van Zeller. (Burns Oates; 12s. 6d.)

'Challenging', 'forthright', even 'provocative' are words that reviewers use automatically about a book like this. 'Provocative' could be used only by one who was prepared to maintain that Father van Zeller goes too far and too fast in the matter of mortification and detachment. He practically says that if we want to be holy we must give up smoking, drinking, cinemas, everything that would betray a lack of proportion, the proportion being that of, say, St John of the Cross. And he is pretty severe in the matter of natural affections. Also he seems to take for granted that even good priests will tell you to ease