

and love he is to 'run in the way of God's commandments'. Those are the great sign-posts of the Benedictine way. It is notably christocentric, leading not by abstract mysticism to any clouds of unknowing, but straight through the love of Jesus Christ into the very bosom of the Blessed Trinity. Benedictine spirituality is also characteristically guided and inspired by the liturgy, and one can have no better guide and inspiration, for the liturgy is the prayer of mother Church inspired by the Holy Ghost, and no one can teach a child to pray better than a mother inspired by God.

We are grateful to Fr Matthew Dillon for making this work of Dom Ryelandt's known to English readers.

D.A.L.

BASIC SPIRITUAL MEANS. By Philip E. Dion, C.M. (Herder; 32s.)

This book is addressed especially to novices in religion, but is intended for all who are either beginners in the spiritual life or who have found, after some years, that they are making little progress in eradicating vices and acquiring virtues. Fr Dion, an experienced conductor of retreats, shows that lack of progress is often due to want of sufficiently powerful motives, and that these can be developed by mental prayer. The method given for meditations, that of St Vincent de Paul, is simple and may be particularly helpful to those who find the customary 'methods' too complicated. The author then goes on to treat of certain basic virtues, such as obedience and humility, and how to acquire them. The chapters here on abandonment and weekly confession are especially good, while the author's transatlantic style may come refreshingly to young novices who find, as is so often the case, that the best spiritual writers can be somewhat turgid. But while this book is helpful as far as it goes, it is rather limited in approach. The spiritual life, after all, is more than a carefully planned campaign for dealing with vices and virtues. It is a growth in the love of God and union with his Son, and if we truly seek this, the virtues will surely be added to us. Mental prayer, too, is far more important considered as a union with God than as a means to stirring us up to the practice of virtue. The author's continual stress on the will of God is admirable, but it is a pity that he waits until almost the end of the book before similarly stressing that 'without me you can do nothing', and that God sometimes leaves us with our weaknesses until we learn to rely on his strength and not on our own. Those reading the first chapters might be discouraged for lack of this reminder.

D.A.C.-B.