

world and work in modern dress. I remember the time when they had to change many times a day in order to join the community with the teaching nuns. It was a real pantomime, a perpetual disguise! At present they have separate communities where they always wear ordinary clothes. They even make their novitiate in modern dress among the other novices wearing the habit. It is obvious that the chapter in the Directory on dress has had to be modified (which does not mean that all the problems have been solved!). I could easily quote other examples, which would provide us with some delightful anecdotes. But we must adopt a more systematic method in order without going too far afield to indicate the various points where adaptation has been effected.

*(To be continued)*



## POINTS OF VIEW

*To The Editor, THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*

DEAR SIR.—FR Bruno James's letter in your September issue has voiced at least one other priest's convictions. I am equally uneasy about the wisdom of encouraging people to make the resolution: 'I mean to become a saint'. A Thérèse Martin could so resolve, but she was possessed of great qualities of soul and balance of mind, not to mention the safeguards of her religious training. I have just been re-reading Sister Anne Hardman's *Life of Mother Margaret Mostyn, the Carmelite*, and in it there is this letter written by the holy nun—at least this extract I take from it: 'Desires of perfection are not enough, but "rather puff up to pride" than please our Lord, whereas a truly humble soul, who refers everything to God, seeing him in all "makes his omnipotency a prisoner", so that he is, as it were, forced to make his will hers, and allow her to dispose of his treasures.' More souls are likely to be much discouraged rather than lifted up by pride if they envisage holiness as a progression in perfection. That is so because the closer to God we become the more we realize our wretchedness and become aware of frailties we had not hitherto suspected. Our Lord did indeed exhort us 'to be perfect', but he at once added: 'As your heavenly

Father is perfect'. That is, perfection is stated in terms of a relation to the Father. As I see the matter, our prayer and effort should be to remove all perceived hindrances in our life and character by sustained generosity, and then let God do with us in every way what he thinks fit. The surrendered soul does not worry about perfection but responds in love to the will of God in all humility. Then there is no anxiety, but a great peace.

*Kiln Green*

ARTHUR W. VALENTIN

*To The Editor, THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*

YOUR correspondent 'Our Lady's Catechist' asks for the infallible guidance of the Church respecting international war, but this is one of those moral problems in relation to which the only guidance offered must be 'follow your own conscience'.

It is obvious that personal pacifism, even if in itself ideal, is not an essential element of Christianity, and the moral right of self-defence must be reasonably conceded. Scholastics have accepted the idea that a nation is a 'self'; it is also evident that patriotic education ensures that wars shall be seen as direct or indirect defence of the nation (or, if aggressive, then in defence of Justice, Freedom, etc.) and given these two premises, it is difficult to see how an official prohibition of war can ever be expected from the Church. It is however open to anyone to challenge and indeed repudiate the notion of national unity, in which case the argument based upon alleged 'self-defence' collapses; the way is then clear for the young man who is threatened with 'National Service' to refuse on moral and logical grounds not only to release an atom bomb but to drive a bayonet or bullet into a fellow conscript who has been entrapped—by military, economic or social conscription—into the forces of an 'enemy' nation.

JOHN NIBB