

POINT OF VIEW

IT is with some hesitation that I write to suggest a variation of *D.B.S.*'s point of view to *Solitarius*.

Let us make our difficulties our desert and our call, but let it be a call we would exchange for none other, except at the very definite call of God. It is in these circumstances that we are asked to serve God, and he can be relied on to see that we can find the means of our perfecting. There doesn't seem any reason to believe that if we do not make a great success of being Marthas, we should be likely to do any better as Marys. And is the hermit's cell really romantic to the hermit?

It is perhaps useful to remember that there is a very real difference between lay and religious spirituality. While the end of each life is the same, the purpose is different, and so is the way and the means. The lay person is left in the world as yeast to leaven the lump, and must therefore remain in contact with the dough. The point is that all shall become one body.

What seems important is whether the discipline to be found in everyday life is sufficiently exacting to make us sensitive to the lightest touch of God; to enable us to respond gladly to any and every demand he makes; to be a kingdom where Christ may redeem his brother.

It is not the amount of activity or otherwise, surely, that makes a life contemplative, but the intention which informs the whole life, so that it shows a characteristic pattern of behaviour.

If the hallmark of a person's life is to be faith, hope and charity, then it would seem that these virtues must be exercised in the ordinary day-to-day activities of that person's environment. They are likely to be but a veneer otherwise.

The contemplative life can but be a life of extreme simplicity: Jesus living his life in each of his members. The goal is to be able to say, with St Paul: 'For to live is Christ, and to die is gain'; and the lay road to this seems to be in the hurly-burly of everyday life fully accepted and rejoiced in.

E.L.P.