

8-1-1956

## Book Review of *Medical Guide to Vocations* by Rene Biot and Pierre Galimard, Translated from the French and adapted into English by Robert P. Odenwald

Maurice B. Walsh

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

 Part of the [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Walsh, Maurice B. (1956) "Book Review of *Medical Guide to Vocations* by Rene Biot and Pierre Galimard, Translated from the French and adapted into English by Robert P. Odenwald," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 23 : No. 3 , Article 6.  
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol23/iss3/6>

## Book Review

### *Medical Guide to Vocations*

René Biot, M.D. and Pierre Galimard, M.D.  
(Trans. from the French and adapted into English  
by Robert P. Odenwald, M.D., F.A.P.A.)

#### Review by

Maurice B. Walsh, S.J.

Weston College  
Weston, Mass.

Many readers of *THE LINACRE QUARTERLY* are community physicians for seminaries or religious houses. These readers particularly will welcome this translation of the French work which reflects an aggregate experience of about half a century in this apostolate. Drs. Biot and Galimard published their first edition in 1945; Dr. Odenwald has translated the second edition, published five years later.

Up to the present, nothing has been published in English which treats extensively of the medical requirements for the priesthood and religious life and of the medical care of seminarians and religious in training. This translation, then, does answer a real need. The primary aim of the work seems to be the guidance of superiors of seminaries and religious houses; secondarily it is directed to physicians who examine candidates or who treat

them during their course of training.

The first section is concerned with the medical examination prior to entrance into the seminary or religious institute. This is followed by a section on the chief physical or psycho-physical problems which may arise during the period of formation. Finally, the authors indicate the medical problems giving rise to dismissal or departure from the seminary or religious institute and the question of readjustment after departure.

A good translation not only conveys accurately the meaning of the original but does so in a style wherein the original idiom does not intrude itself upon the consciousness of the reader. For the most part, the sense of the original French is conveyed accurately, though a few minor errors early in the book may indi-

cate that the first few chapters were done rather hurriedly. (For example, p. 43, the translation of "auquel nous faisons allusion" as "to which we are alluding" causes confusion, since the reference is to a citation made in the previous chapter. "A big head which is really all head" (p. 50) does not make much sense in English and does not translate "une tête grosse, tout en crâne".) A few inaccuracies are almost inevitable in the translation of any long work; here they are kept to a minimum.

Anything like gross transliteration has been avoided, though sometimes words or phrases are used which are not thoroughly English. For example, English or American religious would not refer to fellow-religious as "comrades" (p. 130); and occasional expressions like "sad avowals" (p. viii) have a flavor more French than English. Some awkward sentence structure and a lack of smoothness in transition make it difficult for the reader to forget he is reading a translation. The reverse image of the French casts a shadow on the English and the reader's attention is somewhat distracted, much as if he were reading a book printed on slightly transparent paper. Briefly, then, this is a moderately good translation, but more careful revision before publication would have made it far more enjoyable reading.

Any "house doctor" or examining physician will find in this work more valuable material on

this specialized field than in anything hitherto published in English. He will profit by the authors' generally acute insight into the psychology of beginners in the spiritual life. He will probably agree with and wish to point out to ecclesiastical superiors many of the excellent suggestions for the prevention of avoidable illness in the seminary or convent. In fairness, though, it should be pointed out that he will find this is not the definitive work on the subject. Some of the psychology and probably some of the medicine is a bit dated. There is no thorough handling of the acute moral problems of professional secrecy which he encounters either as a medical expert or in the physician-patient relationship. But until something better on the subject is published, he may do well to add this to his library.

That "something better" will have to be written by one of the chief benefactors of the Church in America—by one of that heroic group of underpaid (or, more usually, unpaid) "house doctors" without whom no seminary or religious house could function properly. From my observation of these overworked uncanonized saints, I fear it will be many years before one of them finds the leisure necessary to produce a more adequate work for the guidance of his colleagues.

**Medical Guide to Vocations**  
published by

**The Newman Press**  
Westminster, Maryland  
1955, pp. xx + 303.

August, 1956