

St John's famous sketch. Like the Carmelite, again, he explains how the soul suffers from the very brightness of the light of God, from its inability to love him as it would, when the strange words of the Dominican Tertiary poet, Michael Field, seem verified:

And I wonder if love so great
Will not keep us forever asunder.

Repeatedly, Tauler bids the soul hold on and be faithful to prayer and self-discipline. 'Real devotion is an interior clinging to God himself, with a soul wholly ready to possess all things and to think of all things just as God does.'

And the end is the transforming union. 'Now God comes and with his finger touches the well-filled vessel of his graces. The soul is now united to God without any intermediary, and loses itself in him; will, love, knowledge, all overflow into God, and are lost in him and made one with him. The eternal God loves himself in this soul, all of whose works are done by him.' For Tauler, as for the Mystical Doctor, it is all summed up in St Paul's words: '*I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me*' (Gal. 2, 10).



POINT OF VIEW

'SOLITARIUS' is indeed to be thanked for his suggestion that contemplatives in the world can find their desert or cell in the midst of the world itself. Now D.B.S. brings the matter right down to the earth on which our feet stand. This writer, a humble male tertiary on whom a measure of domesticity has been thrust, can recognise the authenticity of what D.B.S. writes. But where is to be found the answer to the Martha-Mary conflict? How to fulfil both the duties of state and the call of God to contemplation, which we are told is given in some measure to all?

In passing we may note that Miss H. C. Graef in her *Spiritual Life for All* has much to say that is useful, especially on the question of making time for God. We may think, also, that such an Order as 'The Grail' may be able to give us pointers from their experience in and out of the world. Nor,

for that matter, may it be without purpose that the Duke of Edinburgh's royal mother has dedicated the Greek Order she has founded to both St Martha *and* St Mary.

I venture to suggest that perhaps we should beware of basing our methods too closely on those of contemplatives who are within the cloister, whose time-table life provides conditions we in the world can hardly achieve. May not the contribution we can make be that of developing a form and method of mundane (for lack of a better word) contemplative life? Such a method would be in some degree developed out of the fulfilment of the duties of the lay state: out of, perhaps, the cultivation of an automatic efficiency in one's duties which could free the mind for approach to God: out of ever-increasing 'practice of the presence of God', recollection, and so on—using, in other words, our duties as the beads of a rosary—so that when completely free time can be snatched the best use can be made of it, however short, for 'contemplating God as he is'. But however hard-pressed we may be, there is much comfort in the words of Pope Benedict XV: 'Sanctity consists, properly speaking, in complete conformity to the divine will, *as expressed* in the perfect and persevering accomplishment of the duties particular to each individual'.

Again, it seems, despite much that has been written, that too harsh a distinction ought not to be made between vocal and mental prayer by such people. Surely the tertiaries, for instance, who say our Lady's Office, know that its very lack of variation enables it to serve as the beads in our hands, and to lead us on to a more contemplative approach to God. Did not many medieval monastics do their contemplative prayer while reciting the Office in choir, a separate time for 'meditation' being often unknown among them?

Much has appeared in your pages to assist those who have a special vocation to live almost as hermits within the world or their family circle, or who have leisure to undertake an individual form of lay life, or who are called to enter Secular Institutes. Can your contributors now offer like help to the Martha-Marys of both sexes, who are called by God to give their time and their labour to bread-winning or bread-making for them and theirs, but who also want to present their minds and souls to God along a contemplative way? T.P.F.