

contribution to the investigation of a particularly arduous theological problem.

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THE HIDDEN FACE. By Ida Görres. (Burns and Oates; 30s.)

Since this is a belated review (through no fault of the editor), it will suffice to endorse without repeating the general acclamations which have greeted this book. It is original, profound, stimulating, and one can scarcely imagine its being bettered as a serious biographical study.

Frau Görres, one of Germany's foremost Catholic writers, entered the field as a complete outsider, feeling all the distrust and even disgust of an adult intellectual at the 'trashy popularity' of the cult of the 'Little Flower'. 'It seemed as if the Church were elevating into an absolute a form of Christian devotion which had been increasingly regarded by many of us as the most dubious and fleeting kind of piety in the history of the Church' (p. 13). Yet she had the intellectual humility and integrity to face up to the challenge of a canonization divinely endorsed by the 'shower of roses', and the depth and completeness of this study is surely her reward.

Stripping off the make-up in which the 'little saint' had been presented to the world, she lays bare both the raw material upon which grace worked and the true nature of the consummate holiness which the Church has set up as a model and ideal for our age. Against the background of nineteenth-century French Catholicism of which the ultra-spiritual Martin family was a microcosm, Thérèse appears as the perfection of the period's religious ideal, which in fulfilling she shatters and transcends. In the face of the 'easy-going negligence' (p. 231) of a community which reflected all the spiritual shortcomings of the period, she went straight to the heart of her Carmelite vocation of contemplative prayer and redemptive suffering, realized through unflinching faithfulness in the moment-to-moment practice of obedience and charity. All this Frau Görres details with insight, understanding and sympathy.

To suggest that for all that her study could be filled out on certain points, is not to imply that it is in any sense inadequate. Its very fulness raises issues and opens the way to further research. For example: she has done pioneering work in setting the Theresian spirituality in the full stream of the Berullian tradition which was a major influence in the moulding of the early French Carmelites. The affinity with the spirit of St Francis de Sales is also noted (p. 345). But there is no mention of the Jesuit contemplative school represented by Lallemand, Surin, Caussade and especially Grou. Yet the latter's meditation *On Little Things* in the *Manual for Interior Souls* could have been written

by Thérèse herself, and the same volume contains other striking parallels in both thought and language. Above all, one feels that this picture of the 'new Thérèse' calls for a complementary one from a professional theologian. Fr Petitot, O.P., led the way with his *St Thérèse of Lisieux* (English tr. 1927). This has never been superseded, and Frau Görres quotes it with approval. But there is room for a fuller study in the light of contemporary teaching on the nature of mysticism and of the call to contemplation and to holiness. The application to her life of the principles of Thomist mysticism, so brilliantly set forth in Fr Joret's *Contemplation Mystique*, would place the 'little way' in its true theological perspective and give the lie to the contention that Thérèse was no mystic.

At the beatification process a famous exorcist said that he had often heard from the mouths of possessed persons of the power of the 'little virgin' over demons *parcequ'elle était une âme détruite*. That, surely, is the crux. Unremitting self-conquest which began almost in the cradle—'from the age of three I have never refused God anything'—issued into an even more heroic self-effacement which left her whole being utterly open and surrendered to the action of divine love in and through her. 'One who is thus mastered by God is "a focus of divine forces", an open door for the effective entrance of God into humanity' (p. 131). Such a one is indeed 'another Christ', the Father's beloved child, interceding and suffering for the whole world: 'I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii, 20).

A young person, seeing for the first time an un-touched-up photograph of the saint, looked at it for a moment in stunned silence and then said: 'Almost like the face of a female Christ' (p. 13). Would anything have pleased Thérèse more, or have pin-pointed more aptly the secret of her sanctity and influence?

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THESE LAST DAYS. By a Religious of C.S.M.V. (The Faith Press; 9s. 6d.)

'Greatly daring, but we hope with a reverence to match' (p. 31), an anglican religious Sister here sets out to present the facts of man's origin and destiny as known from revelation, against the background of such scientific knowledge about them as is available today.

'Time Seen Through Christian Eyes' is the sub-title, and the whole story from creation to the final consummation is compressed into eleven chapters. Modern discoveries and hypotheses throw light on the obscurities of pre-history, while a study of the Greek terms used by N.T. writers is the basis of conjectures as to what awaits us at the end of time and in eternity.

Scholarly and devotional, the book is thoroughly in the spirit of