

and to be detached we must practise abandoning creatures. Therefore St John of the Cross is right to demand "Nada" at the threshold, and St Francis to give back some creature-joys once the sacrifice in the heart has been made.

T. S. Eliot, in his poem "Little Gidding," puts it clearly:

"There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and growing
between them, indifference

Which resembles the others as death resembles life . . ."

These are the three: attachment, indifference, detachment. The first is sin, the second death, the third life.

REVIEWS

SAINT CATHERINE OF GENOA: TREATISE ON PURGATORY; THE DIALOGUE. Translated by Charlotte Balfour and Helen Douglas Irvine. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

This is an attractive edition of two great classics of mystical literature. St Catherine of Genoa has become known to a wider English public through Baron von Hügel's *Mystical Element in Religion*; but it may be that his readers thought the two large volumes enough and never attempted to read the original. Yet mystics are rather like poets: though they often need a sympathetic interpreter to explain their meaning, no book about them can take the place of their own works; it can only prepare the way. St Catherine of Genoa is no exception—her *Treatise on Purgatory* must be read and re-read for its depth to reveal itself. For it is not only an unsurpassed description of the purgatorial pains in perfect conformity with the doctrine of the Church, but also a document of profound mystical teaching. Its last chapter is a description of the "Dark Night of the Spirit" in a nutshell, as it were, and all the preceding chapters, which deal with the suffering souls, are easily applicable to the spiritual life on earth, for it was all not only seen in visions but lived through in the depth of her being. The central theme, the core of all mysticism, is the Love of God, which is the cause of Purgatory, for the soul's "instinct to God, aflame and thwarted, makes Purgatory." But as the souls know themselves to be within the ordinance of God, they are happy and contented, despite their extreme pain, "and day by day this happiness grows as God flows into these souls," though their pain is not thereby lessened.

The *Dialogue* that follows the *Treatise on Purgatory* was formerly held to be also the work of the Saint; but Baron von Hügel's opinion that it was written by her disciple Battista Vernazza has

now won general acceptance. Nevertheless it is instinct with the spirit of the Saint, whose interior life it describes with a surety of touch that could be achieved only by a fellow-mystic. It is a dramatic account of the struggle of the soul against the body and self-love. After her initial defeat she is assisted by grace and, through an unrelenting war on the "natural man," at last attains to the fulness of the love of God, which "only he who feels it, can understand." Though frightening in its austerity which is at times more admirable than imitable, the Dialogue is encouraging reading for those who would give themselves to a life of perfection despite all the hindrances that the world, the flesh and the devil usually oppose to such an intention.

The book is pleasantly produced; the translation is very readable, and the short introduction and sparing notes are clear and to the point.

H. C. GRAEF.

MORE ABOUT FATIMA. By Rev. V. Montes de Oca, C.S.Sp. (M. H. Gill & Son; 1s.).

Seven times from May to October in 1917 Our Blessed Lady appeared to three poor children of Fatima in Portugal. At the last apparition a great sign that had been promised was witnessed by some 70,000 folk of all kinds. The sun turned upon itself casting about great beams of light, then seemed to rush earthwards, until it was checked and climbed back to its place.

Perhaps it will be felt that such happenings are too apocalyptic. But the events are recent and public for those who will investigate them. Nor can the scene have appeared more dreadful and apocalyptic than that, man-made, when thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki glimpsed the molten collapse of their world. The warning fits the occasion.

Anyway the happenings are secondary. The message heralded by them is important, and authentic. "Men must no longer offend Our Divine Lord, who is already offended too much." (How much when it can be said too much for Him!) The scourge is war, the remedy the Rosary. Woe betide mankind, if like Naaman the leper we fancy the remedy too simple. For it is the way to fashion ourselves in the pattern of the purity and the simpleness and the fulness of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

In 1930 the local ecclesiastical authorities gave their approbation. Huge pilgrimages were already taking place. Rome itself, in 1942, seemed to approve, for the Holy Father publicly consecrated the world, and in particular Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Father Montes de Oca translates a French work which gives an account, on the whole restrained and balanced, of all these things. One must be grateful to him for this and for making it accessible in price to nearly all. Let us hope that the publicity