

latter consists principally of a quite masterly summary of the theology and spirituality of the psalms, which would be well worth translating and printing apart, even if the rest of the book does not find a translator.

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EACH HOUR REMAINS. By a Carmelite Nun. (Sands; 10s. 6d.)

In a review of a former book by the author of the above, *The Catholic Times* says: 'This book has that well-rounded, all-of-a-piece quality that comes from the pen of one who is a master of a subject—in this case, the capacity to hand on the ideals of perfection not as cold text-book principles, but as a life to be lived'. These words apply fully also to the book we are considering here. Really, the title explains the book, for it expresses in three words the substance upon which the whole depends. 'Each hour remains'—that is, nothing is lost, no time is wasted, no apparent loss or failure is really so—provided that God alone and his will are the aim towards which all action tends. As 'Sister Imelda'—the delightful old Nun who is the chief exponent of the wise sayings with which this book abounds—declares: it is not the *results* of work done for God's sake that are so important, but the *efforts* to carry it out, the will and intentions. 'Each hour of life', she says, 'stands by itself; there it remains—accomplished, lived; it affects the next, but in itself it stands for ever—complete, unalterable. Those hours were not packed with result; they were packed with effort.' (p. 225.) This attitude of soul—that nothing matters in itself, but only as regards God—does not mean that there is any lack of interest in what goes on in the world, in human life in general. The object of the writer is certainly, on the one hand, to declare the need of not only the contemplative spirit and attitude, but of the actual cloistered life of contemplative religious. On the other hand, her object is also and equally to point out that the active spirit and the life of action is no less necessary—that both contemplation and action, in short, must be united against the enemy of God and mankind. Both the contemplative and the active spirits must co-operate in the service of God and of man.

Chapter IX, entitled *The Contemplative in the World*, is refreshing to read as the attitude of an enclosed Carmelite towards this important question. The writer of *Each Hour Remains* declares quite frankly that 'the world has need of contemplatives *in* the world and the gift of contemplation has nothing whatever to do with the grace of enclosure: it is possible to have either without the other. So let those who have no enclosure take courage and cultivate their gift.' (pp. 94 and 95.) Nothing could be plainer than this; nor more encouraging. The author goes on: 'This vocation [to contemplation]—for vocation it is—is not meant to be used selfishly . . . contemplatives, as much as anyone else, are included in the Holy Father's call to action and to energy and to

devotion to the cause of Christ.' (p. 95.) This seeming paradox (which always arises in the question of contemplation and action) is due, as is here shown, to the fact that each needs the help of the other, in order that God's work be complete.

In answer to 'the vexed question as to what precisely constitutes a contemplative', the Carmelite says that to be a contemplative means: 'an awareness of God, an underlying but constant pre-occupation with God himself which lies at the root of all activity . . . if they [contemplatives] are obliged by a very right sense of duty to join in the activities of other people, they do it for the sake of God and for God alone and not for the sake of activity'. (p. 95.) To this she adds: 'the usefulness of the two types—contemplative and active—is precisely the same both in religion and outside it'. But this truth and also the ever-increasing foundation of new, active religious orders and, especially in these days, of societies of lay-folk living a real religious life in the world, but without habit, or external observances, in no way implies that the old monastic and enclosed orders are out of date and should gracefully come to an end. 'The Church', says the Carmelite Nun, 'is very wide and she has need of all', and she goes on to speak of 'the modern extension' of the contemplative life, the 'actual apostolate of contemplatives in, for instance, missionary countries, as so strongly advocated by Pope Pius XI, where contemplation *itself* is to be exercised for the sake of souls'. (p. 119.)

The book ends with a most poetically expressed 'prophecy': although the world may *seem* to have succeeded in overcoming the power of God, in destroying his Church and overthrowing his contemplatives, 'always the last word of any battle lies with God . . . one morning in the growing light of dawn, with the love of God in his heart—the first hermit of our new world will turn his face towards the everlasting desert and the gold of the rising sun'. (Chapter XX. *The First Hermit of the New World.*) And so, in spite of Communism and all the errors of man striving to make mankind alone the object of life and service, the immediate homage offered to God in and for himself (which is the very meaning of the contemplative life, and which absorbs in itself but does not therefore *reject* all other ends or objects) will survive and be renewed until the end of time.

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L'ASCÈSE CHRÉTIENNE ET L'HOMME CONTEMPORAIN. By various theologians and doctors. (Cahier de la Vie Spirituelle; Cerf—Blackfriars; n.p.)

A tentative survey is here given by different writers, in collaboration, on the principles underlying Christian asceticism and the application