

**HEAVEN AND HOME: Conferences for Women.** By His Eminence Cardinal V. Gracias. With an Introduction by F. Correia-Afonso, M.A. (Society of St Paul, Bombay-Allahabad; 3s.)

**THE IMAGE OF GOD IN SEX.** By Vincent Wilkin, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

In these simple and practical conferences the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bombay discusses the position and influence of woman in the modern world, the problems of girlhood, the duties and opportunities of womanhood and motherhood. Though the style will sometimes read strangely to English eyes, the book is full of good sense and gentle goodness; the Introduction helps us to see how the Cardinal's words apply to the India of today.

Fr Wilkin's title is rather wider than his text, for he deals mainly with procreation rather than with sex in all its aspects. He shows how generation, physical and spiritual, reflects the realities of the Godhead, of the Incarnate Word, and of the union between Christ and the Church. His treatment is fresh and positive, in particular it is good to read his pages on the often-misunderstood ceremony of churching: not a purification (there is nothing to be purified from) but a thanksgiving.

G.V.

**HILAIRE BELLOC: A MEMOIR.** By J. B. Morton. (Hollis and Carter; 12s. 6d.)

It is a common-place reflection that men mirrored in one another's minds show a different image in each glass, not only in sharpness of focus, but in emphasis, colour, gesture. This might have been especially true of a man with as many friends and as many sides as Belloc. Yet it is not so. His essential character emerges clearly through almost everything so far written about him. Mr Morton's memoir gives more still: the impact of his presence. A man who had never known him, and wished to understand what it was like to be in his company, could not do better than to read this book. It echoes with his voice, his stories, his songs, his turns of phrase. You put it down, and it seems that you have just been listening to his talk, spiced with whirring French Rs, that you have just been with him, unpredictable, unaccountable, stimulating, entertaining, restless with a child's excess of energy, almost embittered sometimes, and yet with flashes of the deepest compassion and understanding, and always rather larger than life size. (It is curious how strongly this impression was given. He was physically a small man, and shrank in old age as people do, and his voice, speaking and singing, diminished to the clear faint ghost of its prime; yet a small boy who knew him only during his last years remembers him as 'a big man with a voice like thunder'.)

It is possible to disagree with some of Mr Morton's postulates. It may be felt, for instance, that in affection and sorrow he gives an inaccurate impression of Belloc as sole champion in this country of a Catholic Church whose members here were before his advent so 'accustomed to being regarded as the adherents of a foreign sect' that they crept about like alien mice hoping no one would notice them. These members included, after all, Newman, Manning, Acton, Lingard, Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson, von Hügel, R. H. Benson, Herbert Thurston—none of whom fitted bushel-measures or any other sort of lampshade over the light of their faith. It may also be felt that Mr Morton has not realized how fundamentally French Belloc was; not only in his passion for exact verbal definition, and in his 'military temper', which are noted, but in his impatience of the vital, organic untidiness of creative thought natural to Englishmen, his willingness to *épater le bourgeois*, his orderly but inaccurate custom of grouping people under such headings as The Huns, The Rich, The Politicians, and generalizing about them, and his unquestioning assumption that politically speaking there could hardly be such things as collective good will and collective good faith.

These are however differences of interpretation, not of fact. For essential personal vividness this book may well be the best picture of Belloc in himself that will ever be made. Written in sadness and perhaps in haste, it conveys the immediate sense of himself, the habitual knowledge of his ways, before time and memory can tidy and soften and rationalize the crowding impressions into smooth symmetry. Here he is as he was: sailing, walking, singing, driving a car, laughing, in a thud of violence of being which remained remote within him even during the last years when he sat smiling at a brood of kittens and reflecting on the shortness of human life, a reflection usually ended with the ironical remark that 'Someone should *do* something about it'.

RENÉE HAYNES

### NOTICES

THE CALL OF THE CLOISTER, by Peter F. Anson (S.P.C.K., 42s.), is an unusual accomplishment for a Catholic writer, since it is a fully documented history of the religious communities of the Anglican Church. Mr Anson, who was a member of the Caldey Benedictine Community received into the Catholic Church in 1913, brings to his task a specialized knowledge and real sympathy, and this detailed account of the religious life as it is lived by thousands of men and women in the Church of England today is proof of the profound and enduring influence of the Oxford Movement. The revival of the religious life is perhaps the greatest achievement of the Anglican Church in the last century, and in Mr Anson's book it is fittingly commemorated.