

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'.)