

allowed, whilst we indulge in things never on any account permitted. God loves and honours those who obey him; and so, once again: whilst we keep this fast, much more must we banish all our base desires and evil deeds—then we shall share in the nature of the saints, and in the life to come be found worthy of their reward; for as it is written: 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled'.

Here is another thought: we should gladly arrange that the value of the things we give up be distributed to the sick and poor; for blessed are they who willingly suffer hunger that others may be satisfied. A gift is pleasing to God when it helps the poor, when it makes for peace and cancels old quarrels. Then he will be indeed pleased if our self-denial helps those who are compelled by necessity to practise abstinence. Then we shall deserve to hear our Lord saying: 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done this unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me'. What condescension is here! How loving is our Lord, who in order entirely to destroy our avarice, actually accepts for himself what we give to the very poorest of his followers.

Finally, my friends, may God in his mercy grant you so to please him by your abstinence and generosity that he will at last lead you to that eternal, that real life where he lives and reigns for ever.

Translated by JOHN SEARLE.



CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, 'LIFE OF THE SPIRIT'.

'NO PLASTER SAINT'

Sir,—In your January number Father Netherway, reviewing *No Plaster Saint*, says the play shows that St Thérèse of Lisieux, towards the end of her life, was troubled by the memory of 'her father, deserted by his children' and 'helpless and lonely'. If the play does show this, it also shows that its author has not made good use of the 'primary sources and documents' which Father Netherway says he has consulted.

The facts about M. Martin (St Thérèse's father) are these: he was taken to the Hospital of the Bon Sauveur at Caen in February, 1889. It was no longer safe to keep him at home. He suffered from hallucinations. Once he vanished from home for four days and no one knew where he was. Two of his daughters, Léonie and Céline, went with him to Caen and stayed in the town until June of that year and saw him continually. Then the hospital enforced the rule that patients could only have one visit a week. So the two girls returned to Lisieux and lived with their aunt and uncle, Madame and M.

Guérin—the sister-in-law and brother-in-law of M. Martin. The weekly visit was paid to M. Martin.

In 1892, M. Martin was stricken with paralysis. He could no longer wander and so, in May, he was brought back to Lisieux and installed, with his two daughters, at number 7, rue Labby. There was also a housekeeper, and her husband devoted his time to the invalid. In addition, the Guérins, living a few yards away, were continually in and out of the house. M. Guérin had also a large house in the country, the Château de la Musse. M. Martin spent the summers of 1893 and 1894 there. In June, 1893, Léonie entered the Convent of the Visitation at Caen, with the glad consent of her father. Céline stayed with him.

He died in July the next year at the Château de la Musse with Céline and Madame Guérin at his side.

M. Martin was certainly helpless. It is quite untrue to say he was lonely. His brother-in-law and sister-in-law were devoted to him. Two daughters stayed with him until a year before he died and one to the very end.

We should take good note of M. Martin's own words. In 1888, Céline told him that she wished to follow one day her three sisters—Marie, Pauline and Thérèse—into Carmel. M. Martin said: 'Come, let us both go and kneel before the Blessed Sacrament to thank God for the graces he grants our family and for the honour he does me in choosing his brides from my house. God does indeed greatly honour me in asking for all my children. If I had anything better, I should hasten to offer it to him'.—Yours, etc.

JOHN BEEVERS.

CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IN THE WORLD

Sir,—May a humble tertiary, encouraged by your words in the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, offer a few observations which present themselves after reading the most interesting articles on the subject of the contemplative life in the world?

First of all, one has been surprised that it has not been suggested that a group of people who wish to offer themselves for this life might be formed *within* the existing Third Order—with perhaps a special chapter under close and special direction from the First Order. The writer can testify from his own small experience to the truth of the claim that the Order is in great measure contemplative, as well as active; that Dominican methods of spirituality are very suitable to these times, for layfolk living amid the dissipating life of today; that these methods can and do assist layfolk to make progress towards the contemplative approach. Would it not be possible, therefore, to gather up what is already in hand and see what could be done therewith?

Second. It sometimes seems a pity that so much spiritual writing appears to be written by and for religious only, and to imply that to make real progress one MUST join a religious Order. Thinking, as one