GIRLS GROWING UP, by B. Delarge and D. Emin. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, Dublin, Melbourne. Girls' Book 7s. 6d., Parents' Book 5s.

The purpose of this two-part work, for girls of eight to fourteen years, is to help them, through their parents, to understand the emotional as well as the physical aspects of growth towards womanhood. The Parents' Book gives general guidance on the mother's role in this education, and instruction on how she may use the Girls' Book with her daughter so that information is given gradually and accepted happily. The Girls' Book is written in a simple and friendly style, with plenty of clear diagrams and some charming photographs; although the information is absorbed most cohesively if one starts at the beginning and reads through to the end, the authors have somehow cleverly catered for the child who will skip through the diagrams first and then read the bits that interest her.

I recently put both books on trial with some seventy middle-class girls aged eleven to twelve, as part of a course in their school on Family Life Education. The mothers--and the regrettably few fathers interested—found the Parents' Book helpful and reassuring; but they were more enthusiastic for the Girls' Book and some felt the former to be of marginal value compared with the latter. They appreciated the diagrams as being more attractive than the somewhat crude simplifications of medical illustrations often thoughtlessly used in books for children. They liked the photographs of family life and young people growing up, because they re-enact the familiar and secure, and reinforce an expectation of security in the child's future. And they particularly liked the textual theme of affection, responsibility, and consideration for others. The girls in the classroom welcomed the book and turned to it repeatedly.

Yet some mothers found both books a little wanting. Despite the good sense of the Parents' Book, a few still needed help with describing and discussing sexual intercourse with their daughters. The Girls' Book provides diagrams in preparation for this subject, and the text is simple and clear but leaves many details to the parents. Since in our generation discussion of the marriage-act is dreaded—and often in the end avoided—by many otherwise very competent parents, one would have liked more practical help in the Parents' Book. Then again, a few parents felt their answers to the commoner but often disconcerting questions of their daughters on related subjects, like 'What is a virgin?', to be clumsy and tense. A section in the Parents' Book giving specific children's questions and model answers might have overcome both difficulties.

A further need was revealed by the comments of a few mothers, who found the homely photographs and the theme of human love and understanding painful rather than helpful. They felt that a girl in a broken or breaking home, or where there had been a recent death especially of a parent, would be hurt by the present contrast rather than encouraged to build her own future on the ideal pattern presented. This need is rarely met in books of this kind, yet if one is guided by current divorce and family statistics, it must be common enough to warrant attention. If something like one in ten homes face a serious difficulty at some time—or permanently—a small section on sex education in this context would surely enhance enormously the use of the Parents' Book.

All but a handful of the parents were Christian (about half of these were Catholics), yet only one parent complained of the lack of explicitly religious teaching in both books, while many parents seemed relieved at what one mother called 'the lack of piosity'. This is no doubt a comment on the quality, hitherto, of overtly religious teaching on sex education; or perhaps it is a criticism of the way in which many books overload the factual material with spiritual ideas. *Girls Growing Up* is to be commended for leaving to parents and teachers the job of clothing the factual bones with a philosophy suitable for each child.

Despite its minor failings, this work is the best treatment of its subject I have yet come across, and extremely good value for its low price.

MARGARET E. WALLACE

LUTHER AS SEEN BY CATHOLICS, by Richard Stauffer. *Lutterworth Press*, London, 1967. 83 pp. 12s. 6d.

THE THESES WERE NOT POSTED, by Erwin Iserloh. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1968. 116 pp. 25s.

Historical studies are of no mean significance in contributing towards the development of the ecumenical movement. Although from the historical point of view, what people *thought* happened is often just as important as what actually did, it is still necessary to establish the facts of the case in so far as this is possible. On the more theological level, of course, many of

the issues of earlier times are much less relevant today. New problems demand a new and sometimes common approach, while existing divisions disappear and seem to lose their significance or even any meaning. But it is still important to try to understand what happened in the past. How, when and why divisions originally occurred are questions which must be asked by those who are seeking to heal them. Did Luther leave the Church or was he thrown out? Was he a conscientious reformer or a radical revolutionary? The attempt must be made to understand whether Luther wanted to reform the Church from within or, by taking advantage of other factors, to create a crisis or a challenge from without.

It is interesting that Catholics should continue to link Luther's personality with their interpretation of the Reformation at a time when, possibly as a reaction against their former 'hero-worship', Protestants have tended to distinguish the Reformation itself from the figure of Luther. Professor Stauffer has presented a fascinating summary with detailed references tracing the different attitudes of Catholic scholars in Europe and America during the present century. There is a real development from an undisguised and hostile apologetic towards a respectful interest and more recently to a genuine recognition of his religious and theological significance. Luther is now seen, not as the immoral heretic who divided the Church but as a Christian theologian of considerable importance whose demand for religious assurance crystallized within the Church the widespread demand for urgent reform. This approach cannot fail to further the cause of Christian unity.

In the course of his discussion, Stauffer mentions the work of Iserloh who now argues that Luther never even posted his famous theses! This incident was first reported by Melanchthon after Luther's death, but at the time Melanchthon was actually in Tübingen and could only have known of the event at second hand. Furthermore Melanchthon shows himself to be poorly informed about events in Wittenberg in many other respects. The episode was never mentioned either by Luther or any of the contemporary witnesses, and in fact Luther often spoke in a way which would seem to give the lie to the traditional story.

Iserloh's book shows how earnestly Luther struggled to deal with a theological problem of indulgences which has not been entirely solved even today. In the event, however, his polemic became more influential than his scholarly writings. He apparently wrote to the bishops raising certain theological issues and waited for an answer. When this was not forthcoming, he circulated his theses among his friends and acquaintances who had them printed without his approval. By presenting his theses to the bishops he intended to secure the suppression of practical abuses, by sending them to friendly scholars he hoped to clarify some open theological questions. At the same time and in spite of expressions of regret at the spread of the theses, Luther let events take their course and when they were published felt justified in claiming that he had issued a public invitation to discuss them.

Consequently, although if Luther never posted the theses, this would indicate that he did not intend to provoke a hasty break with the Church, it was a moment of decisive importance when he approached the ecclesiastical authorities with his demand for reform. These authorities lacked the pastoral or theological qualities which would have enabled them to meet this challenge and their failure to respond, far more than Roman scandals, directly contributed to the Reformation.

Luther's theses were very widely echoed, in a way which he neither foresaw nor intended, even by those who later opposed him. In fact very few learned men would have disagreed with his original position and even if the theses are incompatible with ecclesiastical doctrine, which remains to be proved, Luther himself repeatedly claimed that they did not entirely reflect his own position. Much was doubtful, some he would himself reject, and none of them would he stubbornly maintain. Again and again, he repeated that he felt bound by the teaching of the Church, though not by the opinions of even the greatest theologians.

If the specific question at issue is not entirely decided by Iserloh's work, it is nevertheless a valuable contribution towards the growing Catholic understanding of Luther. Yet in adopting a more sympathetic approach to their subject, Catholic theologians and historians have made some fair and honest criticisms which demand in reply a recognition by Protestants of Luther's limitations and a re-examination of their established positions. What is still needed, as some Protestant scholars have been the first to point out, is a similar review by non-Catholics of the historical or theological injustices done to the Church as a result of anti-Catholic polemic.

This raises even wider issues which are seldom merely academic. It is not simply that theologians or historians sometimes share a common outlook which is not reflected on other or more popular levels, but that local conditions often seem to present greater practical barriers to unity than points of scholarship or even belief. Without going into the question of intercommunion, it must be said that unlike other Christians, many Roman Catholics only seem to show a guarded welcome to those non-Catholics using their churches or a moderate enthusiasm for common services. This presumably is not the result of historical or theological convictions, nor due to any lack of opportunity, but might well reflect a concern to avoid provoking a hostile local reaction. Nor can these irritations always be reduced to existing divisions between more conservative or less liberal attitudes. In England, for example, it is at least surprising that some of the most radical Anglicans never seem to question the fact of the Establishment. For Roman Catholics, aware that the growth of political and religious equality partly coincided with a conscious effort to defend the Established Church, it would appear ungrateful, if not unnecessary, now to call it into question, but other nonconformists might be less indifferent and their feelings should not be ignored. Furthermore and unfortunately, the temptation to continue to score apologetic points still remains even among those who would be expected to know better. Whereas some of the comments of our non-Catholic friends on *Humanae Vitae* were fair and reasonable, others were less than helpful, while the over-ready invocations of the rights of conscience as a principle of the Reformation were frankly unhistorical. In short, it would seem that much remains to be done, even when the academics have finished their work.

J. DEREK HOLMES

ELIZABETH'S GREETING, by Rosemary Haughton. *Constable*, London, 1968. 256 pp. 30s.

I must confess to a slight twinge of disappointment that Rosemary Haughton's first novel is a historical one. Serious imaginative literature today is so saturated in alienation, despair, disgust and irony—attitudes that we are inclinded to think modern experience compels upon the artist—that it would have been interesting to see whether Mrs Haughton could carry over into fiction something of that positive and liberating, yet adult and intelligent, faith she has expressed in her discursive writing. The life and times of St Elizabeth of Hungary is, however, too remote a subject to test Mrs Haughton's powers in this respect, even though she tells us in her Introduction that she was drawn to it precisely because of the parallels it offered with our own era:

> There is in the early thirteenth century, and in our own time, a breaking down of accepted social, religious, and political structures, and a ruthless exercise of power within the existing structures, covered by a veneer of religious or humanitarian concern. There is an eruption of wild doctrines of revolution, both political and mystical in character, and finding their focus in the newly self-conscious urban proletariat. There is the resulting violence and fanaticism, and calculated techniques of suppression. There is a cult of erotic escapism, which develops into an elaborate and serious philosophy of life, as a protest against the inhuman power politics of the time.

The narrative method of the book is well devised to draw these threads together. Although Elizabeth is at the centre of the novel, there is no attempt to get inside her consciousness. Instead we get a multiplicty of viewpoints —poets and peasants, nobles and religious— for each of whom her sanctity represents both an enigma and a promise. For the poets Wolfram and Gottfried she represents more adequately than their own words the mystical meaning they are searching for in their stories of the Grail, and of Tristan and Isolde. For her husband, Ludwig, she is an exhausting and perpetual challenge to reconcile worldly power with Christian duty, carnal with spiritual love. For the ordinary people she offers the possibility of deliverance from disease, penury and injustice. Through such various points of view we follow the life of Elizabeth: the childhood espousal to Ludwig, the halcyon days of their early married life, the bad times of plague and famine in which Elizabeth finds her vocation among the poor, the harsh régime of her spiritual adviser Konrad, the resentments and intrigues of the nobility, the death of Ludwig on the Crusade, the expulsion of Elizabeth from her home, and her premature death.

This is a carefully composed book, absorbing and informative as historical narrative, thought-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900063046 Published online by Cambridge University Press