

REVIEWS

ST TERESA OF JESUS, MISTRESS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Father Gabriel, O.D.C. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

The conferences which form the contents of this book are an excellent introduction to St Teresa's mystical doctrine. Though only the first chapter is headed 'Moral Perfection', this is really the dominant note of the whole book. We think this particularly important, because so often the great St Teresa is admired either as the practical businesswoman and charming author, getting her own way both with clerical and secular authorities (this is found especially in Protestant writers) or as the mystic enjoying visions and ecstasies almost every day, and who is therefore relegated to the ranks of those saints who are admirable rather than imitable—a view still frequently to be met with in Catholic writers. Fr Gabriel, however, shows us the mystic as the great soul of heroic virtue, enamoured of the divine Majesty, who valued her contemplative graces only in so far as they increased her charity and brought her closer to God. It is the 'true union with the will of God' which she calls 'the union I have ever desired and never cease to ask of God, for it is the surest and safest'. The author insists on this conviction of the Saint throughout his book, and substantiates it with numerous well-chosen quotations, especially from *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, to each of which two works he devotes a chapter.

As in his book on St John of the Cross, where he dealt particularly with the subject of acquired contemplation, Fr Gabriel here discusses again a burning problem of modern mystical theology, namely the question whether infused contemplation is a *conditio sine qua non* of sanctity. Pourrat, in his work *La Spiritualité Chrétienne*, had written that on this subject 'The Saint's thought remains fluctuating' (cited p. 22 f.); but the Carmelite theologian, after a detailed interpretation of the Saint's words, comes to the conclusion that she held infused contemplation to be the more frequent, because the easier and shorter, way to sanctity, but did not deny that sanctity could also be reached without it, though with far greater difficulty. This view seems to us very convincing, because it gives to infused contemplation its rightful place as the *via normalis sanctitatis*, without precluding the other possibility, which is also realised from time to time.

H. C. GRAEF.

SAINTS ARE NOT SAD. Assembled by F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; 12s.6d.)

In spite of a tiresome title this is a delightful book, well produced and (a rare thing in these days) with a dust cover of some originality which does not inspire one at sight to tear it off and put it on the fire.

Forty saints, men and women, picked out not at random we feel sure, from the centuries, beginning with St Paul and ending