



TERESA HELENA HIGGINSON
THE TEACHER MYSTIC



Born at Holywell, North Wales, May 27th 1844
Died at Chudleigh, Devon, England. Feb. 15th 1905
Buried at Neston, Cheshire, England, where her
family lived for over 40 years

TERESA HELENA HIGGINSON was born in 1844 and was brought up with her seven brothers and sisters, in an ideal Catholic home at Gainsborough. A bright and precocious child, brimming over with life and character, she appears to have attained the use of reason in a remarkable way at three years of age when, suddenly over-whelmed by a sense of the majesty of God, she fell prostrate on the ground and vowed herself to Him for ever.

At ten years of age she was sent to the convent at Nottingham but the school life was much interrupted by ill health, the result, in part of the austerities she used even then to practice. Her father having become bankrupt, she trained as a teacher, thus discovering her life's vocation "to teach the poorest of God's children how to love Him". She was appointed to St. Mary's Wigan and later to St. Alexander's Bootle.

Her days were divided between her school duties and visiting the sick, her nights were spent in prayer. To share the passion of our Lord and thereby to atone for sinners was the chief aim of her life.

Her penances were incredible, she hardly slept, she seldom ate. Her food was the Blessed Sacrament. And our Lord repaid her love by admitting her to a close share in His sufferings, even to the length of granting her the sublime gift of the Sacred Stigmata. (Blood was often noticed on her hands and head.) Her friends bore witness to her frequent ecstasies, her miraculous communions, the violent assaults of the devil. Other secrets of her spiritual life she told no-one

but her confessor to whom she was under vow to reveal them. Despite her efforts to remain unnoticed tongues could not be silenced and rumours spread. Some upheld her as a saint, many more denounced her as a liar and a hypocrite. Finally the controversy waxed so fierce that she was dismissed, sick in body and in heart from Bootle.

These trials proved to be the final purification for that mysterious secret of the saints, the Mystical Marriage, the closest union possible to a soul on earth with God. She could now say with St. Paul: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The wonders ceased. Henceforth to human eyes her life became supremely commonplace and ordinary. She no longer prayed for suffering, to God's will most perfectly in all the tiny things of daily life, such seemed to her the height of sanctity. Twelve years she spent in prayer and hidden service in St. Catherine's convent, Edinburgh, and then, her health somewhat restored, she felt called upon to resume her work of teaching. She accepted a post in the little village of Chudleigh where, after a long lonely year she had a severe stroke and on February 15th, 1905, in her sixtieth year, she died.

From the worldly standpoint how drab and dreary was her life. Yet truly God's ways are not as ours, for this humble little teacher in our English elementary schools was favoured with His most sublime revelations. Canon Snow, her director, never wavered in his convictions that she would eventually be raised to the altars of the Church and he carefully preserved her writings.

PRAYER
for the
BEATIFICATION
of
Teresa Helena Higginson



O Jesus by Thy bitter Passion; O Hidden God by all Thy yearning love for men in the Blessed Sacrament, grant we humbly beseech Thee, that if it be for Thy greater glory and the good of souls, the halo of the Blessed may soon be placed on the head of Teresa Higginson, Thy Servant. Amen.



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