

like Strauss and Renan, have made great capital of it. Non-Catholic biblical scholars have given up belief in traditional Christianity because of it, unable to accept the divinity of one who, as it seemed to them, foretold things which have never come to pass. But, as this book indicates, there is a much more fundamental problem to be faced here before one begins to worry about the extremely thorny question of the right interpretation of prophetic sayings. In this discourse Jesus called himself, and therefore either knew himself to be or wished others to believe him to be, the one who was to judge the world in the future. If he spoke the truth, then he is evidently not mere man but God made man. In the other alternative, there is no need to be concerned whether his predictions were or were not fulfilled. For a man who wrongly claims divinity is either insane or wicked. But no honest and unprejudiced critic has ever found in Jesus Christ the least vestige of support for either of these accusations. The Gospel evidence alone is sufficient to show that even if he were no more than man, he was the sanest of men; and as Chesterton says, the saner a man is the more he knows that he is not God. And to the modern critics, as to the ancient critics of our Lord, there still comes the same challenge: 'Which of you shall convince me of sin? I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?' Dr Beasley, after reviewing and passing critical judgment on everything of repute written on the subject, mainly by non-Catholic scholars, during the past century, offers his solution which, if not wholly acceptable to Catholics, is at least along traditional lines.

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

NEITHER WILL I CONDEMN THEE. By Franziskus M. Stratmann, O.P.
Translated by Hilda M. Graef. (Blackfriars Publications; 8s. 6d.)

This account of the aims and methods of the Order of Bethany by a German Dominican who was courageously sheltered by the Sisters during the Nazi persecution, will be welcomed by the many admirers of their work for unfortunate women. The magnificent ideal which inspired their founder is perhaps not sufficiently known. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Père Lataste of the Order of Preachers encountered women in the course of his prison missions who had experienced a 'profound inner change' yet could not hope to find an honourable place in society, or apparently in any existing religious order. His solution was to found a congregation where penitents would live in such close communion with 'blameless nuns' that 'outsiders could not distinguish which of the Sisters had been guilty and which had not'. It was an audacious challenge to the Catholic opinion of the day, for both prisoners and prostitutes were more marked out

as a separate class than they are now, and many otherwise excellent Christians were slow to accept the full implications of our Lord's clear teaching on women sinners. (It was even supposed that sinful women were in some mysterious way less pardonable than sinful men, especially if their offences involved a breach of chastity.) Under a great religious, Mother Henri Dominique, the new Order grew and flourished. The French congregation still restricts itself to the rehabilitation of serious offenders within convent walls, and to prison visiting, but the Dutch Congregation has extended its activities over the whole field of delinquency and undertakes a full modern programme of retraining for life in the world, as well as receiving into the cloister penitents with a religious vocation.

The greater part of Father Stratmann's book deals with the spiritual aspects of the Bethany apostolate, the restoration of the repentant sinner to the shelter of God's love. He writes with tender insight, and in a way which will be helpful to many who have touched neither the heights nor depths of Bethany, of the place of humiliations, contrition and penance in the rehabilitation of the guilty soul. The keynote of his message is the need for love: 'Love has taken the place of penance, or rather contrition and penance have been swallowed up by love'. He quotes Father Lataste: 'God is our friend, and to a friend all our *mea culpas* are not worth as much as a heartfelt "I love you".'

Owing perhaps to a national difference in approach, British readers may be pardonably confused between the severe preparation needed before the penitent can be received into a community, and the retraining which proves most beneficial if her aims are perforce less exalted and her future lies as a 'good Catholic' in the world. The fundamental principles underlying spiritual rehabilitation are of course the same, but the long segregation from the world of which Father Stratmann speaks, the 'disgrace', the strict external discipline, are remedies to be applied, or even permitted with great caution to the ex-prisoner or ex-prostitute without clear evidence of a vocation. Long experience in many communions has shown that employed as a routine, they break as many as they make. Almost all moral welfare workers today (including the Bethany Sisters themselves) have learnt to shorten their periods of seclusion in homes, and to aim—with discretion—at the early re-establishment of normal human relationships. And this is true of those who appreciate the need for moral restoration as well as the non-Christians who regard it as a purely economic problem.

The translation by Miss Graef is smooth and sensitive, but the illustrations will not suit all tastes. A close-up photograph of a Sister gazing upwards with a rapt expression, and labelled 'Adoration', is surely out of character.

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