

L'ISLAM ET NOUS. Par Jean Mohammed Abd-el-Jalil, O.F.M. Collection L'Eglise et le Monde, No. 1. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars).

This booklet is the first of a series on 'L'Eglise et le Monde', and is a short, clear exposition of the main tenets and practices of Islam. It is chiefly valuable in that it throws light not only on the beliefs themselves but on their effect on Muslims' attitude to Christianity and the difficulties of securing converts among them.

The powerful emphasis on the uniqueness and unicity of Allah is the root of the chief difficulties. 'En vertu de cette conception, l'Islam officiel écarte toute possibilité—même par grace—de connaissance et de communion intimes avec Dieu.' Because of this same conception, the Christian Incarnation appears to the Muslim to be blasphemous, unthinkable.

Yet Islam has burst the rigid bounds of its own beliefs. There is a strong mystical trend in Islam known as Sufism, having its home in Persia and widespread in India; but because it has not attained official recognition it is always in danger of degeneration into a cult of the marvellous and fantastic.

Christianity has, of course, a limited recognition in Islam, for Jews and Christians are 'People of the Book' sharing a common origin with Islam. Yet it is a tainted religion in Muslim eyes and its works are vain, for Christians have not the fundamental beliefs. Muslims regard conversion to Christianity as a 'regression'; indeed they consider a cessation of all belief more reasonable than a return to an outworn and superseded religion.

A brief description of modern Islam concludes the book. The author points out that the modern ferment in Islamic countries is not simply nationalistic but has a powerful Islamic tinge. Young Islam, confronted with a decadent and dechristianised Europe, is conscious of a mission, of the need for a new Holy War. Yet modern Pan-Islamism is spiritual and cultural rather than political; it looks to Arabia not only as the cradle and centre of Islam, but as the power house from which a modernised Islam can draw its inspiration.

L. OUWERKERK.

THE TWO TREES. By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Collins; 2s. 6d.)

'There is only one way of tackling human problems, great or small, with any hope of ultimate success: and that is to look at them not as though God had nothing to do with them, not apart from him, but with him, trying to see them as he sees them' (p. 26). The truth here expressed contains the secret not only of the failure of most modern attempts to deal with problems of any sort but also the secret of Fr Gerald Vann's success as a preacher and writer.

Most of us tend to try to look the other way when difficulties loom ahead and few of those who face them fairly and squarely seem to realise that God, too, looks at these things and that he has become man so that in Christ he may see them from man's point of