

who said Aquila was an Armenian (p. 94)? There is much stress on the Græco-Roman world of the time—perhaps too colourful for some readers, but full of interesting references to current Roman literature. The Rabbinic world is similarly carefully described. But was the term 'Torah' used of the whole Bible (p. 13)? In general it may be said that one who is attracted by the strongly personal style, and who is glad to have the evidence docketed at the end, and who needs a book written by a Catholic but presenting no internal evidence of this, will certainly get to know St Paul more closely through reading this book.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

SAINTE THERESE DE L'ENFANT-JESUS ET LA SOUFFRANCE. Par l'Abbé André Combes. (Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin; n.p.)

L'Abbé Combes is a reputed authority on St Teresa of Lisieux, and in this volume he issues a welcome addition to the *Etudes de Théologie et d'Histoire de la Spiritualité*. The problem of pain and suffering has ever engaged the attention of mankind. Calvary is the lodestar for the follower of Christ, for every apostle who seeks to spread the good tidings of man's restored inheritance of heaven. The Christian of heroic endeavour meets the problem of suffering not on the lower but on the higher plane; sees it not so much in terms of physical but of moral evil. It is sin that divides and separates mankind from God, and makes for chaos and dissension between man and his fellow. To effect reparation for their own sins and for the sins of the world, the saints were wont to inflict heavy and severe mortifications on their bodies. St Teresa, too, adopted a penitential cross, fashioned in metal; a means of mortification which she, after trial, abandoned as wholly unsuitable and imprudent for her soul. Not that she shunned or spurned a mortification that was primarily physical, as witness her intense suffering, borne with a truly heroic fortitude, when tuberculosis had made inroads on her health.

The asceticism of St Teresa was in abandonment to the divine will, to the love of God. By Père Petitot O.P. the holiness of St Teresa is classified as 'sainteté de petitesse' (the outcome of 'l'ascétisme de petitesse'), a terminology that does not find favour in the eyes of the Abbé Combes, who maintains it is misleading. 'Ceci me paraît une véritable catastrophe, car le grand mérite de Thérèse n'est pas du tout d'avoir distingué une sainteté de grandeur et une sainteté de petitesse, afin de construire, à côté d'une sainteté qui serait grande, une autre sainteté qui serait petite, mais bien d'avoir compris . . . qui bien loin de constituer la sainteté, ou même de la favoriser, les prouesses d'un certain ascétisme corporal, violent, facilement pharisaïque, étaient plutôt de nature à l'empêcher et à développer l'amour-propre' (p. 126).

This volume so well documented is worthy of close and attentive study. The author has brought new data, in the sense of previously

unpublished data, bearing on the life and character of the saint. His interpretation is not merely sympathetic, it is enlightening.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

NO PLASTER SAINT. By Gabriel Cesbron. (Hollis and Carter; 7s. 6d.)

This play (*Briser la Statue*) was first produced at the Melingue, Paris, 1947, and received much commendation from the dramatic critics. Nor need one seek far for the reason for the play's success, since the playwright draws St Teresa of Lisieux not as an imaginary and artificial person (such as certain and outrageous popularisers of the Little Flower would construct), but as a creature of flesh and blood in love with God. Gabriel Cesbron has gone to the primary sources and authentic documents for evidence of the saint's life, and consequently his text has the ring and appeal of genuineness. The prologue is set in a monastery, for long disused but now serving as a rendezvous in the weekend for the intelligentsia. In a niche of the cloisters stands a statue of the saint, which catches the attention of the intellectuals, and they engage their host, a priest, in a discussion of the merits and demerits of the Little Way. The guests unfavourably contrast the saint with her namesake of Avila, pour scorn on the idea of Spiritual Childhood, a modern fetish, a cheap, albeit successful type of ecclesiastical propaganda. The priest counters their glib and supercilious theories, and whilst reconstructing the life of St Teresa, the scene changes and we behold the quadrangle of the Lisieux Carmel. In this, the first act, we see the saint treated as a member of the community, and learn from a number of the community their own impressions of Sœur Thérèse. Some hold her in high regard, others view her less sympathetically. Conventual life amply bears witness that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. We have also depicted for us St Teresa as Novice Mistress, instructing, chiding, enlightening, restraining, encouraging those entrusted to her direction and care. Herein the author accurately and discerningly sets forth the way of Spiritual Childhood with its ideals of fortitude, magnanimity, wisdom, as against its false counterpart of narrow-mindedness, scrupulosity, fanatical and slavish carrying out of observances for their own sake.

In the second act the scene is cast in the cell of St Teresa who, exhausted and spent by tuberculosis, is further subjected to severe trial and temptation (chiefly to doubt and despair) by Satan, by the vision of what she might have been in the world, by the memory of her father, deserted by his children and now so helpless and lonely. The third act is the deathbed of the saint, details of which, despite their authenticity, might, we venture to suggest, have been omitted with advantage. One's general impression is that the saint is too long a-dying.

The translator has discharged her task with credit. The script is clear, and distinguished from stage directions (how simple, but how sane and practical they are) by use of italics: a pleasing production.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.