

a hatred and holocaust of the Jews unequalled in history, the record of any Jew's conversion to Christ must have a special significance.

Dr Stern is a German Jew, a psychiatrist who is now living in America. His account of the Jewish fidelities of his childhood in Bavaria is written with an extraordinary innocence, a quality that shines with increasing power throughout this record of a brilliant and sophisticated scientist's search for Christ. His book is notable for many reasons, and not least for its inward integrity, evocative as it is of a peace of mind which marks that Jewish spirituality which Dr Stern sees as a true preparation for the fullness of Christ. Indeed, his book is the perfect commentary on the Pauline doctrine of the Jewish destiny: disaster as well as glory, and even the maniac persecutions of our time never deflect Dr Stern from his view of the Jewish mystery as soluble only in terms of eternity.

His book is 'written to help Christians to understand their brothers, the Jews', and it should be of the greatest value in evoking the positive value of orthodox Jewish piety and, too, in revealing the sadness of that Jewish racial and national consciousness, which, cut off from its roots, is at the mercy of the false gods of our time. There is a passage in Dr Stern's book which, above all others, shows his own story as a classic commentary on our Lord's warning that only the simple of heart can come into his kingdom. His Bavarian servant-girl, uneducated but at one with Christ and the Church, sees as it were connaturally what is true. And the 'wise' are so often the betrayers of truth. For 'intellect, without humility, is the most destructive force in the world'. Dr Stern's picture of 'scientific nihilism' is simply the expression of the literal truth of our Lord's words: 'without me you can do *nothing*'.

'In entering the Church one does not have to give up any single positive value one has ever believed in. . . . There is nothing which is good . . . which you do not find again in the Church. Now it is ordered and synthesised. It is molten in Christ.' *Pillar of Fire* is a very great book. More than the story of a conversion, it is the story of a people and their destiny: it is, too, intensely contemporary, adult, with every word close to the pulse of the generation for which it is written. A Dominican review, in welcoming it may find a special joy in the place that the Order of Preachers and the teaching of St Thomas have had in this testament of grace.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE ART OF GRAHAM GREENE. By Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farriss. (Hamish Hamilton; 15s.)

THE END OF THE AFFAIR. By Graham Greene. (Heinemann; 10s. 6d.)

Mr Graham Greene has already received much attention in France where critics arrive at important conclusions perhaps more readily

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than they do in England. It might seem that a novelist, who is still in his forties and whose best work may still lie in the future, is not yet a suitable subject for an extended study; but Mr Allott and Miss Farriss (they write in the first person singular) have provided a valuable interim judgment on Mr Greene's work.

The author of *The Heart of the Matter*, that fertile ground for amateur theologians, is yet the author of *The Third Man*, and in Mr Greene the serious novelist often profitably coincides with what the box office demands. The theme of Mr Greene's novels varies in intensity and range. He has himself made a distinction between his 'entertainments' and his novels. But it is perhaps only in Henry James (or among French writers, in François Mauriac) that an author's work reflects so consistent a seriousness, or so impressive a technical skill. The Allott-Farriss study is a somewhat clinical account by professional observers, with a minimum of commitment combined with a most exact analysis of the documents. Very occasionally we meet the outraged accuracies of the don, reluctantly awarding an alpha minus. But on the whole the study, from the early novels (*The Man Within* appeared in 1929) to *The Heart of the Matter*, is sustained and accurate.

'The Divided Mind' is the title given to a consideration of the first three experimental novels: 'The intelligence is present, but not the active sense of life; the gift, but not yet the world of experience on which it has to feed'. 'The Fallen World' is a fair enough caption for the novels that begin with *Stamboul Train*, and end with *The Confidential Agent*. Here Mr Greene's chosen theme of catastrophe emerges, and in *Brighton Rock* (for some Mr Greene's greatest achievement so far) there is 'a conscious handling of a specifically Catholic theme'. Indeed, Mr Greene's increasing absorption in the theme of evil and man's capacity for damnation, reflects, as any writer's work must, his own religious evolution. The obsessional quality of *Brighton Rock*, its relentless concentration on beatitude rejected, is proof enough that in the novel Mr Greene has sought a form for a universal debate: Pinkie, the brutal, undersized boy criminal, has the capacity to choose evil, to reject the known truth, to will his own damnation.

'The Universe of Pity' is the title for a study of the remaining novels: *The Power and the Glory*, *The Ministry of Fear*, and *The Heart of the Matter*. The world of these novels is founded on pity, 'the horrible and horrifying emotion of pity which for Mr Greene is the essential adult virtue and vice'. What is good in the whisky-priest—and Scobie—is born of this capacity to feel another's tragedy and to share it; and their sin, no less, is the price of pity. He finds this malady in the terrifying, raw areas of the human heart, and the probing obsession does indeed reveal how infinite is the territory of moral choice. But it is disingenuous

of the authors of this study to find in Mr Greene's sympathy with Péguy's '*Le pécheur est au coeur même de la chrétienté*' a mood 'only a step from' Luther's '*pecca fortiter*'. The two ideas are a universe apart. For Péguy (as for Mr Greene and all the Catholic tradition) the sinner is significant because he is capable of redemption. Indeed, his very sin, once known, once wept for, is the providential way to his release. Here is no sanction for sin, but rather the declaring of what blessedness repented sin may lead to.

The Art of Graham Greene is, then, a valuable map to the complex land of Mr Greene's imagination; but it is scarcely a map in relief. The religious theme is not indeed evaded, and we may welcome the absence of the sort of apocalyptic rapture of some French criticisms of Mr Greene. Yet we are aware perhaps too often of the don's microscope; 'the pity' is recorded, but we cannot feel that it is often felt. There is in any case some confusion in the allusive shifting of comment from one novel to another. It supposes a more detailed knowledge of the novels than most people will bring to the reading of this book, but it is serious in intention and adult in achievement.

With *The End of the Affair*, a 'love story', Mr Greene's gifts are revealed in a technical accomplishment which will confirm the judgment of his critics. This study in hatred, written in the first person (the writer is a novelist), is of absorbing interest, though the absorption is most often that of the hypnotised watcher, unable to intervene, but fascinated and appalled at the unfolding capacities of envy, lust and chosen cruelty. The problem for a Christian critic must be how far this relentless exploration into the further reaches of iniquity can be said to belong to the novelist's function. The novelist's mistress chooses to see a 'sign' during an air-raid; she therefore withdraws from sin to a God as yet unknown. (Later we learn she was baptised as a Catholic, but had never been brought up as one.) Hatred makes Bendix conceal Sarah's desire from her husband; so she is denied a priest and is cremated. But hints of miracle confirm the truth of her own decision. Here the technique of the novel sags, and its ending is too resolute and unconvincing a re-statement of the theme of hatred. But more important is the moral issue, in this novel more explicit than before (and, for that matter, more coarsely insisted upon). Mr Greene has perceptions so disturbingly exact, that one may question whether he is not invading a territory of motive which in the end can belong to God alone. He is not a moral theologian, but he has become a moralist who chooses fiction for his illustrations. And that, however dexterously handled, is dangerous work; not indeed to be avoided for that reason, but to be assumed only with a certain humility, which, without of necessity invoking any religious considerations, will yet mark a boundary, call for silence even, or at least will say 'enough'. ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.