

REVIEWS

MOHAMMEDANISM, by Louis Gardet; Burns and Oates (Faith and Fact Books); 8s. 6d.

The publishers are much to be congratulated on this translation of Gardet's minor classic, *Connaître l' Islam*. For Catholics it is without comparison the best introduction to Islam, and the best short reference book on the subject. Partly a condensation of the author's *Cité Musulmane*, it shares with that work a perspicuous sense of the Islamic community—now and throughout history—and a vivid perception of the presence of truth in alien or unaccustomed surroundings. Its scope is vast—the career of the Prophet, the history of Islam to the present day, its theology of belief, its religious practices and its community life, its morals and its mystics, its historic humanism, and the facts and trends of the present day. It is hard to suppose that a better book can be written in our time that will cover the same ground in the same space anything like so brilliantly. Nor does it contain anything to shock the conservative.

The book is so much needed and so well produced that criticism seems unfair. The translation is fluent, really English, and easy to read; but I do not know why chapter ix of the original (*Islam et chrétienté*) has been omitted, and, although I know very well the difficulties of getting Arabic intelligibly and consistently transliterated by means acceptable to British printers, the absence of any indication of *'ain*, or of long, stressed vowels, makes it impossible for the reader unfamiliar with Arabic to guess the pronunciation. Gardet is not correctly described: he should have been called 'a French theologian' or 'religious'. The most serious fault is in the title. 'Islam' has been perfectly naturalized in English now. 'Mohammedanism' is offensive to Muslims by implication, and it would be comparable to call a book on the Catholic Church 'Popery', if that were not now a joke; 'Romanism' might be closer. (The publishers of Gibb's volume in the Home University Library had the excuse that they were substituting it for an existing volume.) In an explicitly Catholic series the title only gives Muslims and other non-Catholics the impression that Catholics lack good manners.

It is just because this book is so good that I mention errors of judgment in the presentation which could be corrected in a new edition.

NORMAN DANIEL

THE IDEA OF PUNISHMENT, by Lord Longford; Geoffrey Chapman; 10s. 6d.

This is a timely and important little book. The population of British prisons and borstals has more than doubled since 1939, and public opinion is sharply divided over what should be done about it. We need to think clearly about the fundamental principles on which judicial punishment is based, and no one is better qualified to give us a lead than Lord Longford (formerly Lord Pakenham). His book should be read by everyone who is concerned about our penal