

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

THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD. By Gregory Dix, O.S.B. (Dacre; 1s.)

Both these books are described as 'Broadcast Addresses'. Their matter offers little source for comment and their manner of presentation for broadcasting offers still less. Both are by experienced broadcasters who know the technique of broadcasting perfectly, so perfectly, in fact, that it is impossible for them to be anything other than broadcasters when they broadcast—and that forms my main criticism of them. It is becoming so increasingly common for broadcast talks of all descriptions (though I am concerned at the moment only with broadcast sermons) to appear later in print, that it is time someone stated the case against the practice.

The preacher invited to broadcast realises, if he be true to his mission, that he has a unique opportunity to put some part of the Christian revelation before the man who is either too lazy or too ignorant to read or to go to church. This man, the 'weakest link' among his hearers, is the one on whom the value or strength of the talk depends. He must be set thinking and therefore one small but fundamental point is emphasised and padded about with a great deal of attractive wrapping so that his attention may be held while the point is driven home. The person, however, who will buy these talks published in book form wants something quite different. He wants to follow the point through to a reasoned conclusion or instruction and even the lazy or ignorant man, if he has been stimulated by the talk, does not want merely to be stimulated again but stimulated further, and therefore the published version of the talks will not be really what he needs to buy. While a talk aims to set a person thinking, a book or essay is the presentation of considered thought, which is submitted for approval or disapproval at its face value. There is therefore some case for adapting these talks for publication but none for publishing them in the form in which they were delivered, especially if one remembers that talks which are notable or have reference or record value are published in *The Listener*.

The case against their publication goes further, considered in the light of the doctrine, so beloved of preachers and schoolmen, of the vocation of work, not of work in general but of this particular work. Each occupation should be sanctified by a skilled craftsman working in each medium for the honour and glory of God. The medium and science of the spoken word are quite different from the medium and science of the written word. A man may be a craftsman in both media (both Father Vann and Dom Gregory Dix undoubtedly are) but it seems to militate against the whole doctrine of vocation of work to hand over the script of a broadcast talk for publication.

The spoken word has many limitations which are exaggerated in the case of the broadcast word: there are limitations of time which prevent a thorough consideration of the subject; there is the need

not to 'lose' any of the hearers by the complexity of the treatment, and perhaps above all, there is the obligation to be simple and lucid. In the written word a point can be developed and, if need be, illustrated by a multitude of examples: allowance can always be made for turning back a page or two and going over again the thread of the argument, an allowance which destroys the need of 'talking down' to the least intelligent of the readers and which permits of the education of the willing learners, and a page can be kept open while a point is pondered without detriment to what follows which is impossible in the spoken word. In published works all these advantages ought to be used, in justice to the readers, in justice to the author (the possibility of a preacher not being interested in his subject is unthinkable) and in justice to God whose message one must give forth to the best of one's ability, using all possible advantages and accepting no undue limitations.

There must be some case for publishing these talks other than the obvious ease with which a broadcast script can be handed to a publisher—that would reduce these books to a matter of convenience and to the level of utility furniture, which is the negation of all true craftsmanship and approaches very closely the prostitution of labour. It would be interesting to hear the case.

Admirers of Father Vann's writings who have been disappointed in his latest works should be warned that *Two Trees* is by the author of *Awake in Heaven* rather than by the author of *Divine Pity*. It seems that Father Vann no longer writes because he has something to say but because he has said something—which is a great pity.

TERENCE TANNER.

ON MODERN ART. By Paul Klee. (Faber; 8s. 6d.)

When Herbert Read says in his introduction that he considers that these notes 'contribute the most profound and illuminating statement of the aesthetic basis of the modern movement in art ever made by a practising artist' we must take care to ponder what this celebrated, if not notorious, artist has to say for himself. But we must first remember what he means by 'modern'. He wrote these notes before 1924, and he bases his views on the 'modern' conception of the artist as a very special kind of man. The artist according to Paul Klee is 'a being who differs from you only in that he is able to master life by the use of his own special gifts'. We cannot forbear reminding the reader that another artist who wrote considerably since 1924 insisted frequently that the 'artist is not a special kind of man, but that every man is a special kind of artist', and who would surely have taken up Paul Klee by pointing out that every man must master life by the use of his own specific gifts, or perish in the mire of industrial materialism. Klee was perhaps taking things as he found them, but Gill tried to construct reality out of the fragments that he found strewn around modern man. At the same time we must avoid the stupidity of the third type of 'modern' artist who clings des-