

characters seemed tame and provincial compared with those of Sartre; but one might say that though they are, of course, pre-war in conception, they have come into their own again in the nuclear

age because they show the personal triumph over despair by a renewal of hope, strength and fresh vision.

*Elisabeth Stopp*

BEARING WITNESS TO CHRIST by Jean Fletcher. *Geoffrey Chapman, 16s.*

Mother Fletcher provides us in this guide to the catechist with an up to date synthesis of what the experts are saying. She is at her best when she is writing freely and from her own experience, less good when she is giving us a catena of quotations from her sources. Her book may be expected to contribute to the raising of standards in the teaching of religion which is already taking place, but inevitably one finds points of disagreement. I cannot, for example, think it wise to put off the child who asks: 'where do babies come from?' on the grounds that the parents are the proper people to give this information. The section on the catechism, also, while reflecting contemporary positions, seems to contain a basic inconsistency. If, as Mother Fletcher says, catechism questions and answers (which should never be given to be memorized under the age of ten) should be the summary of the lesson, it is difficult to see how they can fit in with the programme she

outlines in the next paragraph (p. 55): 'In order to help the child to remember his faith it is necessary to repeat the basic truths of religion frequently, if possible every year, each time taking them from a different approach and at a deeper level'. If even a simplified catechism is used every year – and answers not used frequently will not be retained – it follows inevitably that in most classes the catechism question and answer to be learnt or relearnt will determine the approach of which it is summary, and the lessons will reproduce in the pupil the sense of boredom and staleness which is one of the basic failings of the teaching of religion in the secondary school. So long as the teaching of religion in this way is imposed, there would seem to be no way out of this dilemma, and the author cannot be blamed because she has not found one.

*C. H. Southwood*

THE CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT ON THE LIÈGE TRIAL edited and translated by Malachy G. Carroll. *Mercier Press, Cork, 5s.*

The excitement over the Liège Trial has long subsided but the issues which it raised are still very much alive. It will be surprising if during the life of the present Labour Government we do not see a major tussle over legalizing abortion on all sorts of grounds, and it is important that the Catholic view should be widely understood. The Mercier Press has now given us a curiously untidy paper-back, which oddly enough does not discuss the trial directly. It is composed of papers from the *Cahiers Laënnec* by eminent French doctors and Jesuits, but the quality is disappoint-

ing. An excellent opening paper, rather technical in phraseology, gives an account of the fantastic difficulties experienced by pharmacologists bent on combining safety and efficiency in modern drugs. Even after hundreds of experiments have been performed on various kinds of animals, the effects on the human organism, and more especially the embryo, are hard to foresee. Yet the value of these new medicaments is so great that no sane person would suggest that their production be halted. Father Michel Ray's paper on 'Moral Relexions' makes the good, but neglected,