

Isaias. By Dom Hubert Van Zeller, O.S.B. Westminster, Md., Newman Bookshop, 1951. pp. xii, 123. Cloth \$2.25; paper \$1.25.

Daniel. By Dom Hubert Van Zeller, O.S.B. Westminster, Md., Newman Bookshop, 1951. pp. xvi, 232. Cloth \$2.75; paper \$1.50.

There are some who hold that never have men been so evil as they are nowadays. There are also some who hold that a book about the Bible which is not written by a Scripture authority is not worth reading, for it will be full of errors and will only mislead the ordinary reader. Both of these schools will find themselves contradicted by Dom Hubert's *Isaias*.

In the first place, Dom Hubert brings out quite clearly that the sin of the Jews of Isaias' time is much the same as our own sin—lack of faith in God's Providence. Though he does not mention the parallel, it seems to this reviewer that the message of Our Lady at Fatima was very similar to Isaias' theme: *amend your lives, have faith in God, and leave the rest to Him*. God proved it for Isaias by the miracle of the decimation of the Assyrian army, just as He proved it for Mary by the countless miracles of the Rosary, from the victory at Lepanto to the advent of peace in 1918. The Jews reaped the fruits of their neglect of the warnings by being led into subjection and captivity, just as we are reaping World War III. Although this particular parallel is not mentioned by Dom Hubert, many other excellent analogies are, and it is for this reason that *Isaias* can easily be recommended, even as an aid to meditation. For, as he says (p. 39), he picks out the best passages from the prophet, and delivers little sermons of his own. The Old Testament does have great value for Catholics, and this book proves it.

As for the second objection, Dom Hubert admits that he is no scripture scholar, and the fact that he refrains from exegesis is an indication. Any book on *Isaias* aims at helping the reader understand the Sacred Book itself. Some such books, written by recognized authorities, tend to bring in so many points about minor problems that the ordinary reader is only confused and disappointed. But Dom Hubert, with only 123 pages on the whole 66 chapters, actually makes it very easy to take up the Book of Isaias and follow it along intelligibly. He divides the work historically, and then gives the historical background for the various prophecies and threats. In short, it is an excellent "companion" to the Book of Isaias.

What has been said in praise of *Isaias* may be applied also to Dom Hubert's later work, *Daniel*. He has made it possible to take up the Sacred Text and read it quite intelligibly. He makes frequent digres-

sions and applications to the spiritual life; he supplies details from other sources to fill in the gaps, and quite often proceeds on his own imagination. Such a course might at first seem rather arbitrary, but he does not do it except where the scriptural authorities are silent. A book should be judged only in the light of the author's intention; and since Dom Hubert has aimed at making the Book of Daniel easier for the average reader to understand, we may say that he has done a wonderful job.

Of the fourteen chapters which make up the Book of Daniel as we have it today, Dom Hubert has undertaken to explain only the first six, and the fourteenth. The seventh to the twelfth are concerned with prophecies (which would require a thorough exegesis), and the story of Susanna (ch. 13) explains itself.

Both of these books are reprints of the original works, which appeared about eleven years ago. A future edition might be enhanced by the addition of a map or two to aid in the location of the various kingdoms and cities. Also a preface or appendix on the office of prophet in Old Testament history; for the office of prophet is inseparably connected with the history of Israel. Dom Hubert hints at this (*Isaias*, pp. 46, 84), but it is not enough. St. Thomas has some very worthwhile things to say about prophecy in the *Summa* (II-II, qq. 171-174) and *De Veritate* (q. 12).

It should be noted that most of the works mentioned in the bibliographies are by non-Catholics, and as such are *ipso facto* on the Index. These works give exegesis of the text, which Dom Hubert has not even attempted.

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Ancient Christian Writers. Treatises On Marriage and Remarriage. By Tertullian. Translation by William P. Le Saint, S.J. Westminster, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1951. pp. vii, 196. \$3.00.

This is the thirteenth in the hundred-volume series of the Ancient Christian Writers in translation.

Prior to a discussion of this work it is well to note that Tertullian is not a Father of the Church, for he neither excelled in orthodoxy of doctrine nor did he receive the complete approbation of the Church. However, since he was a Catholic for some time, he is numbered among the ancient Christian writers. Tertullian fell into the heresy of Montanism which, among other false doctrines, taught that remarriage was sinful. Since this is not the teaching of the Church, the study of his treatises on marriage is of great moment in any consideration of Tertullian the Catholic and Tertullian the Montanist.