

well promote '*devotion*', a sense in which '*studium*' is certainly used later in the work.

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LE CANTIQUE DES CANTIQUES (Lectio Divina, 10). By André Feuillet. (Cerf: Blackfriars; n.p.)

The intuitive love of the mystics was not at fault in fixing upon the Canticle for its expression; it has not transposed the sense but more deeply penetrated it. All too often the Scripture scholar has been forced to resist superadded '*devotional*' interpretation; with the Canticle (sometimes called '*the great surprise of the Bible*') he is in happier case. Here exegesis and affective piety, each following its independent way, have met and kissed at last. The union will be blessed: in the Abbé Feuillet's book it has a healthy and lovely child.

Catholic exegesis has never without qualification tolerated the '*profane love-song*' theory—the book's inclusion in the sacred canon protested too loudly. And now the Canticle is known for what it is: a sustained allegory of divine love; the saints had no need to allegorise, the noble poem was allegory already. This thesis is not new. It has been recently given admirable precision by Robert (Jerusalem Bible, 1951); his method has been applied, his conclusions confirmed and his sketch painted-in with striking effect by M. Feuillet.

In the last few decades it has become increasingly realised that the finest tool of interpretation is the Biblical Concordance—provided we remember that it is ideas we seek rather than words. The literary and doctrinal continuity of Israel's traditions imposes the method, a method vastly more scientific than a succession of doubtful appeal to non-Israelitic parallels. By this bright light the post-exilic Canticle (and not only the Canticle) is accurately placed in the march of revelation. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love . . . O virgin of Israel', Jeremias was to say in the name of God. But more than a hundred years before, God had spoken to his people by the mouth of Osee: 'I will allure her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart'. Ezechiel takes up the theme from Jeremias in his marriage-adultery allegory. Against the background of the return from exile the book of Isaias speaks: 'The bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride, and thy God shall rejoice over thee' (cf. Jer. 31, 3; Os. 2, 14; Ez. 16, Is. 62, 5). The Canticle is this same allegory expanded by an inspired and accomplished poet, a St John of the Cross before Christ.

Pursuing his method to its last application the distinguished author follows the Marriage theme of the Canticle (together with its correlatives: the sleep - wake, light - darkness, search - find motifs) into the New Testament itself. It is here that the Christian, vaguely aware of the '*fulfilment*' of the Old Testament in the New, finds that his road continues

Israel's trodden but deserted path. In the pages of the New Testament there is not, indeed, a single quotation from the Cantic (though John's 'Abide in me and I in you' suggests 'I to my beloved and my beloved to me': Jn. 15, 4; Cant. 6, 2), nevertheless our Lord comes to his people as a 'bridegroom' for the wedding-feast of the Son of God, the marriage of the Lamb (cf. Jn. 3, 29; Mt. 22, 2ff and 2 Cor. 11, 2; Apoc. 19, 6). His glorious spouse is the Church, made glorious by himself (Eph. 5, 25-33; cf. Ezech. c. 16). The Israel of old gives place to 'the Israel of God'. But the New Testament is still not content: not only a nation nor the Church as a whole but the single soul is the spouse of Christ. St Paul echoes the Cantic's phrase: 'Love is as strong as death' with 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Not death. . . .' (Rom. 8, 35f.). Thenceforward the saints of Christendom have found in the Cantic the highest expression of God's personal love for them and of theirs for him.

It will be many years before we have an adequate book of biblical theology, but, when it comes, the debt to works like this of Fr Feuillet will be considerable. For the convenience of those to whom this volume is not available we note that Feuillet's own summary may be found in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1952, 706-733.

ALEC JONES

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By A. J. B. Higgins. S.C.M. Press; 7s.)

In these 'Studies in Biblical Theology', of which this is No. 6, the publishers are doing something that Catholic publishers could usefully imitate. They provide a platform for the Scripture scholar to make known his researches and investigation into specialised aspects of the Bible that can be of great use to others, not merely to the learned but also to the average Christian who ought to be deepening his understanding of the word of God. In this study the author approaches one of the central themes of Christian life from a textual point of view; and though some of his assumptions will be unacceptable to Catholics, his conclusions, which he leaves to others to apply to eucharistic practice, bear reproduction here and meditation by the reader: '(a) The problem of the "dominical institution" of the Eucharist cannot be handled in isolation from the question whether Jesus "founded" the Church; (b) The Church and the Eucharist are the historical counterparts of what Jesus envisaged—a new Israel, the Messianic community, and its Passover centred upon his own death; (c) The earliest churches, in remembering the death of Christ, at the same rejoiced in his living, risen presence at the breaking of bread. . . .' It shows how little the author understands the true Catholic teaching about the 'real presence' that he should with such a magnificent background then conclude that this presence was not found in the eucharistic elements.

C.P.