

After that the subject changes to the economics of religious life and the theology behind religious poverty. And with all this as a background the authors turn to the application of the ideal to the modern scene in terms of the present social consciousness about the poor, the need of the enclosed nuns to earn their livelihood as determined by the Pope's encyclical *Sponsa Christi*, the problems of the Superior and the bursars, and so on.

The whole volume will be found to be of great practical value not only to contemplative nuns and active religious sisters, but also to all those engaged in the task of religious life today and brought up against the difficulty of living according to the vow of poverty in a world which has become so preoccupied with material values. The translation is by Mr Lancelot Sheppard, which is a guarantee of accuracy and good style.

JOHN CORSON

LE THÈME DE LA PARFAITE ALLIANCE DE GRÂCE DANS S. JEAN DE LA CROIX. Par Henri Martin. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars.)

The present study of St John of the Cross is a detailed refutation of the view of the Saint expressed in the work of Jean Baruzi. By systematically expounding St John's teaching the author of the present study wants to aid the reader to a better understanding of the scope of his teaching, and to preserve him from the fallacies of Baruzi's interpretation. In this country such discussion may perhaps be less needed than on the Continent, where even a Carmelite like Edith Stein frequently misinterpreted the Mystical Doctor owing to her dependence on Baruzi. Nevertheless the systematic presentation of the Saint's teaching, of his theology of faith and grace, and especially of the central place he gives to love, is very successfully accomplished. Even those not conversant with Baruzi may sometimes be tempted to think that St John of the Cross, with his relentless asceticism, comes near to a Manichean view of nature. The present book is a brilliant refutation of this view, supported by a wealth of well-chosen texts and a most convincing vindication of the perfect balance of the Saint's teaching. There is no shadow of a spurious 'gnosis', of an esoteric mysticism falsely so called, in his work. For him the mystic life rests on the secure foundation of solid virtue, and its essence may be reduced to two axioms: first, the only perfect happiness of man consists in loving God alone; secondly, in this life the love of God is tasted only in the inebriation of the cross. The teaching of the Carmelite Doctor is here analysed with a lucidity which we have come to expect from French theologians. The book should be a help especially to those who would penetrate more deeply into the theological principles underlying the Saint's work.

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