

Love of others is the prolongation of love of self. To love another as a friend is not to neglect oneself, but to recognize one's own and the other's value. An entirely disinterested love therefore is impossible. Indeed, it is precisely that that makes for the dignity of friendship. Friends love one another because of what they possess in common. The element of communion is not just an abstract human nature but God as the unique and supreme Good in which all creatures actively participate by their very existence. The love of God then is not the effacement of self. Indeed, only by loving God can man love himself and his friend with a true love of *agape*. To love God the more is to love one's friend the better.

Some reviewers have dealt severely with this book. Admittedly, one could find fault with the excessive bibliography and quotations. There are only seventy-one pages out of one hundred and thirty-three given to the main text. Also the author uses an unorthodox method of giving references to St Thomas. But as a key to an understanding of the Thomistic doctrine on love, we deem it an excellent book. It is closely and clearly reasoned. But it is of use to the specialist only, not to the simple soul striving to love God above all things and his neighbour as himself. The present reviewer's criticism is not so much against the book itself as against the tradition for which it stands in its failure to face up to modern problems. The philosophic question today is not what the meaning of love is, but whether love exists at all. The reader of J.-P. Sartre's celebrated exposition on intersubjectivity will acknowledge that such is the case. The basic relationship among men, he concludes, is hate, and all other attitudes are but variations of that; thus the modern philosopher must see his friend, not in the light of *a priori* theories on love, but as a sexuated 'other' manifesting himself through the mediation of signs and gesture, situated in the same complex world of utensils as himself. Any metaphysic of love which fails to take such a description into account is unequipped to answer the challenge it implies, and is therefore simply building castles in the air.

NICHOLAS FOLAN, O.P.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Andrés Fernández, S.J., translated by Paul Barrett, O.F.M.CAP. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; \$12.50.)

A life-long student of the gospels may often seek a life of Christ which effectively embodies the findings of years of profound study and reflection, or, if better endowed, he may himself aim at writing such a life. He would then need to have read and weighed every word of the gospels, he would need to be very conversant with their very

particular literary *genre*, he would need to have understood something of how they came to be in the living teaching of the Church which stemmed from Christ and which is their ever-living context. Further, he would need to be versed in all the new testament background, both historical and topographical, and to be a master in 'palestinology' generally. And then he would need to be a theologian who has pondered long on the Word made flesh, as on all theology generally. Thus theology teaches us that each and all the sacraments were intended by Christ—and so that fact is to be added to his life. And so with much else.

All this and more calls for vast stores of knowledge, and an immense capacity for handling that knowledge with true mastery.

Yet even then we have not said all. For our would-be author of a life of Christ must have ability to produce and present a living, vivid portrait of our Saviour, which grows upon us as we turn page after page. And such a presentation makes us go back to the gospel narratives and earliest traditions with renewed zeal and reawakened interest.

If this last is, as we suggest, a main *desideratum* in a life of Christ, then we must say that the volume before us is, in that respect, unconvincing. We have some eight hundred beautifully printed pages of a long drawn out story—made long not by the gospel texts, or paraphrases, but by innumerable notes and reflections through the whole course of the book. Thus, for example, two whole pages go to an exegetical discussion of how to translate *biazetai* (pp. 180-182). We are given the impression that our author has lectured on the gospels for some years, and that now he has presented us with a version of his notes on each and every part of the gospel story. There is a massive total of erudition. Certainly our author knows his Palestine, and has given us of his knowledge. The fortunate few who have been in Palestine will be delighted with this 'refresher course', yet we may sometimes wonder what a chaplet of Arabic place-names may convey to most readers who, alas, are not likely to explore the Holy Land . . . except very imperfectly on a map.

There are copious references to the opinions of many scholars, in the style of: 'Zahn, Lagrange, Prat, Plummer choose the first, while Joüon, Dalman, Fillion the second.' (p. 156, note 13); and animadversions against rationalist critics, Protestants, and *Formgeschichte* (without any hint of progress since Bultmann, and of the possibilities of a certain 'tradition criticism' for Catholic scholars working in full conformity with *Divino Afflante*).

We would have preferred a firmer and simpler presentation of the author's own viewpoint, and footnotes would surely be place enough

for the innumerable aberrations of unbelievers as of separated brethren. As it is, we cannot get a clear picture of our Lord who is the subject of this book. The figure of Christ is blurred by a multiplication of details. Each of these has indeed a part to play, but somehow they are not woven into their appropriate place and so completely subordinated to the person of our Saviour.

In a word, we can say that this book can be valuable for its information content. Many a priest will find sermon matter therein, many a student ideas and references for essays. As a life of Christ, for the reasons already given, it will hardly satisfy the general reader. The more scholarly may also be put off by the same reasons. Texts of the Fathers are often appositely cited; but why give St John Chrysostom in *Latin* (pp. 220 and 271)? Misprints are: 'Van der Vlit', which should be 'Van der Vliet' (p. 293, n. 5); for *lagathenon*, read *galathenon* (p. 211); for Gisera, read Cisera (p. 442); an accent, not a breathing, is wanted on *xúton* (p. 161). Something of the author's mind appears in that (a) Boismard's seven-day symbolism in John i is rejected outright (p. 206, n. 85), (b) Benoit's treatment of the meetings of the Sanhedrin as a *dédoublement littéraire* (p. 700, n. 65) is dismissed as unscientific. Finally, why are the maps prefixed by a depressingly dark picture of Jericho?

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Alan Richardson. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

'In this book . . . the hypothesis is defended that Jesus himself is the author of the brilliant re-interpretation of the old testament scheme of salvation (old testament theology) which is found in the new testament, and that the events of the life, signs, passion and resurrection of Jesus, as attested by the apostolic witness, can account for the *data* of the new testament better than any other hypothesis current today. . . . The principle of interpretation here employed is that of historic Christian faith, and the thesis is defended that it enables us to present a more coherently and rationally satisfying history than do the liberal-humanist or existentialist principles of interpretation which have latterly been used in the construction of other theologies of the new testament' (pp. 12, 13). This, as Dr Richardson explains, is what is meant by 'new testament theology' in the title of this book. It will be apparent from this that he works from the standpoint of the 'orthodox' school in contemporary English new testament study: the basic *reliability* of the apostolic preaching as a witness to what Jesus said and did, and at the same time the need to *interpret* this in its developed form in the new testament, in order to distinguish between the inspired message of the