

staying long with one family or small group of families if the Gospel is to be preached and the Sacraments administered to all. The gains made on one missionary journey are only with the greatest difficulty consolidated and may, by the time the priest goes over the same ground again, be completely reversed as a result of the Eskimo's ingrained materialism, the absence of *any* religious tradition and the unhelpful and at times inimical competition of the shaman.

In *Inuk* Father Buliard paints a vivid portrait of the Eskimo, his way of life and the physical difficulties he has to face (all of which, though Father Buliard makes little of it, the missionary also must meet), and only incidentally touches on the particular problems associated with the propagation of the Church's teaching in so specialised a field. *Inuk* is a remarkable achievement and to expect Father Buliard to have done more than he has done in writing it would of course be ungracious—but one hopes that he may yet write a detailed account of the specifically pastoral aspects of his work dealing with such matters as how the Sacrifice of the Mass is explained to a people to whom wine and, at least until very recently, even bread are completely unknown; how the Gospels, so much of which were written in the idiom of a pastoral and agricultural civilisation, are 'adapted' to the understanding of the Eskimo, and how, for example, the exalted position of our Lady in Catholic teaching strikes the Eskimo with his traditional contempt of women. Brief glimpses of these matters are caught here and there in the pages of *Inuk*, but a more detailed account of them would be of great value; such a study would surely take its place in the tradition of such works as *Revolution in a City Parish*.

## REVIEWS

REGULARIS CONCORDIA. Ed. Dom Thomas Symons. (Nelson's Medieval Classics; 15s.)

In the early pages of his study of the Monastic Order in England Dom David Knowles endeavoured to do something to atone for the injustice which he felt had been done by modern historians to the work of monastic revival in the reigns of Edgar and Ethelred. The key figures in this movement were three great bishops, Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, and its chief surviving witness, outside the lives of these saints, a document, the *Regularis Concordia* or Monastic Agreement, written about 970. Only two manuscripts survive, and the edition which Dom Symons has now given us, with economical footnotes, is the first to make use of the older of the two, though the later is taken as a basis. Some will think it a pity that the editor has not given slightly fuller details of his work on the sources of the Monastic Agreement of which he gave some account in three successive numbers of the *Downside Review* in 1941. Except in the larger libraries articles in journals have a maddening way of getting mislaid.

However, Dom Symons's introduction is pleasant and sufficient to place the work in its settings.

*The Regularis Concordia* itself is altogether fascinating, in part because it is as Dom Symons says, 'substantially a mosaic, a piece of patchwork'. Professedly connected with continental monasticism through the abbeys of Fleury and Ghent—Dunstan had spent a period of exile at the latter—it embodied at the same time customs which appear to have been distinctively English, as for instance its strong recommendation of daily Communion and weekly, if not more frequent, confession—ideas which cannot be paralleled elsewhere at that period. As is sometimes the case with a composite document which nevertheless comes from the hand of a forceful personality, the whole possesses a distinctive character of its own. The universal monastic spirit, built up by the recurrence of words like *compunctio*, *silentium*, is combined with a strong sense of local tradition which is re-enforced by the unique position given to the King and Queen as at once the benefactors and protectors of religious observance. There is a curious hint of the Byzantine world in the phraseology used in this connection, especially in the comparison of the King to the Good Shepherd. The robust piety which the Agreement represents is striking for its immensely vivid sense of the contemporary relevance of tradition. Its idealism is something entirely brought down to earth. For these monks Christ is in their midst in the person of the poor who call at the monastery doors or of the brethren in the infirmary whom the entire community visits at their daily communion and not just in the hour of death. Christ in the brethren is again charmingly honoured in the ceremony of toasts all round during the reading of St John's account of the last Supper on Maundy Thursday. The lengthy Office, which is considerably increased by extra suffrages, and even at the end of Holy Week by the entire Psalter, is balanced by an insistence on everyone's doing his duties in the kitchen and bakehouse. One gets the impression of a life whose whole atmosphere is created by the psalms, which are as much the accompaniments to labour as they are the stable matter of the choir office.

The Latin of the *Regularis Concordia* obviously presents some difficulties in translation and one hesitates to raise points on questions which only expert knowledge could decide. One finds here for instance the word '*sacramentum*' in the rather unusual sense of 'holiness' as in the Post-communion for the Wednesday in Passion Week. However, there are occasions when one might wonder about a rendering. Is it really correct to translate the phrase (par. 23) *In diebus autem festis ob taciturnitatis studiique observantiam ita protendatur Prima, etc.*, as 'Now on feast days on account of the observance of silence and study Prime shall be prolonged. . .?' While it is easy to see how the prolonging of Prime promotes silence, it is not so easy to see how it promotes study, though it might very

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