

not the rebuke which they may at first seem. Perhaps the final answer (which we shall never know, since so much depended on the manner and intonation of our Lord's words) is that the words are, both in themselves and in their intention, a gentle, most highly complimentary protest against the irresistible power of a request from his mother. Our Lady, at all events, was in no doubt. She simply told the waiters to carry out his orders. She had only asked for wine. She obtained 'the beginning of miracles'.

But each section of this fascinating book is full of starting-points for meditations on our Lady. It is destined to be a standard book and one of the main sources of devotion to Mary in this Marian age. The translation, unfortunately, is timid, un-idiomatic, occasionally very much below the standard of the contents. Misprints, though not abundant, are more numerous than one expects in such a work.

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LA PAROLE DE DIEU DANS LE MYSTÈRE CHRÉTIEN. By Divo Barsotti. (Editions du Cerf; n.p.)

Here is a translation by Père Roguet, O.P., of *Il Mistero cristiano e la parola di Dio*, Florence, 1954. It is a long book, but was well worth translating for the educated French Catholic public. One is glad to introduce it to English Catholics, though a short review must be quite inadequate. The theme is the action of 'la parole créatrice', God's creative utterance, among men. The Word, by whom the world was made, resumes, after man's fall, the work of creation. History, properly speaking, then begins. History is revelation of the divine mystery of redemption through the Word who effects what he declares. This mystery is typified in Israel's deliverance and the giving of the Law; and foreshadowed also in the whole series of events and prophecies up to the return from Exile. The action is accomplished and ended in the personal incarnation of the Word in Christ. Thenceforward there is no longer history, but only a participation in what has been fully revealed. The Church exists only to render the mystery present to men, in the Eucharist above all. True, the Word still speaks, not now to create, but to call men to himself.

This is a bare sketch of a work rich in suggestive detail. Especially remarkable is the section entitled 'Israel'. It shows a deep and fresh understanding of the mutual relationships of the parts of the Old Testament in the light of the New. Most valuable too is the discussion of the spiritual or typical interpretation of the O.T.; to be distinguished clearly from any merely allegorical or arbitrary exegesis. The true spiritual must be firmly based on study of the literal meaning, but as far excels a merely historical commentary as the Christian revelation surpasses mere human reason. There is much else in the book that could

be praised. Certain criticisms can of course be made. The author owes a great deal to Daniélou, Bouyer, and other modern writers. His thought may not be free from current exaggerations. That history in any true sense ends with revelation would have surprised an earlier generation. That revelation itself consists in God's action rather than his disclosure of truth is a recent idea that needs to be readjusted. For example, in John 1, 1-2, no reference is seen to the eternal relationship of the Word to the Father, but only to his action in regard to man. Père Boismard, O.P., is quoted in support. A reference to the latter's Prologue de St-Jean hardly justifies the claim. However, in spite of a certain lack of balance, there is so much that is enlightening in the book, that it ought to be made available, at least indirectly, for those who cannot read the French version or the Italian original.

JOHN HIGGENS, O.S.B.

LE SILENCE À L'OMBRE DE LA PAROLE. By Hélène Lubienska da Lenval. ('Bible et vie chrétienne', Casterman, Tournai, Belgium; n.p.)

The author has been taught by others to know and to love silence as a means to living in God's presence. Silence for her is not absence of words, for she sees that muteness is opposed to it as much as noisiness. Being silent is the condition of any soul that would be a Christ-bearer—a bearer of the Word of God. A certain exterior condition is needed for its practice by a learner, but when fully understood and lived with love it appears as 'the place where the meeting of the soul with God takes place' (p. 46). That is why it is misunderstood and feared by the world—the way organized round the Self. Silence can be understood and loved only by those whose life is centred on God, by those who have become for the most part an echo and a mirror. Only then is it seen that the meaning of silence is prayerfulness, heeding the things of God, waiting on God. This true significance of silence is revealed in the school of silence—in liturgy, which is the Christian's participation in the prayer of Christ. Liturgy is the sensible outward manifestation of Christ's prayer who became for our sake a living prayer in the Eucharist. Silence is nothing else than God speaking. The business of man is to remove all that prevents him from taking part in the dialogue to which he is invited. But this dialogue is not basically a conversation between our Self and God—that would be interior gossip, the greatest enemy of silence and prayer. It is rather God speaking to God, the Word of God living through faith in our heart blessing and praising the Father. Yet silence is not something for adults only. In fact, one of the greatest merits of this lovely simple book is to show its place and its importance in the life of children. A child is by nature a contemplative—one whose approach to the world is intuitive, one whose reaction to it is expressed by an attitude or gestures, the symbols of will. All those interested