

interesting to note that St Thomas Aquinas is there in the structure of the book as well as quoted. In this Bishop Hedley represents the early fruit of the Thomist revival.

The most notable thing about the sources of the book is that the Holy Bible is quoted on almost every page and often many times. Nor is the Bible for him only the New Testament; the Old is as well known as the New, especially Isaias and the Psalms.

Already we see appearing on the horizon the revival of enthusiasm for the liturgy and the sense of the Communion of Saints. But one feels that Abbot Marmion's books have not yet appeared, nor therefore is the doctrine of the Mystical Body more than touched upon, more than half discerned. Indeed the last fifty years have witnessed a great shift in stresses in the spiritual life. Saint John of the Cross was to be declared a Doctor of the Church; Soeur Thérèse was to conquer the world with her little simple—but hard—way; the present Holy Father was to lay down the theology of the Mystical Body and that of the liturgical revival. In one thing Bishop Hedley is in the forefront, even of our time, though the wording might be different; his devotion to our Lady is theological as well as eager. He sees her as the dispenser of all graces with her divine Son.

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AMOUR ET SILENCE. By a Chartreux: Preface by Mgr Charles Journet. (Editions du Seuil; n.p.)

This little book, written by a Carthusian monk, is edited in a series of spiritual books published by La Vigne du Carmel. The frontispiece is a photograph of what seems to be a Carthusian monastery in beautiful wooded country—no doubt the monastery to which the author belongs and of which he would seem to be the Prior. But no names or descriptions are given—save only that under the picture is printed: '*photo Carmel du Reposoir*', which seems to indicate that it is the property of a convent of Carmelite nuns.

This booklet (for it is hardly more) is divided into two parts: Part I, *Introduction à la Vie Intérieure*; and Part II, *Sermons Capitulaire*. Part I deals with the principles of the spiritual life: its supernatural object, the life of faith—the presence of God in his creation and his special supernatural presence in the souls of all (who *allow* that presence) that all may share in his own Divine life. Then we have explained the way to live in this presence—prayer both at stated times and throughout the day: the 'life of prayer'. A method of prayer is offered the reader—'*Toute simple, aussi simple que possible*'—the use of the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. The author gives us examples of these acts, but no doubt these are only offered as helps and often there

would be question rather of the attitude of the soul—in faith, hope, charity—than by the use of actual words.

In his Preface, Mgr Journet, speaking of this first part especially, declares that it would hardly be possible to deal with such high matters as are put before the reader in the little book in simpler fashion. Simplicity is certainly the 'note' of the whole booklet—at first, perhaps, the reader might be inclined to think it *too* simple. But it is evident that the whole object of the writer is to make it clear to all that the interior life and all it implies *is* simple. His object is to show all who really desire to love God and to seek him only, that God does not necessarily demand from them the experience of great suffering, great trials; that they should undergo severe penance or struggles through many difficulties in prayer. All that is essential to start on the way is 'Love and Silence'; love of God in Christ our Lord, for his own sake—a love that means the complete 'abandonment' of self to his will (or at least the intention, desire and the effort to arrive at this); silence—not only as regards external 'talkativeness', the 'silence of the tongue'—but also and especially the interior silence and solitude with God of the soul. This silence means silence from the continual tendency to start and keep up conversations with ourselves about so many unnecessary matters and so often, too, about the faults and shortcomings of other people. This way is not *easy*; it implies a kind of mortification perhaps much harder to bear, in reality, than any mortification that is self-imposed. But at least it is simple, clear and without complications.

The author makes it clear, too, that our Lord not only calls, invites, but *urges* us to accept the offering he makes to all to arrive at perfect union with his eternal Father through himself and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. He quotes the account of the Banquet in the Gospel, to which the angry host, after the series of refusals he had received, declared that those invited must be *compelled* to come. (Luke, xiv, 16-23.) God of course, never brings constraint to bear upon the free-will which he has himself bestowed upon his creatures. But, sometimes, he appears to do all that is possible short of that, to—can one dare to say it:—*cajole* souls to come to him without reserve.

The author, in giving his advice as to the method of prayer (he uses the word 'meditation', but evidently in a very wide sense—nothing 'formal'), speaks of the use of these virtues as forming 'the essential of deep, solid prayer. Instead of scattering our thoughts abroad from one point to another . . . we can go straight to God in the simplicity of our hearts: "seek Him in simplicity of heart".' (Wisdom I, 1; see p. 40.)

As to Part II, the '*sermons capitulaires*' are the sermons preached by the author to his community on the occasion of feasts, such as the Purification, the Uplifting of the Cross, the Immaculate Conception, the

Epiphany, and Christmas Eve, in connection with the life of solitude and silence of the Charterhouse. It would be impossible to do justice to these simple but excellent instructions in the interior life in a short review: they should be read as they are. Although primarily intended for Carthusian monks, these sermons will be of great use and help to all those who, whatever the outward circumstances of their lives, seek God 'in simplicity of heart'.

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RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE. By Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. (Burns & Oates; 9s. 6d.)

The title page of this little book is itself provocative; why 'A Practical Exposition for Religious Sisters'? Why not just 'A Practical Exposition for Religious' since it can be very truly said that obedience is almost more the business of men than women, seeing that the men should possess it very sincerely if they are to teach it to others, to Religious Sisters? Whether women are more prone to the abuse of authority, and therefore obedience, or not, is a vexed question, but it certainly concerns both sexes in equal measure. The contents of the book certainly apply almost equally to men and women *mutatis mutandis*.

Would it not have been as well if, at the very outset, the author had placed obedience in its correct setting among the virtues and perhaps made more of this aspect? It is not till page 57 that we are told 'obedience is a moral virtue, a quality in the will . . .' and here we are almost half way through the book! The positive nature of all virtue, and perhaps especially obedience, is a thing that needs stressing very much in a somewhat negative world of suppression. To be perfect is to act and do, not to suppress. Almost one third of the book is entitled 'Surrender of the Judgment'! There are such expressions as 'the complete surrender of his will through obedience' (p. 33) which surely suggests a cutting off or getting rid of one's will. Would it not be better to speak of the complete *Consecration* of one's will in obedience, which immediately suggests the use of the will in the service of God? Can one truly say that the negative quality of indifference is holy? Is this not rather of the nature of 'angelic purity' which in the sense of chastity just does not exist? The author has quite a lot to say about criticism, and points out that here the chief sin is one against prudence. This point might have been stressed even more, as so few ever accuse themselves in confession of the sin of imprudence. Obedience is the very life-blood of the religious life, and it is therefore all the more important that its relationship to all the other virtues should be clearly stated without depreciating either itself or the other virtues.