

It was Père Durrwell, more than anyone else, who was responsible, nearly forty years ago, for a great change in attitude to the Redemption, which had been for long generally regarded as a means of appeasing God's anger. His book on the Resurrection made it clear that our union with the risen Christ is the key to the true meaning of the New Testament. It was followed by books on the Eucharist and on the Holy Spirit with the same insistence on the exact significance of the biblical texts. The present book is a worthy successor. It shows impressively how Christian 'spirituality' should be, fundamentally, the intelligent contemplation of the Christian mystery. There is some repetition, but that is because there are formulas which prove to have deeper profundities as the book proceeds. At times, however, I shall suggest, they seem to inhibit rather than to encourage thought.

Some characteristic examples will best show Durrwell's effectiveness: 'The mystery of Jesus is never believed simply because of what he says; for in that case we should be believing in words and not in the mystery. That has to be perceived in itself, although the perception comes through a veil, that of his humanity, his words and deeds. By making himself seen and heard he is recognized' (23); 'While God sustains everything in the world through secondary causes, in the resurrection he acts without intermediary. *Even in his corporeal being Jesus lives by the first cause only, by the Father* who proclaims in his eternity "Today I beget you" ' (30); 'Jesus comes to us, not by coming down again to an earthly existence, but by drawing men to him. Even in the description of the *parousia* in 1 Th. 4, 16, where the Apostle uses apocalyptic images, he at once corrects that of Christ's descent and declares that Christ will make us rise up with him' (84, n. 10); 'Although he is called the third person, the Spirit is the first to make his dwelling in the hearts of the faithful ... *it is he in whom God begets the Son and the sons, he in whom they too are begotten by the Father*' (90); 'For knowledge of God, intuition comes first; enquiry and reasoning follow; they confirm and make clear what has been already partially discovered' (122); 'God does not show his justice as men do, handing out rewards and punishments, but by sharing it with them in his Son whom he begets, because in all things he is the Father' (189); 'Praying in the name of Jesus does not consist just in bringing his name into our petitions For the name is not only a word, it is the person thus designated: the Christian prays in communion with Christ' (225).

After all this, I hope no one will be put off the book if I mention the difficulties, incidental but important, which I find in it. They regard the use of anthropomorphisms in talk about God and the account given of the Holy Spirit's role in the Trinity. On the first issue, the Old Testament's attributions of human emotions to God are defended on the ground that God made man 'in his own image' (50). Durrwell does object to Moltmann's language about 'dissension between God and God' in the passion and death of Jesus (68—69) and about God's 'auto-limitation' in creating, but on the same page (126), and often elsewhere, talks of his 'coming out (*sortant*) of himself'. There is much talk later of the 'immolation' of God. Durrwell accepts that our language about God must never be taken literally; it can only 'point' to him. But when after writing: 'God cannot suffer after the manner of men, his transcendence puts him beyond the reach of suffering and death' (164), he goes on to say: 'Compassion is not incompatible with infinite happiness' (170), he seems to be suggesting that there *is* a divine form of suffering. What more can we expect of God than his infinite love, which is something more than a feeling? On the second issue, when we come to the claim, constantly repeated, that the Holy Spirit is 'in person the begetting activity of God', I cannot see that it even 'points' to anything meaningful. Durrwell complains that theologians 'ignore this important scriptural truth that the Spirit is God's all-powerful operation' (144). Can we say more than that the Father 'operates' through the Son and, with the Son, through the Spirit?

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