

REVIEWS

PARABOLES ET ALLEGORIES EVANGELIQUES. By Jean Pirot. (Lethiel-leux, Paris, 1949; n.p.)

The author, a professor of exegesis of the Grand Séminaire of Marseilles, has here dealt very fully with the parables and allegories of the Gospels. As he points out, our Lord spoke in parables all his life; it was one of the charms of his conversation. Therefore the author treats not only of the fully developed narratives, like the Prodigal Son, but even of the images our Lord evoked in passing: that, for instance, of the wind that blows where it will. or of the mother whose pains are forgotten in the joy of her delivery. Each, at least of the developed narratives, is dealt with at length. Its context and probable circumstances are considered. What is evidently the author's own lively translation is given, and justified where necessary. (It is interesting to notice how readily and calmly the Catholics of France produce and accept fresh translations of the Scriptures; in France there is no one authorised and familiar version.) M. Pirot takes special pains to determine the exact nature of each passage, whether parable or allegory, and the variety of each kind. He distinguishes first the simple comparison. This in its developed form is the parable. Here the terms are to be taken in their proper sense; they are to be interpreted not individually but as a whole, to drive home a single lesson. In every parable there is one principal feature or group of features that directly illustrates the reality to which attention is to be drawn. The other subordinate features serve only to bring into relief the chief point of the parable; of themselves they have no didactic but only a literary force. In an allegory, on the other hand, each feature has a didactic value of its own; it corresponds to some aspect of the reality to be illustrated. This analysis of the different types is carried a good deal further by the author; who allows also that they may sometimes exist together in a given case. There are allegorical traits in certain parables; some allegories contain features which have a literary value only. The important thing is to distinguish the different elements that occur in each story, otherwise the exegesis will lead to confusion. Such analysis is, of course, nothing new; but in this work it is set out very clearly and in full in a series of final notes. Its principles are consistently applied in the body of the book. In his exegesis the author cites the opinions of the chief earlier writers on the parables, and especially of modern French Catholics authorities such as Père Lagrange and Père Buzy (his references and bibliography will be a useful guide to the more ambitious reader). The patristic interpretations are given due weight but their allegorising passed over briefly. His own judgments are independent, well-balanced, and as a rule convincing. His explanations in general are clear and illuminating; but there are some exceptions. For instance, the section on the Unjust Steward leaves

one almost as much in the dark as before. Sometimes he labours a point, and discusses at length a problem that could be dealt with briefly; the miniature parable addressed to Simon the Pharisee is an example, of which the explanation covers sixteen pages. The Lost Sheep has a long and needless excursus on the Shepherd in Christian art. But in spite of some imperfections, the book should be of considerable value to priests and laity able to read easy French, both in their private study of the Gospels and their teaching of others.

DOM JOHN HIGGENS.

NOUUM TESTAMENTUM DOMINI NOSTRI IESU CHRISTI LATINE *secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi*. Partis tertiae fasciculus secundus. (Oxonii e Typographeo Clarendoniano, apud Galfridum Cumberlege, 1949; 21s.)

The production of the great critical edition of the Vulgate New Testament, whose publication was begun at Oxford in 1889 by John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury and Henry Julian White, Dean of Christchurch, has been going on for over sixty years. The present fascicule consists of the text of the seven 'canonical epistles' from James to Jude, and so only the Apocalypse is to come. During these sixty years 'Wordsworth-White' (generally written simply WW) has enjoyed an undisputed position of authority on the text of the Vulgate New Testament, and is essential to the exegete for any serious work on the Latin text. WW sets out to establish the Latin text as it left St Jerome's hands, and this is found to differ slightly from the usual official text, the Clementine Vulgate of 1592, for since that time much manuscript evidence has been brought to bear upon the text. WW is a critical text in excelsis: each quarto page has about six verses of text, the rest being a really complete *apparatus criticus* giving the variant readings of all independent codices (i.e. which are not merely copies of one another) and the printed Vulgates, as well as divergences from Greek readings (with their codices indicated). In its class it is a perfect work, for if it should happen that one should disagree with the reading adopted in the text, all the evidence for any other reading is there in the apparatus.

In reproducing the text of the codices exactly the editors have not inserted any punctuation or capital letters and have retained the orthography of uncontracted forms such as 'inmaculata' and write 'uerbum', 'uultus', etc., all of which look awkward to us who read every day from a modern Latin text. But these things are familiar to all who have consulted WW through the years. And every fascicule, as it appears, has for generations been welcomed throughout the learned world.

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