

servants (Mark, John). On the presence of Roman troops Dr Blinzler casts considerable doubt and his conclusion, based on an examination of the terms used by John, is that it is the Temple commandant and police who are meant. His book as a whole is an attempt to assess the guilt of the Jewish and the Roman authorities respectively for the crucifixion, and his detailed discussion, criticism and reconciliation of the sources, including the question whether the code of the Mishnah was in operation in the time of Christ, is of great value for an understanding of the persons and events of the Passion.

A note on two paper-backs; Penguin Books have issued a new edition of *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, by J. M. Allegro (Pelican, 3s. 6d.); this very readable introduction has been slightly revised and additions have been made to bring the story closer up to date. Collins have issued a book on the Gospel of Thomas—*The Secret Sayings of Jesus*, by Robert M. Grant with David Noel Freedman (Fontana, 2s. 6d.). A long introduction deals with the writing of the canonical gospels and the survival of oral material, the hitherto known agrapha, the Gnostic background and the Gnostic character of Thomas. The remainder of the book is a translation of the Gospel of Thomas with commentary. The commentary traces the parallels with the canonical gospels but does not throw much light on the inner meaning of the gnostic manipulations; granted the secret character of Gnosticism, this is naturally hard to define.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

MAKING AND THINKING. By Walter Shewring. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

There are several reasons for welcoming this collection of essays: they are the reflections on art and letters of a Christian mind at once very cultivated, honest and consistent; and they are extremely well written. These merits are rare enough to justify the reprinting of papers all of which, I believe, have been published before, except an inserted Note on Greek sculpture by Eric Gill, the thinker and artist (nowadays unjustly neglected) whose disciple Mr Shewring modestly declares himself to be. I say 'modestly' because Mr Shewring, though greatly influenced by Gill, has evidently thought out every issue for himself, and also because his own culture is in some respects much wider than was that of his master. He is that rare bird, a classical scholar who regards the Greeks (except Plato) without any special reverence and rates St Augustine and the Christian Latin hymns above Cicero and Horace. He has a keen interest in the literature and art of India, China and Japan. He can write well on Dante (he knows Italian uncommonly well) and what he has to say on translation has the authority of a long and varied experience in that difficult art.

Yet literary matters play only a subordinate part in this book; they are introduced either to point some excellent ideas on educational reform (on which Mr Shewring can speak from experience as a schoolmaster) or, as in the essay on Dante, to support the ideal of a culture based on metaphysics and the sovereignty of the intelligence. This ideal appears more or less clearly in all the essays; it governs what may be called their 'anti-modernism'. The

modern world, for Mr Shewring, is sick with irrationality. His main topic is 'making' or art, which for him—as for Gill and the Scholastics—is a thoroughly rational activity: the making well, according to known rules, of things required by body or spirit. Therefore art and utility (in the sense that includes what may be usefully contemplated) are inseparable, according to nature and reason. Their divorce in a world governed by mass-production and the profit motive involves a deep cultural debasement, the chief symptom of which, from the point of view of these essays, is the withdrawal of a small class of 'artists' from the mass of ordinary men, with the consequence that art itself has become emasculated, a prey to the vanity and illusion of a pseudo-autonomy. The decline of art as handicraft since the Industrial Revolution has joined hands with the decline of religion since the Renaissance (and of reason too—the Renaissance was intellectually a decline); the result being an art divorced from both kinds of utility, the bodily and the spiritual. This last sentence is, admittedly, what I take Mr Shewring to mean rather than what he actually says: and if he constantly implies this double 'decline', he never explains just how they are connected. In any case, he denounces on every page the 'decadence and abnormality' of the modern world, using always his criterion of the Scholastic notion of art; and this with a mordant wit and faultless logic.

Granted his premisses, then, I find it impossible not to agree, in general, with his thesis. But I have two objections, which, for brevity's sake, I must state rather crudely. First, as to the 'arts' that supply the body's needs: according to Mr Shewring's ideal they ought to be, in the main, such handicrafts as were practised before applied science got to work on a large scale. But applied science has also caused, indirectly, an enormous increase in the world's population, requiring an enormous development of natural resources to meet its needs. Is this conceivable with pre-industrial methods? Secondly, as to the arts that minister to contemplation, the so-called 'fine arts', Mr Shewring's assault on the snobbish mumbo-jumbery that has been and still often is associated with them is absolutely right in principle; but he gives his enemy a rather old-fashioned look, at least when it is poetry and the theory of poetry that he is speaking of. I don't wish for one moment to under-rate the problem of the poet's or painter's or sculptor's or musician's integration into modern society; but at least certain attitudes have changed for the better in the fifteen or twenty years since these essays were written. And even before Mr Shewring, in 1938, wrote the one entitled 'Book-learning and Education', with its splendid scorn of the 'harmonious madness' view of poetry, such a view had been badly damaged by the criticism of Mr Eliot and the practice of Mr Auden. And in general the impression given here that modern art-theory is dominated by anti-intellectualism does not, I think, quite tally with the present situation.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND HIS TIME. By Chrysostomus Baur. Vol. 1. Antioch. (Sands; 30s.)

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. By Donald Attwater. (Harvill Press; 18s.)

ELEMENTARY PATROLOGY. By Aloys Dirksen. (Herder; 35s.)