

that of Dom Pothier. 'For the over-all tradition of the chant the method of Pothier comes as close to being a plausible and practicable solution as may be expected' (p. 130). We believe that careful attention to the best gramophone records would convince him that the mensuralist solution, now abandoned or almost so by actual users of Gregorian chant, is as impracticable for the day-by-day rendering of the chant, especially in a monastic choir, as the earlier methods of Wagner and Houdard have already proved. What needs stressing is the importance of free *musical* rhythm rather than free *oratoric* rhythm. Mocquereau, we are convinced, attached an exaggerated importance to the systematic arrangement of notes in binary and ternary groups with the ictus, a theory that has no historical foundation whatever. If his general theory can be purged of this exaggeration there remains little that is open to criticism in the actual method of Solesmes.¹ For the execution of the very delicate nuances in syllabic chant any system can be abused and lead to a lamentable mechanical rendering. We fully endorse Dr Apel's wise words on this point: 'Rhythm is not the same as a fixed system, that is, a clearly formulated and consistently applied set of rules governing the duration of the notes and other matters pertaining to rhythm in the most general sense of the word. It is toward the discovery of some such system that the efforts of so many scholars have been directed—without any incontestable or generally accepted result.'

PIE BONHOMME, O.P.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Alan Richardson. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

This is the sort of work from which each and every student can profitably cull much valuable knowledge of the content of the New Testament. Page after page can be studied and found rewarding. Valuable too will be the practical demonstration of a way of seeing the New Testament *as a whole*, generating a body of doctrine which purports to and which should recognizably represent the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles. In manner and matter there is a great deal in the work to remind us that the author was editor of a theological word-book of the Bible. Thus a great deal of the vocabulary of the New Testament is explained, and we are provided with many a *nuance* and many an interpretation which has all the guarantees of good scholarship.

This much must in fairness be said. But the good qualities of the book must not blind us to the *lacunae*, nor dim our critical faculties to the point of not seeing how much is in conflict with traditional Christianity.

Thus it is rather startling to read on page 363 about the 'mediaeval mumbo-jumbo of hell and purgatory and limbo'. Purgatory and limbo

¹ See *La Méthode de Solesmes*, by Dom J. Gajard (1951).

may be too much for one who is brought up in Protestant tradition; but seemingly we must conclude that Professor Richardson has also made away with Hell. It is significant that the index references to 'Hell' are all concerned with the credal clause 'He descended into Hell', which our author rightly explains in terms of universal redemption, but then proceeds to speak of the 'mythological form in the legend of Christ's preaching in Hades' (page 211). Further, neither in the Greek nor English indexes are there any references to 'fire' or 'Gehenna'; and there is no treatment anywhere in this book of our Lord's utterances and of the considerable number of New Testament texts which need to be considered (we do in fact, for a New Testament theology of Hell, need to consider some seventy-five or eighty texts). The particularly telling texts of Mark 9, 42-48 and II Thessalonians 1, 5-10, are spirited away as a 'lurid and terrifying picture', and we are told that they are 'perhaps best taken as graphic ways of insisting upon God's character of avenging righteousness which must nevertheless not be dwelt upon to the exclusion of his character of willing the conversion and redemption of the sinner' (page 188). Such a consistent and complete silence on or boycott of a part of our Lord's teaching is, to say the least, disquieting.

But this is not all. For our author betrays a belief in 'the fixity of natural law' (page 95), and so a disbelief in miracles as traditionally understood in Christendom. For an Infinite God who has fixed all nature's bounds and workings can equally well modify and adapt them to his loving and saving purposes, and surely our author must believe that he did so in the much greater miracle of the Incarnation; if so, why balk at all other wondrous works of the God-Man, which are all part of the same divine patterning? And if St John's story of the raising of Lazarus 'is not literally true' (page 100), would it, in the mind of St John, be a *semeion* of that still greater truth which it typified? St John was nothing if not a realist, and chose his 'signs' purposefully, and knew of what he wrote: 'our message concerns that Word who is life, what he was from the first, what we have heard about him, what our own eyes have seen of him: what it was that met our gaze, and the touch of our hands . . .' (I John 1, 1). This vision of the Word is poles apart from the suggestion that St John is 'simply in his own allusive way telling the truth that Jesus was put to death because he claimed to be the resurrection and the life'.

Even more important than the mind and attitude of St John is the mind of Christ—which we should all crave and pray for. Thus we can never accept the implication of a note (page 145): 'We must put aside all modern critical notions when we try to understand how Jesus would have read the Old Testament'. Far better surely would it be to use all

critical acumen and virtuositities to find out and treasure the way in which he used the Old Testament. For the way in which he used the Old Testament is the way in which we should. And our understanding of the theology of the New Testament turns very much upon our understanding of that way as of all the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, which lives on in the Church today and to the end of time.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

THE APOCALYPSE OF ST JOHN. By H. M. Feret, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 21s.)

If there is anything that will neatly divide people into two classes, it is a book like the Apocalypse. Those who are fans, like your reviewer, will find Fr Feret's book both enlightening and sobering—and a steady de-intoxicant is a necessary companion to St John's revelation. Those whom the Apocalypse tends to fill with distrust, alarm, bewilderment and vexation should find this companion to it re-assuring, because Fr Feret displays very convincingly that there is an intelligible message intelligently presented beneath the weird imagery that is so alien to the matter-of-fact modern.

The historical *mise-en-scène* of the Apocalypse was the persecution of Domitian towards the end of the first century. This persecution was a crisis for the faith of the Christians even more than for their courage, because it raised a *prima facie* case against our Lord's claim to be the Christ, the Messiah. Where then were the promised times of Messianic blessedness? The Apocalypse is the most complete answer in the New Testament to this eschatological *crux*, and Fr Feret shows how it coherently amplifies the doctrine on the last days scattered throughout the other apostolic writings and the gospels.

He firmly maintains the prophetic, as well as the doctrinal character of the Apocalypse; besides giving us a Christian view or theology of history, it has foretold at least in broad outlines, how that history would unfold. Its prediction of the fall of Rome has come to pass; we are still living in the era of the 'ten kings' who were to succeed Rome as Satan's instruments in his war on the city of God (Apoc. xvii, 12); and the millenium, the more or less universal triumph of the gospel (xx, 1-4) is still to come before the last tribulations and the titanic struggle with Satan which will herald the day of judgment. As Fr Feret acknowledges, not all commentators will agree with this interpretation, but all would endorse his emphasis on the Christian optimism in the face of history which the Apocalypse inculcates.

The style of the book is rather too rambling and diffuse, not always helped by the translation, which turns, for example, the 144,000 companions of the Lamb on Mount Zion (xiv, 1) into the Lamb's 1,444 accessories (p. 159).

EDMUND HILL, O.P.