

order that in due time the authorities might have a wide selection to choose from. Granted that Challoner is no longer really satisfactory, it seems vain to try and stifle the contemporary translation ferment with Knox and again Knox. One can only hope that the wide use of this Little Breviary will not lead to the Knox version being taken more and more for granted by the faithful in England as *the* Catholic version.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

JESUS AND HIS COMING. By J. A. T. Robinson. (S.C.M. Press; 15s.)

In recent years non-Catholic scholars have been giving much attention to New Testament eschatology: they are concerned to relate the doctrine of the Last Things to the thought of the present day. Many of them, though insisting on the final consummation of all things in Christ, regard the New Testament picture of the End, not as a prediction of events, but as expressing only a conviction of God's ultimate sovereignty in him. The final scenes that are foretold belong to the realm of myth. Dr Robinson accepts this position, but would go further. His especial concern is with the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming; and his aim is to discover, from a critical study of the New Testament and particularly of the Synoptic Gospels, whether as commonly understood it formed part of Jesus's teaching or only emerged as the expectation of the Church. If the latter, how and why did it arise?

His thesis is as follows. Belief in a Second Coming exists clearly developed first in the Thessalonian Epistles, and then in the Synoptics. Yet, he would say, in the preaching of Jesus himself, as criticism lays it bare, in the earliest apostolic preaching and credal statements, and even in the early development of the Gospel themselves, the belief in another coming of Christ in glory does not appear. Christ through his death and resurrection has triumphed, the future is his, all enemies will finally be subdued; but the expectation of his return, as distinct from all this, arose within the Church and was not foretold by him. The predictions ascribed to him in the Gospels are not his own words, but result from this expectation. Jesus was concerned to proclaim the present crisis for the Jewish people, and its approaching culmination in his own death and resurrection. This would be at once his own glorification and their judgment: it would inaugurate his universal kingdom and result in the destruction of the city that had rejected him. All this was the final, the eschatological event; yet the New Testament writers, except perhaps in the fourth Gospel and the later Epistles of St Paul, failed to penetrate the full content of Jesus's teaching, separated out from it what seemed still unrealized, and expressed this, in apocalyptic terms, as a separate future act: he would come again.

Dr Robinson is an excellent scholar, and his book is valuable in the emphasis it puts on the final, the crucial, importance of Christ's first coming: that his life, death and resurrection were an 'inaugurated eschatology', that his Parousia is a present fact. Moreover, he would allow, even insist, that it was *only* inaugurated, that there was, and is, still a manifestation to the world, still a final summing-up of all things, to take place. Yet in refusing to Jesus and the earliest Church tradition an expectation of a Second Coming, the author seems to go too far. For one thing, his extreme radical criticism defeats itself: no doubt there are secondary strata in the Gospels; but he ends by giving the impression that every text that does not suit his thesis must be explained away. He lands himself in difficulties: for instance at the trial before the Sanhedrin he is driven to reconstruct Mark's text (xiv, 62) to provide a (for him) more primitive source for Matthew and Luke. Our Lord's warnings, he would say, were addressed to his own nation and time; his teaching was indeed eschatological, but ethical, like that of the prophets; not apocalyptic. One can reply that the prophets, even of the Golden Age, were not infrequently apocalyptic. And if their message was primarily to their own generation, that did not prevent its having also a fuller, distant and universal fulfilment. Surely we can allow as much to our Lord, and that he foresaw such a fulfilment. Because his words and acts are divine, and their deepest significance spiritual and timeless, so on the widest stage of world history his warnings are still relevant and his coming to be looked for at the end of this age. If his language concerning that future event is apocalyptic, we need not label it merely mythological. There are real events at the end of human history both general and individual, so alien from experience that plain terms fail us: apocalyptic is their natural expression. That Christ did not himself include among them his own return in glory, this book has failed to prove.

JOHN HIGGENS, O.S.B.

**SAINT JOHN AND THE APOCALYPSE.** By C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

This book is a reprint, it was first published in 1922; but that is now a long time ago, so there may be many who now come across it for the first time; to some of those many it is likely to be a great discovery. It is only a small book (150 pages) and it is, therefore, neither a complete commentary nor an exhaustive exegesis of the symbolism. It is, however, also not a mere introduction. It will introduce the reader to the Apocalypse, certainly; but it will do far more, it will help him to get to know and understand the mind of St John and the context in