

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.

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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).

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