

fundamental to the whole issue it is of little value to criticize the details of the theme of *Life Together*. But to take one instance, the notion of 'community' as it is developed here is the very antithesis of the catholic theology of the Mystical Body. All men are members of the Mystical Body of Christ—at least potentially in so far as they are all *capax Dei et gratiae*. All men are, then, members of the Church—again, at least potentially; and of those who are *actually* in union with Christ and the Church many are not and never will be visibly so. Hence all men are to be loved with the charity whereby we love God: there is no elect body of those who are predestined to heaven—in the Lutheran sense. As will be expected, there is no place for the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the priesthood in this analysis of the Christian life. A number of statements are contrary to Catholic teaching—the most obvious being that of the validity of absolution by the laity.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS. By Ronald A. Knox; Vol. II: The Acts of the Apostles, St Paul's Letters to the Churches. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

The second volume appears just a year after the first (September, 1953), the review of which appeared in *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* for May 1954. In that volume, on the Gospels, 'a companion commentary on the rest of the New Testament' had been promised. The promise was made in July 1952 (date of preface), but by October 1953 (preface of Vol. II), Mgr Knox had decided that he would go only as far as Thessalonians, and continue the rest in a third volume.

The treatment of Acts and the Epistles to the Churches follows that of the Gospels: the text is taken in sections, whose meaning is studied in relation to the context and the historical circumstances. When we read St Paul, it is especially important to be aware all the time of the main lines of his argument—so often St Paul takes a loop line, with fascinating implications, only to return to the main line miles further on. Monsignore has provided most illuminating introductions to each epistle: for instance on Romans: '... Why did he write? You get the impression that he did so with some reluctance. ... It is a natural conjecture that he had been asked to write; asked by somebody who knew, and was concerned about, the situation there. Not impossibly by St Peter. ...' And original suggestions like that abound. And Monsignore's commentary is always linking the text, especially of St Paul, with the probable circumstances; a method which makes the commentary singularly alive.

In some ways, this commentary is a book to read alongside the

text, while the text is itself being read like a book; rather than a commentary to be consulted for a particular difficulty. Or the commentary can be read by itself, when the text is sufficiently present in the memory of one who knows it well. In this, it is like Monsignore's translation, which is much more a book to be read than a quarry for quotations.

Yet we shall not be disappointed if we come to Monsignore with our difficulties; we shall usually find an answer, and often one that makes us think again.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

ST BERNARD ON THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. Translated and edited by A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Mowbray; 10s. 6d.)

Once again we have cause to be grateful to the religious of C.S.M.V. who has already given us *St Bernard on the Song of Songs* and *Lent with St Bernard*, for another 'bucketful from the same well', to quote her own words in the preface to the work under review. This 'well' is St Bernard's oral sermons, which were written down by others and revised by himself before being circulated.

The present selection is divided into two parts covering the Liturgical Year in Part One, and the Saints' Days in Part Two. The selections are well chosen so that the reader is given, in a pleasant translation, some of the best of St Bernard without having to plough his way through the long and often repetitive sermons of the Saint. We can enjoy, without danger of surfeit, some of those delightful metaphors and similes which seem to crowd one on top of the other in the unabridged sermons. The passage of the Bee, for instance, which flew to Nazareth 'and alighted on the Flower fragrant with perpetual maidenhood and settled there and stayed', or the passage in which, commenting on our Lady's compassion for the young couple's embarrassment in the Marriage of Cana, St Bernard says, 'if a man hold an apple for half a day, does not its fragrance stay with him the other half? How deeply, then, was she affected in her inward parts by Pity's power, in whom He rested for nine months!'

One cannot but regret that having been given readings for the Purification and for the Annunciation, we are given nothing for the great feast of the Assumption for which St Bernard provides plenty of material.

A. J. MEIKLE

THE ROSARY IN ACTION. By John S. Johnson. (Herder; 13s. 6d.)

It is not possible to read this book and then say the rosary just as you did before. Something happens. The rosary becomes more of a real piece of the spiritual life. I suppose this is because the book tells,