

and 100. This notion is, as so often, taken as so axiomatic that 'expansion rather than the reverse' becomes a principle, and is applied for instance to the problem of 2 Peter and Jude (p. 134). The same axiom about the unoriginality of St Matthew, of course, also compels him to conjure up the old ghost Q which Abbot Butler so convincingly laid (p. 111); and St Luke thus gets the date A.D. 80-90, which for some years was fashionable. And this leads in the next chapter to difficulties about the dating of Acts, which the author would like to place in A.D. 63—the obvious suggestion from the text—but unfortunately cannot allow himself to do because of the dates of the Gospels. Nevertheless, allowing for the axiom of Marcan priority, it must be said that these chapters are exceedingly well argued. It is remarkable in fact how many difficulties are reduced if the traditional originality of St Matthew is once more accepted.

The traditional authorship of St John's Gospel is asserted, while the alternative theories are discussed (pp. 118-20), but with regard to the Apocalypse, although 'the attribution to the son of Zebedee has much to commend it', the author feels it cannot be sustained (p. 142), and the materials of the argument are, as in the other sections, most lucidly supplied.

The last chapter deals with the growth of the canon and the idea of a canon in the Church up to the end of the fourth century when it became fixed. In general, therefore, this is a most useful book. There is a mass of evidence in its short compass, highly compressed but extremely clear, and if we take leave to hesitate about the theories which colour the study of the Synoptic Gospels and cognate problems, we find much valuable information about the origins of the various books.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS. By Ronald A. Knox. Vol. I: The Gospels. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

Just as Mgr Knox's Version has qualities which make it quite different from other versions, so is this Commentary different. It is written, Monsignore tells us in the preface, for those who 'want to read the Bible for themselves without shirking the difficulties'. And there are difficulties, even in the Gospels, apparent contradictions, obscure sayings, parallel passages, variant readings. It is this kind of thing that Monsignore is attempting to elucidate. He is not going to discuss 'intricate problems of scholarship and of historical criticism'. For these things we can go to the more massive standard commentaries, as well as for questions such as 'How large was the Lake of Galilee?'—an example given in the preface of a question he is not going to answer, although in fact he does so, albeit *en passant*, on page 220 (on John 6, 15-25).

Yet this is indeed a work of scholarship. As in his work of translation,

Monsignore is always asking himself, What do these exact words *mean*? What did they mean to the original audience? And then, in view of the rest of the Gospels, and of the immediate context, what do they *imply*? Thus every sentence is examined in the background of the whole Gospel narrative, and connected with other passages parallel or relevant.

The text of the Knox Version is taken for granted, though Monsignore often explains why sometimes he would prefer to use the Greek text. Thus there is much less preoccupation with vindicating a rendering than was provided in the *Notes on the Sunday Epistles and Gospels*, published first in *The Tablet* and then as a book in 1946, so soon after the appearance of the translation. Sometimes the commentary is an elaboration of a note printed in the Knox New Testament: occasionally it shows a development to a new conclusion, as for instance on the 'third hour' in Mark 15, 25, where the note gives the usual explanation that it indicates the period 9 a.m. to midday, while the Commentary makes the striking suggestion that it means 'three hours had now elapsed' (since they started). The Notes on the Epistles and Gospels had ultimately the same approach, yet it is remarkable how different the Commentary is, dealing with the same passage. The earlier book deals with a fragment, is still vindicating a translation, and is ephemeral in manner, sometimes almost flippant. The present book deals essentially with the whole Gospel, is frequently much less erudite (about Greek words, or citation of opinions), always more staid in its diction.

In the course of this Commentary, and its introduction, there are very many valuable ideas and interesting conclusions, often original, always rewarding, regularly presented with that charming tentativeness that has become characteristic. A handful which particularly interested one reader might be indicated here.

Regarding the Synoptic Gospels (pp. ix-x), after mention of Abbot Christopher Butler's book (which Monsignore elsewhere called a 'land-mark'), the suggestion is made that Luke's irregular dependence on Matthew could be most easily explained by his use of a document ('Q, if we like to call it so') based on Matthew, not, as in the old view, the basis of Matthew, but a collection of our Lord's sayings taken from Matthew. This suggestion is a real, new contribution.

In the notes on Matthew 2, 13, and Luke 2, 39, Monsignore faces the problem of order of events at the time of the Flight into Egypt and the Presentation, and advances the theory (so rarely held, but which has always appealed to the present writer) that the Flight may have been only a matter of a few days and have taken place between the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem and the Presentation. This would suppose that Christ was born only a very short time before the death of Herod in B.C. 4.

In the study of the parables, Monsignore would see a more frequent

reference to the Jew and Gentile question: for instance, in the Treasure and the Pearl (Matthew 13, 44) he sees the faith of the Gentiles, and he approaches the Prodigal Son (Luke 15, 11) and the Unjust Steward (Luke 16, 1) with the same theme in mind. This undoubtedly throws new light on many parables.

The problem of the census in Luke 2, 2, is studied at some length, and Monsignore suggests that Luke was trying to say something like this: 'We all know that there was a census under Quirinius in A.D. 6; I am not talking of that, I am talking of an earlier census'—whether or not Quirinius had two terms of office.

And so we could go on. But Monsignore is like the rich man in Matthew 13, 52 (Knox), 'who knows how to bring both new and old things out of his treasure house'.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

PERFECTION DU CHEF. By Dom Claude Martin; edited by Dom R. J. Hesbert. (Editions Alsatia, Paris.)

While many know something of the life and character of Marie de l'Incarnation (called by Bossuet the St Theresa of France), her son, who became the Maurist Dom Claude Martin, is a much less familiar figure. Yet it is largely to him that we owe the Maurist edition of St Augustine, and few who make use of it know that Dom Martin was twice elected assistant to the Superior-General, and that during his second term of office the very highest responsibilities of his Congregation fell to his charge.

The publication of these conferences by Dom Hesbert from a MS. of the Bibliothèque Nationale is welcome as revealing the spirit of the Maurists during the second half of the seventeenth century. Although one might expect from the title a treatise on the Mystical Body, the subject is the Being and Attributes of God, described in conferences written specially for 'Prelates, Pastors and Superiors, and all who have charge of souls', for use when they make their own private retreats.

Each of the thirty Meditations has three points, and then it is resumed in an *abrégé* likewise of three points. God's Attributes are considered as the models for Superiors, and are treated in a way that is correct, sound—and entirely uninspiring. One seeks in vain the influence of St Augustine's doctrine and personality, and one wonders why the author is so lacking in the humour and vivacity which were such attractive characteristics of his mother.

The long introduction describes the Maurists' way of life, and emphasizes the fact that they were, above all, monks and men of prayer, who led fervent and mortified lives, while their works of erudition were a by-product of a tiny and highly organized minority, in the artificially created