

Reicke compare the constitution and organization of the Essene community with that of the early Church as we find it in Acts. One is also particularly grateful to find Dr Kuhn's famous comparison between the Qumrân ritual meal and the Christian Last Supper included in this collection.

*Connecting Links Between Qumrân and the Early Church.* Dr W. H. Brownlee is especially helpful on John the Baptist here, and Dr Cullmann lucidly explains his well-known suggestion that the Hellenists whom we meet in Acts provide a further link with the Essene Sect.

*Peripheral Questions.* Fr J. A. Fitzmyer provides a clear and valuable comparison between the Covenanters and the heretical Christian sect of the Ebionites, and finally Dr N. N. Glatzer shows that the teaching of Rabbi Hillel may have been consciously formulated as a corrective to the extreme exclusivism of the Essenes.

Most of these articles are addressed to the initiated. They are intended to be read critically, and presuppose a certain familiarity with the subject. Some over-lapping in subject-matter, and some omissions (notably Hebrews and Apocalypse) are perhaps inevitable. The inconvenient arrangement of the notes at the back of the book tends to cause irritation and waste of time. But these are minor defects. Dr Stendahl has chosen most wisely. He has done New Testament scholars an immense service in assembling here some of the soundest and most fruitful suggestions which have been made during the ten years since the Scrolls were first discovered.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS. By David Knowles. (Aquinas Paper No. 30. Blackfriars; 1s. 6d.)

Leaving aside the Thomists of the old school who go to their master's works as though to a universal provider of chapter and verse to meet any occasion, and noticing the newer schools of literary criticism which narrow them to the circumstances of their composition, this lecture by a distinguished historian, addressing himself to their historical significance, asks what they owed to the past and what, if anything, was original in them. His personal testimony may be cited. 'The more and the longer the history of the thirteenth century is studied, the more does the thought of St Thomas, even considered merely as a historical phenomenon, appear as something more than just one tree, even the biggest, in a row. Others, indeed, cannot be despised; they may even touch upon points that he omits and supplement or even correct him. But if one is looking for a complete system of thought in the Middle Ages, it is St Thomas or nothing.'

Only a minority in academic circles would have agreed in the two centuries that followed his death. We must look elsewhere for the acknowledgment of his special magistral greatness, to the mystics of the Rhineland. 'Though it is still a matter of dispute whether Eckhart was a Neoplatonist with a smattering of Thomism or a Thomist with a penchant for Neoplatonism, there is no doubt that so far as Eckhart dealt with technical theology he used the Thomist idiom. It probably says much for his radical orthodoxy that his disciples are unimpeachably orthodox (and Thomist)—John Tauler above all. The result of this was that the great mystical school of the Rhineland wrote and thought in the Thomist language and built up an entirely Thomist mystical theology. This was exported wherever German spirituality went. It is seen very clearly in the English *Cloud of Unknowing* and in Walter Hilton, who follows *The Cloud*, and it is seen still more clearly in the Spanish Carmelites, above all in St John of the Cross. Although by his time the Thomist revival in Spain was well under way, it was probably not so much from Salamanca as from Tauler, directly or indirectly, that St John derived the Thomist framework of his mystical theology—by no means the least important part of the Thomist legacy to modern times.'

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

A GUIDE TO THE CITY OF GOD. By M. Versfeld. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Mr Versfeld is a lecturer in moral philosophy. Neither he nor his publishers tell us what university he teaches in, but wherever it is, the students of philosophy at that university are warmly to be envied. He has been lecturing to them for some years on the *De Civitate Dei*, and this excellent little book of a mere 138 pages now gives a wider public the benefit of his reflections on this subject.

St Augustine had a great and energetic mind, which he expressed with an inexhaustible eloquence in enormous volumes. The *City of God* must be at least twenty times the size of this modest guide to it. But the guide is wholly adequate to the vast rambling edifice, and succeeds in putting the reader in living contact with the mind of the architect. A man must be both very bold and very self-effacing to write or lecture successfully on the thought of St Augustine; if we try and tidy up his thought for him, classify his ideas into topics, his political theory, his philosophy of history, his doctrine of grace and predestination, his Platonism, his this, that and the other, then his thought immediately goes limp and lifeless in our hands, like water-lilies out of the pond. The vital element in which all his thought expands and lives is his quest for God, his faith seeking understanding. It is this context that Mr Versfeld is careful to preserve for us.