

that of some masterpiece of tapestry. It arrests the attention as a whole, and absorbs it with every detail'. Without seeming to exaggerate, I think this description does apply to the four conferences which Fr Vann gave to the members of St Joan's Alliance on the Vocation of Women.

He takes three great catholic women, St Catherine of Siena, our Lady, and St Monica and one symbol of catholic womanhood, Beatrice of Dante, and with the Gospel texts and the Pope's Encyclical on the Mystical Body he weaves a small but perfect piece of theological tapestry.

The first practical principles of the spiritual life are well illustrated from the marvellous achievement of the Saint of Siena. Our Lady naturally occupies the centre of the stage in such a theme as the vocation of motherhood and round the Pauline text of the length and the breadth and the height and the depth of God's love, Fr Vann has woven a truly satisfying meditation of practical insight. St Monica illustrates the vocation of tears in the third part, which clearly shows that the golden thread of christian hope and gladness is of the very texture of the pattern. The fourth part on the leadership of love is a fitting conclusion and it is left to Dante's Beatrice to explain to us the secret of the whole picture.

Though addressed in the first instance to an audience of women, this is an inspiring book for all and especially for priests. If a true mother, said Mgr Bougaud of St Monica, must possess a priestly heart, the heart of a true priest must be a maternal one.

P. J. FLOOD

SECOND-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY: A COLLECTION OF FRAGMENTS. By Robert M. Grant. (S.P.C.K.; 6s.)

As 'a little *corpus* of those odds and ends which link the New Testament period with the developed Catholicism of the end of the second century' this book is hardly satisfactory, being incomplete. As a textbook which brings together, in convenient shape, translations of the greater part of second century fragments, it is useful. The translation of Pseudo-Tertullian *Against All Heresies* is welcome; and the heretical fragments of the period are given at length. It is a pity that no room was found for the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne; and the commendation of St Irenaeus sent by the former church to the Bishop of Rome surely deserves to be included. It is hard, too, to see why, in the section on Pantaenus, the passages from the *Stromata*, Bk I, and from Eusebius, have been left out. Were there space other points might be raised. In general, it seems that the editor's selection has been prejudiced to some extent by his strong conviction as to the 'fluidity' of second century Christianity.

A. R.