

THE WESTERN FATHERS. Translated and edited by F. R. Hoare. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

THE ANGLO-SAXON MISSIONARIES IN GERMANY. Translated and edited by C. H. Talbot. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

At a time when the illustrated book has realized hitherto undreamed-of possibilities, a quite untravelled man finds himself, almost without knowing it, familiar with the art-objects of many periods and places. On the other hand, the taste for pre-digested reading has probably led to a marked decline in our direct acquaintance with the written documents of the Christian past. The proposed *Makers of Christendom* series should do much to remedy this, and the first two volumes are full of promise.

The late F. R. Hoare was already well-known as the translator of a particularly interesting version of St John's Gospel. *The Western Fathers* is a collection worthy of his careful scholarship. Within reasonable limits he has tried to preserve the idiosyncrasies of his authors, not excluding their defects, so that one is made fully aware of changes of style and atmosphere in passing from one to another. Undoubtedly the modern reader will find Possidius' life of St Augustine the most vivid of these pieces, written as it was, without artifice, by a man who had a prolonged personal acquaintance with the saint, and giving us a picture of him quite different from the early self-portrait in the *Confessions*. We see him here as the hard-working bishop, tireless in his correspondence and the attention to his daily duties, a lover of the common life, who 'made no will because, as one of God's poor, he had nothing to leave'. In contrast to this patently reliable account, the life, letters and dialogues of Sulpicius Severus which concern St Martin of Tours are so elaborately worked-up that a dispassionate evaluation of their contents is a good deal harder to arrive at. Mr Hoare's note on the question is frank and judicious. Least rewarding for its information is St Hilary of Arles' discourse on the life of St Honoratus, though it is probably a fair representative of the pulpit oratory of its period and, as such, deserves its place in a collection illustrative of different literary conventions. The volume also offers translations of the early lives of St Ambrose and St Germanus of Auxerre, the latter including a circumstantial poltergeist story. Each translation is preceded by a few brief remarks on its authorship and dating, and the general introduction to the whole book stresses the importance of the monastic movement in the fourth and fifth centuries which is the background common to all these outstanding figures.

Dr Talbot's *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* moves us forward to the eighth century in northern Europe. It contains translations of the lives of Willibrord and Boniface, the two greatest names in the history

of the German apostolate, of Sturm, the first abbot of Fulda, of Leoba, one of those many women whose role in the whole story of the conversions is one of its distinctive features, and of St Lebuin, another English disciple of Boniface who had known the archbishop as a boy. The essential setting for all these pieces is provided by a selection of the correspondence of St Boniface with Popes, as his canonical superiors, consolidating and confirming his work, and with his English friends in the episcopate or in the monasteries and convents which provided him with so many of his books and liturgical requirements. Finally, for good measure, there is the intriguing narrative of St Willibald's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as a reminder of that extraordinary itch to travel which Boniface himself mentions in one of his letters as a factor in the working-out of his own vocation. Dr Talbot's introduction and notes are remarkably succinct and to the point, and for the rest the translations allow the writers to speak for themselves. They introduce us to an age in which the Scriptures *in extenso*, and particularly the psalms, were committed to memory in youth, and became the source of a militant strength which could face great hardships. Yet the impulse towards the development of the active virtues was controlled and balanced by that thirst for solitude which is eloquently typified in the account of St Sturm's search for the site of Fulda, lost in a wild and uninhabited place. 'There they made small huts roofed over with the bark of trees, and there they stayed for a long time serving God in fasts and watching and prayer.' Of that side of their lives, however, they are largely silent.

It is not very evident why these otherwise admirable volumes were published without any indexes.

ÆLRED SQUIRE, O.P.

THE GROWTH OF PAPAL GOVERNMENT IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By Walter Ullmann. (Methuen; 42s.)

This book is the result of an attempt to re-think and re-assess the evidence—for the most part familiar—relating to the development of the governmental authority of the papacy 'between Emperor Gratian and Master Gratian'. It seeks to build a bridge between the purely factual and the purely ideological treatment of the subject, and so to depict the growth of the medieval papal monarchy as it were 'in the round'. The project is an ambitious one; but Dr Ullmann disarms criticism in advance by acknowledging in the preface the temerity of his undertaking, and offering his apologies for certain of the more striking omissions. Of these perhaps the most obvious is the absence of any attempt to assess the influence of Augustinian thought upon papalist political doctrine. Many of the individual topics discussed are, and must remain, controversial; but the main thesis is coherently presented and convincingly maintained. In spite of its somewhat ponderous