

introduction is flimsy, the index useless, and the general reader for whom the book must be designed is not helped by a single note, biblical references excepted.

These things are the more regrettable as there is so much evidence that those responsible for the series could do better. Dr Peebles, who is a member of the Editorial Board, presents a more satisfactory edition of Sulpicius Severus than the one hitherto available in English. The translations of Basil and Prosper of Aquitaine fill gaps at last, and we must be grateful for them. The Augustine volume will be bought by many; if for no other reason, because it has an introductory essay of nearly ninety pages, on the City of God, by Professor Gilson. The fact that there are such good things in the series only deepens dissatisfaction with the general editing. The *Ancient Christian Writers* series is clearly inspired by scholars. There is sometimes more than its pretentious binding of gold, blue and maroon, to suggest that the other series is primarily a business venture; and yet it would be ungracious to end on a note of complaint. It is a sign of hope for the future if translations of the Fathers of the Church are an attractive business proposition in America. We can envy American Catholics these two series, and regret that post-war economy makes them difficult to obtain here.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

WALTER DANIEL'S LIFE OF AILRED ABBOT OF RIEVAULX. Edited by F. M. Powicke. (Nelson's Medieval Classics; 15s.)

The life of St Ailred, by his friend and disciple Walter Daniel, is one of the most informative documents in English Cistercian history, and one of the loveliest things in monastic literature. Its pages show clearly and vividly the great Cistercian who made his abbey 'a stronghold for the sustaining of the weak', of which it could be said that above all else this was its glory: that it taught 'tolerance of the infirm and compassion with others in their necessities'. Ailred's own life is a moving story of the triumph of charity over more than ordinary physical and psychological difficulties. When, towards the end of the biography, we read that the three books which he kept always by him in his cell were the Psalter, the Gospel of St John and the Confessions of St Augustine, there comes a sense of satisfaction: there is the ancestry to which he plainly belongs.

This new edition of his biography is admirable in every way. The introduction of nearly a hundred pages gives all the information about the author, the history of the text, and the events in Ailred's life known from other sources, which readers could expect. Latin text and English translation are given on opposite pages. The translation has the freeness necessary to catch the spirit of the original, whose depth of feeling it excellently conveys. Those who are familiar with previous

volumes in this series know the high standard of book production maintained by the publishers.

There are a few changes which might be made, in reprints of what will become a standard edition. On p. xciii, *disputatio* should be *disputatio*; two letters have been dropped at the end of line 6, on p. 18 of the Latin text; on p. 45, 'truth there *was*' should read '*has*.' The use of the word 'dogma' on p. xix is anachronistic, as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had not been defined in St Bernard's day. 'Palaestra' on p. 12 might be better translated by 'training-school'. On p. 18, the translation of *uotum suum firmanit professione literali* is not only awkward, but surely misses the point. Ailred was ratifying by a final profession the offering of himself which he had made at the beginning of the year of novitiate. It may be that the translation of the sentence on p. 27, which refers to *ratio* as *membrum quoddam veritatis* also misses something. Is Walter Daniel not referring to *reason* as the instrument, the *organon* of truth? This seems to agree better with the rest of the sentence.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

THE ORIGINS OF THE AUSTIN CANONS AND THEIR INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND. By J. C. Dickinson. (S.P.C.K.; 20s.)

Mr Dickinson has not written a book that makes easy reading; but he has gone a long way to fill a gap in our knowledge of medieval religious life. Unlike other religious orders, the Austin Canons derive from no single founder. A curious result of modern research is to establish the fact that Canons Regular had been organised in most European countries long before any of them began to claim St Augustine as their founder. They looked back rather to the example of primitive Christian fervour which they found in Acts iv, 32; the precepts of monastic life which are contained in Augustine's Ep. 211 were not commonly remembered as the *Regula Augustini*. Indeed, the example of Augustine's own episcopal life seems to have had little practical effect after his death: the disasters of which the Vandal invasion was the first presage destroyed all hope of a continuous monastic tradition. The influence of the *Regula Augustini*, though it can be traced in certain passages of the Benedictine rule and in the sixth-century *Regula Tarnatensis*, does not make itself widely felt until the end of the eleventh century. In an elaborate Appendix, Mr Dickinson sets forth the rival theories of Mandonnet and Dom Lambot as to the early history of the *Regula Augustini*; he himself favours Dom Lambot's conclusions.

Austin Canons, as distinct from earlier half-secular Canons, are distinguished by three characteristic observances: in theory, and largely in practice, they are in holy orders, they live a full common life