

## REVIEWS

THE SUNDAY SERMONS OF THE GREAT FATHERS. Translated and edited by M. F. Toal. 4 vols. (Longmans.)

This collection is published in four volumes, corresponding to the liturgical divisions of the year. It appears both in a large format for libraries and in a pocket edition. The pocket edition is most attractively produced; it has markers, the paper is fine, the print, though small, is extremely clear. For each Sunday the gospel, and parallel passages, are laid out and followed by extracts from the *Catena Aurea* of St Thomas; this in turn is followed by two, or usually more, sermons of the Fathers. We are told that this work contains 'what is in effect the spiritual inheritance of every Christian'—the Sunday gospels themselves together with the traditional interpretation and teaching of the Fathers, 'in authority and influence second only to the Apostles and Evangelists themselves'. It is stated that the author's purpose has been to serve the needs particularly of the busy priest, who will here find 'placed in his easiest possible reach this treasure house of sacred lore, this quintessence of the doctrine of tradition. . . . A sermon well prepared on the matter here supplied cannot fail to be learned, solid, simple and effective.' (Foreword.) Alas! any effectiveness will be due rather to the qualities of the preacher than to the material as here presented to him. The reason for this lies in the actual translation. It does indeed seem accurate, as one would expect, and also perfectly clear; it is, however, dull, lifeless and perfectly uninspiring, belonging to a *genre* which one had hoped was of the past. As such, it does not have the power to implant in the reader the strength and life which it really possesses. It is not only what the Fathers said, but the way in which they said it, the zeal and vigour with which they spoke, that gives to us the full content of their thought. It cannot be maintained then that this work contains 'the spiritual inheritance of every Christian'; there is a vital aspect missing, and what could have been a most delightful and valuable work, is instead a doubtful quantity.

G.H.

MUHAMMAD AND THE ISLAMIC TRADITION. By Emile Dermenghem. (Longmans; 6s.)

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE DESERT TRADITION. By Jean Steinmann. (Longmans; 6s.)

These two books are 6 and 5 respectively in the *Men of Wisdom Series* which Messrs Longmans are producing from the French. From the first of them the average reader unfamiliar with Islam will inevitably