

make them in his conception of time, which is so opposed to that of the Hebrews. Furthermore, as Fr Pepler himself emphasizes, St John of the Cross—in the neo-platonic tradition—comes much nearer to the poetic, concrete Biblical manner of expression than does St Thomas Aquinas with his Aristotelian realism. Again that sharp sense of the contingent so characteristic of the Hebrew mind has its closest parallel in Duns Scotus rather than St Thomas (whose account of individuation is so clearly derived from Greek theories). I do not raise these queries because I doubt the main lesson of this new Aquinas pamphlet—that Christian mysticism must ever be incarnational and scriptural—but because I can see no future for the side-issues of platonism, aristotelianism, etc. By all means let us read Plato, Aristotle and St Thomas, but let us then forget their alien terminology and express the vision as it is given to us by their aid. It is when he does this that Fr Pepler's pamphlet is so rewarding; for it is when he expresses his own vision that he 'speaks to our condition'.

DONALD NICHOLL

WHAT LAW AND LETTER KILL. The Spiritual Teaching of Fr Francis Devas, S.J. Edited by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d.)

The late Fr Devas was known to thousands of Catholics as a preacher and retreat giver, and they will be grateful to Fr Caraman for having undertaken this work, which is a series of extracts from sermons preached by Fr Devas during the last twenty years of his life. Fr Devas never published any of his sermons, but they were taken down and preserved by some of his admirers, and it is from these that Fr Caraman has taken the extracts which form this book. They are well chosen, and illustrate admirably the spiritual teaching of Fr Devas, a teaching which is characteristic of its author, simple, practical, full of common-sense, and yet profound, showing the depth of his knowledge of the spiritual life. Fr Devas understood people, their problems and their difficulties, and many of the extracts given here show how he can be of great assistance to all who wish to live the full Christian life. The style throughout is direct and accurate, although in extract 38 the language is more imaginative than theological.

F.P.

IRELAND OF THE SAINTS. By D. D. C. Pochin Mould. (Batsford; 21s.)

'This book', says its author, 'is an attempt to write about one of the many Irelands, Ireland of the Saints, an attempt to describe how Christianity came to Ireland, and how it developed there and then came to influence and change the rest of the Christian world.' This attempt, it may be said, has been attended with remarkable success. The many

photographs are excellent, while the text is very clear. The author who is a convert to Catholicism, describes her work as an 'outline sketch': one wishes that all outline sketches were as free from confusion and superficiality as this is.

The chapters dealing with 'Ireland's place in the world' and with 'The impact of Christianity' are particularly noteworthy, the author emphasizing that the civilization of both pre-Christian and Christian Ireland was highly cultivated and fundamentally rural, 'two things which we today, to our loss and confusion, tend to pull apart and regard as opposites'. Christian doctrines came quietly into Ireland—there was no violent opposition from the old religion. The Irish Christians were not called upon to lay down their lives for the love of God, red martyrdom; rather, their love found its expression in what was called white martyrdom, which involved the extreme strictness of Celtic monasticism. But, as Dr Pochin Mould points out, there was nothing repressed or morbid about Celtic sanctity; the whole affair has a freshness and exhilaration about it, like a breeze off the Atlantic on a May morning.

For many readers, however, the interest of this book will be the chapter dealing with the monastic schools which were of such vital importance in the preservation of learning during the barbarian invasions of the rest of Europe. Ireland's own literature was added to it, her 'vision' literature, and her 'voyage' literature with its stories of Brendan the Navigator. The life of St Brendan illustrates the extraordinary attraction that missionary work has always had for the Irish. The monasteries were often situated near the great land and sea routes. Men like Columcille journeying to Scotland and Columbanus journeying to Europe really typify the spirit of Celtic Christianity; that spirit which carries out Christ's command to his apostles, 'Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'.

R.J.