

was a baby. This was the first of his many transatlantic voyages. It was in 1870, just after the Education Act had been passed, that Brother Potamian came to England to consolidate the work of his Congregation in providing educational facilities for Catholics of the new middle classes. He brought to this work his youthful zeal, a great gift for teaching and an enthusiastic interest in contemporary science. The account of his work is narrated against the background of the development of Catholic education, which was not always smooth and untroubled. It is an account, too, of the development of his Congregation's growth and increasing influence in Catholic education. Dr Battersby is already well-known through his definitive three-volume study of St John Baptist de la Salle's life and writings, and here he writes with piety of a worthy follower and spiritual son of that great educator.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE.

By J. G. Davies. (S.C.M. Press; 2 is.)

In the best French sense of the term this is a work of 'high vulgarisation'. In 138 pages it deals in turn with the geographical and historical background, with the developments of the basilica types of church, with the evolution of the central type of architecture, with the furnishing and annexes to the church buildings and with the geographical distribution of the chief remains. There is an admirable bibliography, a useful glossary and fifteen carefully chosen plates. The results of recent research are summarised concisely and fairly. It is admirably suited to be a first introduction to Christian archaeology and it is to be hoped that it will be purchased and used widely.

Some suggestions may be made for the second edition. The first section should be either much enlarged or else omitted. If only eleven pages are devoted to the historical and geographical background to early Christian architecture it is inevitable that they should contain a number of barely tenable generalisations. Perhaps the most untenable of these is the assertion that between 441 and the coming of St Augustine Celtic Christianity was 'the rallying point of European intellectual life'. But the statements that Ascum was christianised in the sixth century at the instigation of Theodora and that the indigenous Berber population of North Africa was hardly touched by Christianity would be difficult to maintain. The particular character of Syrian Christianity certainly demands a fuller treatment. The chapter on church furnishings might well be enlarged and made more tentative and the varying uses of such terms as 'thrones' might be listed. If a section were added on the traditional uses of inscriptions in churches it would have real value for the student. But these are trifling criticisms when compared to the extent of Mr Davies' achievement.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.