

Franciscans who travelled even more so . . . ' (p. 11), ' . . . customs gradually petered out' (p. 14), 'the Bible has suffered the same fate of non-usage' (pp. 16-17), and the subject suggested by the title is discussed during five pages (pp. 16-20) explaining that 'without doubt the Psalms are prayer' (p. 16). The purpose of the booklet is to encourage lay-people to make use of the breviary as a prayer-book, without necessarily attempting to recite all of it, and leaving to them the choice of Latin or the vernacular. And this is indeed a good thing. The remainder of the book (pp. 21-40) is an analysis of each part of the Office for a beginner. The explanation is much more elementary than Lancelot Sheppard's 56 pages devoted to a detailed examination of each hour.

Finally we have a book from America, reproduced (with American typography) in England. Fr McManus is a canon lawyer from the Catholic University and in his *Handbook for the New Rubrics* he sets out to provide 'a practical guide'. The greater part of the book is a re-telling of the new rubrics in a more conversational manner, preceded by some short notes on liturgical changes in recent years, especially since 1955, and interspersed with occasional references to the previous rubrics for comparison, the calendar, for instance, being given with the old ranks alongside. Local American feasts are included, but not (perhaps naturally) local English feasts (as St George I class), though there is a reference to British usage of the phrase 'High Mass' (p. 109), which in America means a Sung mass. For many readers the actual Vatican decree will be a more manageable book, with its first-class index, while Fr McManus does no more in this direction than to refer (on p. 1) to that index. Others, for whom the reading of rubrics is hard going, may find this book a little easier.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS, by Michael Gough; Thames and Hudson, 30s.

THE AGE OF ATTLA, by C. D. Gordon; University of Michigan Press, \$3.95.

The attractively presented series *Ancient Peoples and Places* includes some very good volumes and some rather indifferent ones. The plan which they follow is dictated inevitably by the antiquity of the peoples concerned, and the excavated nature of their places. A catalogue of archaeological discoveries and *objets d'art* is linked into a sequence by passages of a history that is sometimes so ancient as to be quite legendary. This was very much the case, for instance, with the de Paors' book on early Christian Ireland. Mr Gough is fortunate in having to deal with a thoroughly factual history of persecutions and heresies. Of the two parts into which his book naturally falls, the second (from Constantine to Justinian) is perhaps less satisfactory than the first (pre-Constantine) because the heresies are summarised at times too schematically. It is admittedly a great thing that Mr Gough's exposition of these confusing controversies does not bore us, but at times one is suspicious of over-simplification.

When we have assimilated the background of persecution and heresy, the

text and the excellent plans and photographs take us into the evolution of basilica building, and reveal the wide range of manifestations of Christian art. Unlike the art of Scythians or Seljuks, early Christian art belongs not to one people or to one culture, but to a whole world. This is quite obvious of course, but one does not get the full impact of what it implies until a book like Mr Gough's points out how the same iconographic scheme is used from Dura Europos to Eynsford in Kent. *The Early Christians* brings out remarkably well the way in which art can testify to one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. The book is in itself a plea that we return to our origins in art, just as we are doing in liturgy and theology. How appalling it is, for instance, that the Lateran Good Shepherd cannot be had in replica anywhere in Rome, where so many dreadful things are sold as *oggetti sacri*.

A fascinating chronicle of another kind, but very much related to the history of early Christianity, is Professor Gordon's *Age of Attila*. Mr Gough's book ends with the triumph of Justinian who, besides immortalizing himself in the Ravenna mosaics, put an end to the Ostrogothic kingdom of Theodoric. From the death of Theodosius I in 395 to Theodoric's conquest of Italy in 495, the barbarian assault on the western empire was watched apprehensively from Byzantium, and chronicled by its historians. Professor Gordon has translated the more or less fragmentary records of Candidus, Malchus, Priscus and others, so as to form a running commentary on the successive waves of invasion. The personality of Attila, with his contempt for civilized values, his austere self-satisfaction with the Hunnish way of life, and his childish obsession with gold, was something which they found horrifyingly interesting. A 'spectacle of decay and defeat' indeed, and not designed to be read for mere idle pleasure.

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