

FATHER TOMPKINS OF NOVA SCOTIA. By George Boyle. (P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York; \$3.)

All who have at heart the cause of adult education and of a vital Christianity which brings the works of mercy to the modern scene in a way our times demand, should read this book. Fr Tompkins is one of that growing band of priests and laymen who believe, with the late Archbishop McNeil of Toronto, that '... we labour under a restriction of the meaning of the word Charity in the minds of our people. They take it to apply to remedial measures only, such as a hospital, poor relief, an orphanage, etc. They do not think of it as applying to preventive measures, such as education, technical efficiency, promotion of sound family life, etc.'

Fr Tompkins was not only vice-president of St Francis Xavier's, Antigonish, but a parish priest who, by gentle encouragement and the right word in the right place at the right time, was able to persuade fishermen, farmers, miners, to co-operate in improving their lot by their own united efforts. He gave them the necessary training by providing them with good, sound, practical literature, by teaching that the works of mercy in our time include such things as self-help building groups, co-operative social action, the study of real conditions as well as doctrine. Thus he was able to see the simple and depressed (both economically and spiritually) fishermen of his parish of Dover successfully combating the great impersonal forces of capitalism. He was one of those who helped to make St Francis Xavier's into a university with its roots in the land and among the common people of the towns and villages, a centre of education and inspiration for all and not only for those who took courses within its walls.

France has its *Economie et Humanisme* movement, Canada its Antigonish with its fine harvest of co-operative reform. Is it not time the Catholics of England proved that they too are able to show visibly that the Church in our own country is able to bring forth treasures new as well as old?

REGINALD TREVETT

BROTHER POTAMIAN: EDUCATOR AND SCIENTIST. By W. J. Battersby, Ph.D. (Burns Oates; 15s.)

When Brother Potamian of the Congregation of Brothers of the Christian Schools, better known in England as the De La Salle Brothers, died in America in 1917, an American Dominican published an article on him, describing him as 'an ideal educator and scientist'. This was but one of many laudatory articles, and now Dr Battersby, of the same Congregation, has paid further tribute in his biography of the Irish boy who came to exercise a great influence in English and American Catholic education during the last century.

The parents of Michael Francis O'Reilly emigrated to America from Ireland at the time of the potato famine when the future Brother Potamian

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.