

Reviews

BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION.

By J. Arnott Hamilton, B.D., Ph.D., Hon. F.R.I.A.S., with a Foreword by Professor D. Talbot Rice, M.B.E., M.A., B.Sc., D.Litt., F.S.A.; London, Batsford, 1956, 302 pp., 42s. net.

Dr Arnott Hamilton is to be warmly congratulated on the second edition of his excellent book. The first appeared in 1933 and in the intervening years has been in steady demand. The exhaustion of that edition gave opportunity for a thorough revision and expansion of the text, and also a reconsideration of the illustration. In consequence there are now 175 illustrations, the great majority of which are new, and which include plans, drawings and photographs. There is an additional chapter on the domed churches of Aquitaine, and the most recent ideas on architectural construction are taken account of throughout. The chapters on the architecture of churches in Constantinople, Salonika, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Palestine, Syria and Egypt, as well as elsewhere, are not only satisfying and valuable for the specialist and the professional architect, but are written in such simple, clear and straightforward style that the ordinary reader should have little difficulty and much interest. The volume would in fact be an excellent handbook for the tourist, as Professor Talbot Rice points out. But behind the factual scene the reader can perceive the high-minded and devout spirit of the author, this being perhaps particularly evident in the last, and all too short, chapter on "The Spirit of Byzantine Architecture". There is a very good bibliography and a useful index of places whereby the reference to any church mentioned in the text or in illustration can be readily turned up. There is a great deal in the book beyond the purely architectural interest—the general history of Byzantine Art, of the Eastern Church in its many divisions, mural and other decoration, and so on. This volume should greatly stimulate interest in the Eastern Churches, not only in their buildings but also in their worship and indeed their whole life. It remains to say that the volume is produced in every way in accordance with the high standards of the publishers.

JOHN A. LAMB

THE OXFORD EASY ANTHEM BOOK, a Collection of Fifty Anthems: with Supplement, price 12/6 net; without Supplement, 10/6 net. Oxford University Press, 1957; pp. 234.

This volume, published by the Oxford University Press in conjunction with the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the Church of Scotland, meets a long felt need. The choice of music in many churches up and down the country has in the past left much to be desired. In some cases, perhaps, the musical authorities of the churches have not been to blame, for there appears to have been no collection of easy, well-written anthems available, and to find suitable music involved laborious research through the publishers' catalogues. In the book under review, however, we have a well-bound, slim volume, easy for choristers to hold, with words and music in good, clear type, and containing much attractive music, both old and new. For those choirs who feel that the *Church Anthem Book*, OUP, 1933, is too difficult for them, they will find in this new volume a selection of music suited to small choirs, with organ accompaniments well within moderate capabilities; where the pedals are called for, no great demand on technique is made.

The selection of music has, on the whole, been well done, although it is disappointing that the names of both Byrd and Gibbons are absent. One feels that if choirs are capable of tackling "My spirit longs for Thee" (Dowland, No. 27) with its rhythmic intricacies, or the contrapuntal "All people at this hour" (Bach, No. 20), room could have been found for such little masterpieces as "O Lord, increase my faith", and "Almighty and Everlasting God" by Gibbons, and "If ye love me" by Tallis. Moreover, as most choirs have a preponderance of sopranos, could not Byrd's SSATB "The souls of the righteous" have been included? These could have taken the place of the few pieces—the very few—which are of doubtful musical merit. The fact that some of these (i.e. the Gibbons and Tallis) appear in the earlier *Church Anthem Book* is beside the point; the new book already contains one or two works from the older volume.

The foregoing criticism apart, however, there are many features to admire, not least being the useful classification of anthems for the seasons of the Christian Year; for the Communion Service, for Saints' Days, and for general use, and the fact that in addition to SATB anthems, there are

others for unison and two or three-part singing, some in which tenor voices are not required. Where an anthem is intended for unaccompanied singing an accompaniment can be provided, if necessary, from the condensed vocal score ; if the latter is absent the accompanist could play the vocal parts, which are in nearly all cases on two staves.

It is good to see Bach represented with a number of easy anthems, excellent for training a choir in balance and tonal quality. There is a splendid Easter section ;—the anthems by Stanton, " Alleluia ! hearts to Heaven ", and Bulloch, " Good Christian men ", will make an immediate appeal, as will Henry Ley's " Choral Hymn for Advent or Ascension-tide ", based on a Scottish melody. Among a wealth of good things may be mentioned Vaughan Williams' " O how amiable ", for a dedication or general use ; Armstrong-Gibbs' two-part " Bless the Lord " (Harvest) ; Vittoria's " Jesu the very thought " ; L. J. White's " A prayer of St. Richard of Chichester " ; and George Oldroyd's " Ye watchers and ye holy ones ".

The Supplement (for Scottish use) contains easy settings of the Canticles. Surely these ancient hymns of Christendom should be sung more often in Scottish churches ? The *Te Deum* and *Benedictus* by Vaughan Williams, founded on well-known metrical psalm tunes for unison or mixed voices, is a fine, vigorous piece of writing, as is also George Dyson's unison *Magnificat*. The Supplement concludes with a unison setting of the Communion service by L. J. White, well suited for choir or congregational use. One could have wished for a plainsong setting also : the old plainsong melodies can never be surpassed in their power to evoke the devotional spirit in worship.

The publishers are to be congratulated on an excellent collection of easy anthems and canticles, and it may be hoped that the book will have a big influence in raising the standard of music in churches generally. The book is not available in tonic sol-fa, which may restrict its use.

WILFRED J. EMERY

THE ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTTISH POST-REFORMATION CHURCHES, 1560-1843. By George Hay. Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press, 1957. Price in United Kingdom, 63/- net.

Mr George Hay possesses all the qualifications for writing a history of Post-Reformation ecclesiastical archi-

ture in Scotland. He has a deep love for his subject and a thorough understanding of its spirit. He has a profound knowledge of the churches which he describes, and has spent many years in visiting them throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. He is a scholar who has a keen insight into the religious and economic tendencies which helped to form the nature of its buildings. He is a devoted churchman who has approached his task not only with reverent understanding, but also with a real desire to be of service to the Church.

Mr Hay has used these qualifications to the best advantage, and the result is a volume which will occupy a permanent niche in architectural literature. An introductory chapter deals with the state of medieval churches at the time of the Reformation, and with the attitude of Calvinism towards art. In a series of able and scholarly chapters the author then traces the development of the plan and elevation of the Scottish kirk right down to the period of the Disruption in 1843. The narrative is clear and straightforward, but at the same time is furnished with copious details and exhaustively illustrated by description, or mentions the individual churches.

The various plans are passed under close review according to periods. There is the simple rectangular plan which can be most pleasing, like "the attractive little kirk of Pettinain (1696) which has a projecting belfry over a forestair at the western end". Of particular interest are his accounts in succeeding chapters of the origin and continuance of the well-known T—plan, "a classic Scottish type for new kirks until the 19th. century". It is one of these T—churches, Polwarth in Berwickshire, which forms the fine frontispiece to the volume.

Less common plans, like the cruciform, the octagonal, and the elliptical, all have their due place, while the information about the long survival of Gothic will doubtless be new to many readers. The "galliered hall-churches" of later days are carefully analysed, while one of the most valuable sections in the book is that on the delightful little belfries which are so characteristic a feature of many Scottish kirks of the 17th. and 18th. centuries.

A great deal of scholarly information about communion tables, pulpits, lofts, colour decoration, and other ancillary subjects adds to the value of the architectural descriptions. The admirable inventory of churches, arranged by counties, with dates, will be of the utmost assistance to both the student and the tourist.

The volume is beautifully produced, and worthy of the high standard achieved by the publishers; and a fine collection of photographs amply illustrates the text. With this volume as a guide the reader will approach the old Scottish kirks of the past with an added interest and a richer appreciation of their worth.

J. ARNOTT HAMILTON

YOUR PARISH CHURCH, the Twelfth Report of the
Central Council for the Care of Churches in England.

There is no better or more authoritative guide available than the Reports of this Central Council, so long under the leadership of the late Dr F. C. Eeles, to whom modest tribute is paid in this Report. It governs all that is now done by way of renovation in the churches of the Church of England, and all advice given comes from leading authorities. It is quite invaluable as a guide, and should be on the bookshelf of every parish minister. If it were, it would save us from many mistakes and miscalculations in the renovation and "restoration" of our churches in Scotland, and the dubious advice which is often given, and alas, followed. Of particular interest in this Report is the trend evident in England to make the altar accessible to the people, and it seems odd that England should lead Scotland in this respect. The illustrations are superb, and fascinatingly informative. The cost of the Report is modest, and is available by post for five shillings, from Miss Judith Scott, Acting Secretary, Fulham Palace, London S.W. 6.

The founder and first Secretary of the Council, Dr Eeles, was largely inspired by the late Professor James Cooper, and was himself an Aberdonian. Recognition of his great work was acknowledged on both sides of the Border, for he received the degree of D.Litt., from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and of LL.D., from the University of St Andrews. There has appeared this year his last work on *King's College Chapel, Aberdeen*, Oliver and Boyd, 30/-, a place which early won and always retained his deep affection.

WILLIAM D. MAXWELL