

## BLACKFRIARS

of Byzantine architecture in the various countries of the East, its arrival in the West through Italy into France where its influence is still vital in the great Romanesque churches. There are many excellent photographs and plans : and in its completeness and thoroughness the book may literally be described as indispensable to any serious student of architecture. A.M.

HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH. By Benedict Williamson. (Ouseley ; 10/6.)

This title suggests that the book is meant to supersede the architect. This is not so. It is a general guide to both priest and architect, for it outlines the most important requirements and principles which must be uppermost in the planning of every church. Following St. Charles Borromeo, who issued instructions on church building for the diocese of Milan, the author deals briefly with style, material, plan, foundation-stone, façade, baptistery, altar, etc., for the most part clearly, assisting his exposition with a number of useful illustrations.

Many points here insisted on are of value, such as the need for solidity, light, ventilation, roomy sacristies, and spacious altars. But the most refreshing aspect of the book lies in the author's unhesitating adoption of the modern style of building. The revivals and copies so common in England are set aside as completely dead. The direct and simple style embodying the inspiration of the modern age has been adopted in many places on the Continent for ecclesiastical architecture. This book will have achieved much if it succeeds in shaking the pertinacity with which English-speaking countries cling to the moribund Gothic and Classical styles for all religious purposes.

The author, however, discloses a strange anomaly when he discusses painting and sculpture. He inveighs without qualification against the so-called 'distortionist' art, and sets up as a model a weak type of modern art descended from Pre-Raphaelitism. Consistency demands that his characterization of the modern style—'simplicity, solidity and dignity,' and 'a dependence upon line and form rather than upon detail' (pp. 123-4)—should be applied equally to sculpture and painting. A visit to a modern church on the Continent complete in all detail with non-photographic, simple, symbolic statues and stained glass, compel the feeling that these are in keeping with the church and inspired by the same living style.

The treatment of the subject matter is perhaps too brief and sketchy, resulting in overstatement and omission. In fact, the book shows signs of being written in a hurry. But anyone having some acquaintance with differences in style and plan in churches will find this a very practical book. C.P.