

This book will be valuable to students of Patristics and to all who realise with what incomparable sense of right measure the Fathers were able to combine their enthusiasm for Scripture and Liturgy with a lucid appreciation of a pastoral situation in no way better than our own.

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PATROLOGY. Vol. I: The Beginnings of Christian Literature. By Johannes Quasten. (Spectrum Publishers, Utrecht, Brussels; n.p.)

The writing of a good introduction to any branch of study might almost be taken as a test of one who is competent to speak as a master. How delicately must he exercise his gifts of judgment and selection, how continuously bear in mind his capacity as guide, where the temptation to a *simpliste* finality must so often occur! Professor Quasten has these virtues in an eminent degree. His summaries are brief and clear, as only one very much at home with his matter could make them, yet he always indicates where the problems occur and, without refraining from offering his own solution, does so with courtesy. He contrives to give a real foretaste of the writers he is discussing by the use of ample quotations, but he does so in such a way that they form a true element in his economy. The section on Irenaeus is perhaps particularly successful in this respect. One may notice, too, that in a volume of roughly only three hundred pages he can find room for half-a-dozen on the Odes of Solomon, most of which are translations. It is this ability to retain an air of space and generosity that prevents his book from ever descending to the level of an indigestible potting and enables him to achieve so much in a very illuminating initial survey of Christian writing up to Irenaeus.

But these are not the only merits of his new patrology. His bibliographies are a storehouse of up-to-date information. He gives particulars of critical editions and translations, and then after each section, and frequently after each paragraph, lists of studies and articles. This makes his volume as valuable a work of reference to the initiated as it is a reliable guide to the beginner. Professor Quasten has already put us in his debt by starting the *Ancient Christian Writers* series of translations in 1946, and this new book increases that debt. It is a delight both to handle and to use.

A.S.

THE ART OF PREACHING: A Practical Guide by Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

TREATISE ON PREACHING. By Humbert of Romans, translated by the Dominican Students, Province of St Joseph. (The Newman Press; \$2.50.)

Fr Valentine anticipates an immediate criticism by his choice of a title. His book is about a technique, and he might argue that complaints that

he deals too cursorily with the theological and liturgical significance of the sermon are irrelevant since he is simply concerned with how the thing is done. It may be doubted, however, whether in this, as in so many other matters, an emphasis on means is as effective as it might be had there been a more developed consideration of the end the sermon serves. Fr Valentine is of course aware of the sermon's functions as a liturgical action ('liturgical', that is to say in the sense that the official place and time of preaching is within the Mass, and its classical form the homily on the Gospel of the Mass), and in a brief chapter on 'Remote Preparation' he insists on the 'Christian relationship between Pulpit and Altar'. But there is little to suggest that the sermon, *mutatis mutandis*, should find its context within the Mass of Catechumens (the Mass of the Learners), developing the pattern of evangelical instruction that in daily fact precedes the offering of sacrifice in which the faithful are to share. And the recovery of this sense of function (which after all was wholly characteristic of the Fathers of the Church for centuries) is perhaps part of the 'art' as well as of what might be called the 'archaeology' of preaching.

But granted this limitation Fr Valentine's book is, as we have a right to expect, an authoritative and useful guide to the many practical problems of effective preaching. Here are valuable chapters on voice-production, relaxation, articulation, acoustics, timing, the use of the hands and even one 'on being interesting'. Particularly valuable is the second part which deals with extensions of the apostolate—retreats for layfolk, group discussions, speaking to children, the use of mime. In all these spheres Fr Valentine brings to bear a wise experience and a real understanding of contemporary needs. It would be hard to think of a more reliable introduction to the numerous techniques which a young priest should aim to acquire in order to give to his preaching its fullest effect.

The translation of Humbert of Romans' treatise on preaching is very welcome. As the fifth Master General of the Dominicans he wrote with a special authority and his words give us a picture of Dominican preaching in its spring. His treatise itself is, of course, faithful to the conventions of its time, and its ingenuity in numerology as well as its sometimes startling accommodation of the senses of Sacred Scripture are no longer likely to be models for the preacher. But the wealth of quotation alone shows on what resources the medieval preacher was able to draw, and the industrious students of the St Joseph Province of the Order of Preachers have done a most useful piece of work in revealing the strong biblical roots of Dominican preaching.

I.E.