

CATHOLIC CHURCHES SINCE 1623, by Bryan Little. *Robert Hale*, London, 1966. 256 pp. illustrated. 42s.

Because no one else has written a comprehensive study of this subject, Mr Little's book will remain for a long time a standard work. It is detailed and exhaustive, even exhausting; for the story of Catholic church building from penal days to the present is fragmentary and tortured.

The limitation of the book is that it deals only with England and Wales and excludes Scotland, thus depriving us of some valuable 18th- and 19th-century contributions, of the greater part of P. P. Pugin, of Macpherson, Fairlie, and Coia, probably the most significant church architect in Britain today; and this seems unfortunate, because they form part of the same story, and help to relate Catholic churches to the development of architecture as a whole.

This is a limitation throughout. By looking only at Catholic churches, with occasional side-glances at other work, Mr Little leaves unanswered the question of how or whether this notable volume of building has contributed to the history of architecture. At times one feels that it hasn't: that here is a self-defensive sect growing in upon itself, and becoming isolated from the mainstream of architectural thought. That happened just before and after the war, and Mr Little indicates the failure of the Church in those years—a failure that would have been even more striking if he had compared it with the church building of post-war Germany and of the Cologne diocese in particular. It was a dismal chapter in the Church's history, and still requires some analysis of the attitudes of the clergy responsible for commissioning the buildings.

Mr Little rightly emphasizes the work of A. W. N. Pugin in promoting the real Gothic revival; but here again he misses a lot of Pugin's significance as a key figure in the development of functionalist theory, which

ultimately relates him to modern architecture. It would have been useful to examine his ideas in the *True Principles*, and to take account of their implications, as did Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* (a work which he surprisingly ignores). Pugin therefore emerges as a partly successful church architect rather than the major theorist as well as practitioner that he was.

And it is sad to find an author still misunderstanding the Liturgical Movement. He seizes on a parallel with Mr Stephen Joseph's advocacy of 'theatre in the round', and misinterprets both movements. 'Churches with their altars in the centre, and with their laity seated all round the resulting circle, are among those urged, and in some places built, by some of the Liturgical Movement's enthusiasts.' Had he investigated the Liturgical Movement fully, especially on the Continent, and related it to the work of architects like Schwartz, he might have appreciated why knowledgeable followers of the Liturgical Movement, far from urging altars surrounded by the laity, are deeply critical of such parodies of their principles. He would then find himself in agreement with them.

It seems very suitable, at a time of ecumenical dialogue, that the story of Catholic churches in England and Wales should become at last a piece of history. Modern Catholic church architecture can no longer be treated in isolation from both ecclesiastical and secular architecture of all kinds. That is why this book in no way replaces the major studies by Mr Peter Anson, which the author acknowledges. It makes the situation more hopeful than it has been for some years; and Mr Little's achievement may be that he has written up and closed the lid on a story which has come to an end.

PATRICK NUTTGENS

LE TIERS-MONDE L'OCCIDENT ET L'EGLISE, *Les Editions du Cerf*, 1967.

This is a collection of papers contributed to a conference organised by *Mission de France*. The writers concern themselves with various questions about economic development and under-development, the relations between the Third World and western nations, and the implications and problems for the Church. The standard of some of the contributions is

very high. There is strong contrast between wide papers surveying the whole field and papers on particular countries, which is itself educational. The tone is committed and urgent, and the reader is given plenty to ponder on.

The papers are arranged in descending order of generality, so that the volume opens with sweeping discussions of the nature of under-