

Blackfriars

mate his position in the history of Gallicanism. This tends to place even his political activities in a false perspective since he had first gained political influence as a leader of the lower clergy, had maintained it as the ablest spokesman of the 'constitutional' priests and was to retain throughout life the mentality of a seminary professor. But though an authoritative biography still remains to be written, Lord Ashbourne has achieved that rare and admirable thing, an essay in objective history.

G.M.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, or The Witness of the Apostles to Christ. By the Rev. O. R. Vassall-Phillips, C.S.S.R. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; pp. xxxvii-506; 8/6.)

'Christianity . . . is essentially an historical religion' (p. 30), and it is fitting that this, the last book from a life devoted to the apostolate, should be an examination of historical evidence. We may show the likelihood of revelation, the reasonableness of Catholic doctrine, the desirability of Catholic life; but when people have been brought as far as 'It would be nice if . . . ' or even 'I wish it were . . . ' they will come to 'But is it true?' and at once we are on historical ground. Fr. Vassall-Phillips has carefully set out the evidence of the apostolic writings to the divinity of Christ, adding a short analysis of the testimony of the Gospels. Then, having shown what their faith was, he proceeds to show that their achievement is inexplicable unless that faith was true. Instead of the now familiar statement of the advantages that the Roman world of apostolic days offered for the spread of Christianity, this book considers the difficulty of the apostles' task and the almost insuperable obstacles with which Christian belief and morality were confronted in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman world of their time. Lastly there is a section on the identity of their faith with the faith of Catholics to-day. Critical questions are, in general, only lightly touched, and the book is intended for the educated man who is not a specialist. It is written with a warmth of personal conviction that is very attractive, and is commended in a foreword by the Archbishop of Liverpool. Catholics should not ignore it as meant only for outsiders; the author well says, 'at least for the great majority of Catholics . . . it is not God's will that they should live, so far as their faith is concerned, an absolutely inert mental life.'

Three points of detail may be mentioned. The sentence on p. 48, 'there is such a thing as an acceptance—more a reasonable acceptance—of Christianity with which the intellectual

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faculty, as such, has little or nothing to do,' might prove misleading and should be read with what is said of the act of faith on p. 229. It is accepted (pp. 120, 146) that the Apocalypse was written at about A.D. 95; but we are also told (p. 144) that 'we may be sure that the book was written by St. John somewhere about twenty years before he wrote his Gospel and Epistles,' which seems to give a very late date for them. Finally 'not' has been omitted from the quotation in line 1 of p. 23. The book is clearly printed and the price is very reasonable. We wish it had allowed a more attractive binding.

A.E.H.S.

BROADCAST MINDS. By Ronald A. Knox. (Sheed & Ward; pp. 275; 7/6.)

Father Knox, in his latest diatribe against the press-mindedness of our intellectuals, has administered an ever sharper rap over the knuckles than usual. In *Caliban in Grub Street* he proved that our little specialists did not really believe in what they said; in *Broadcast Minds* he is afraid that they do; and for the sake of their souls he proves them wrong. He has an answer for all their panaceas—from Lord Russell's 'How to cure the Blues' to Mr. Heard's 'Let's play hide and seek with History.' 'Off with his head,' roared the Queen; Father Knox is not satisfied until he has knocked the head through the hoop with a croquet-mallet made from the rest of the victim's body. And this game is naturally entertaining for everybody except the mallets. Mr. Mencken, the American humorist, perhaps comes off worst; Father Knox disarmingly congratulates him on his exquisite wit, and proceeds to explain the more humorous passages for the benefit of those readers who might have been led to take them seriously. 'Poor Pagliacci, has not a clown a soul as well as other men?' Professor Huxley is treated courteously but firmly; Mr. Davies is trampled upon for dealing the death-blow to Aristotelian ethics, without showing any signs of having consulted them. Perhaps the best thing in the book is the *reductio* of Professor Huxley's Nicene Creed to the delightful *absurdum*, 'I believe in three Persons—and no God.'

Mr. Gerald Heard in a recent newspaper article makes the illuminating statement: 'Before psychology was discovered, man relied wholly upon reason.' I presume that Mr. Heard means 'psycho-analysis,' for a knowledge of psychology is, and always has been, one of the most important attributes of a Catholic priest. It is perhaps a pity to be forced to jilt our