

Blackfriars

WHAT ARE SAINTS? Fifteen Chapters in Sanctity, broadcast by C. C. Martindale, S.J. (London: Sheed & Ward; pp. 157; 1/-.)

Listeners to Father Martindale's talks on the Saints broadcast last winter will welcome their reproduction here in a form which makes them a permanent and precious possession whose value far exceeds the modest price. The book is a marvel of compact wisdom and intense vitality illuminating the meaning and the lessons of sanctity as lived by men through the Christian centuries.

A short extract was read in school to a class of boys to drive a point home, and within three days more than a dozen copies of the book were asked for by the boys themselves, who are now buying, borrowing and reading it.

May we beg for further talks by Father Martindale in the future, so as to bring us a companion volume devoted to women Saints?

T.-A.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY. By G. G. Coulton, Litt.D., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A. (Faith Press; 7/6.)

Dr. Coulton, whose work on medieval, monastic and social history is rightly esteemed by scholars as of great importance and learning, carries on as a sideshow a variety of machine-gun practice against the Catholic Church. He sprays one position after another with his exciting bullets, and never seems to tire. But bullets are apt to miss their mark if the objective is not clearly seen. And this time at any rate, we think, it has definitely not been seen. The book is a really rich collection of 'cases' taken from the whole range of Church history, which are supposed to hit the dogma of infallibility and puncture it infallibly. But, curiously, nowhere in the book can we find any indication that the author precisely understands what that dogma is; he seems to assume that the reader knows and will consequently appreciate the relevancy of his 'cases.' And this omission is, in fact, the fundamental weakness of the attack. It would be impossible, of course, in a notice such as this, to deal with the multitude of instances he brings forth, but each of them, we think, could be demonstrated without any evasion to be beside the mark.

Not that Dr. Coulton is entirely to blame. Satisfactory works in English on Infallibility are few. Besides there is a great need for a thorough history of the dogma that would illustrate its gradual clarification through the centuries. Such a work indeed would be the only satisfactory answer to the array of evidence here produced.

A.M.