

BLACKFRIARS

our Belloc more acute if no less defiant than the Doctor. Indeed the point might be (temporarily) conceded. If my sense-data are delusions, they are yet part of reality, and must be explained: they are contingent, yet not controlled by my mind: therefore not its creation, but the creatures of some other, necessary, Being.

After God, Revelation. First, the need for it. Secondly, if a revelation, then a witness of it: or it is but a vision to a few, and nothing to posterity. Mr. Belloc describes the marks he postulates of this witness, betraying his feeling rather in the choice of metaphor than in any disturbance of his calm and simple style: in the last lines the sceptic is invited to have the courage of his honesty and identify this witness with the Catholic Church.

'I count religion but a childish Toy, And hold there is no other Sin but Ignorance.' If it can be done in a hundred pages Mr. Belloc makes it impossible to hold these two beliefs at once.

L.C.G.

BELIEF IN MAN. By Philip S. Richards. (S.P.C.K; pp. 193. 7/6.)

The anti-humanist implications of the evolutionist theory are a danger not only to belief in God but belief in man also, for if human nature ceases to be regarded, in the Aristotelian phrase, as a Real Kind, if there are no absolute human standards and values, he is inevitably dethroned and becomes merely another moment in the Heraclitean flux. If, on the other hand, we are to retain our humanist values and traditions we can only do so by upholding those standards as absolute and ultimate. This book offers a very thoughtful and cogent argument in this sense. Its positive and constructive side is, though the author is not, it appears, a Thomist, a fine defence of a Thomist thesis, for it advocates that completion of man both naturally and supernaturally which is precisely the programme of Thomist humanism, and regards the uncoordinated state of the sciences as only remediable, finally by the 'reinstatement of Theology,' and, until that becomes more feasible, by the reinstatement at least of absolute human standards.

REVIEWS

On its critical and destructive side the book is less successful because too facile. To say that psycho-analysis is anti-rational is a confusion surely between repression and restraint; to accuse Aristotle of arguing in a vicious circle because his virtuous mean is 'as the prudent (or virtuous) man would define it' is a confusion between prudence as an intellectual and as a moral virtue, for it is the reason which defines the moral; to say that St. Thomas 'worked up' the Aristotelian ethic into a 'systematic if ultimately unreal harmony with the principles of the Gospel' and that he does not 'quite succeed in equating Aristotle's pursuit of the chief Good with the Christian love of God,' which conclusions one cannot help regarding as too swift and sweeping; such things as these seem to lessen the value of the book and to weaken the force of the argument.

These criticisms are, however, of minor importance: the substance of the book is extremely significant and valuable, and puts in the author's debt anyone who has the ideals of Christianity or humanism at heart.

L.S.G.V.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION. By J. Howard and J. J. Ingram. (Sands; pp. 278; 2/6.)

Intended merely as a summary of the Apologetics prescribed for the Inter-Collegiate Examination, this small book includes chapters on God, the Soul, Revelation, Christ, the Catholic Church, and more. The implication, that the proved 'fundamentals of religion' include at least this much, is a pleasant one to-day, when thought and language are so slack that our intelligent atheists have only to feel the exhilaration of a moment's altruistic effort to conclude, in regretful good faith, that they have 'had a religious experience' (see Mrs. Mitchison's article in the *Nineteenth Century* for June).

Intense compression makes the authors' style rather graceless and jejune, especially in the earlier chapters, and difficulties are freely remarked and freely dismissed. But the spirited chapters on Our Lord's Divinity and on the Church are an excellent hand-list of the arguments. The appendix on the theories of Man's evolution should be expanded in the next edition.

L.C.G.