

## BLACKFRIARS

by sin." Sin then, incidentally, is bared as the essentially nihilist force it is, tearing down the fabric of creation. And the waves sweep on to carry on their crest the cause of what is being termed Christian humanism. "Throughout the whole Christian scheme perfection is not something to be created by man, but something to be recovered, a gift that has been lost . . . ."

If only the style and the form of this book were as luminous as the thought it would be a masterpiece. RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

### HISTORY

A HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH. By J. W. C. Wand. (Methuen; 8/6.)

HISTOIRE DE L'ÉGLISE. By A. M. Jacquin, O.P. (Desclée de Brouwer; 2 vols.; 70 frs.)

In the first volume the Archbishop of Brisbane deals serenely with five centuries in 250 pages. His study will be found to possess all the qualities of the successful manual: quick concision, a factual accuracy and a patient lucidity of thought. Perhaps lucidity is its chief defect. The alien complexity of those five hundred years, the slow pressure of involved vested interests, the catastrophic influence of individual will, the tangled conjectural evidence are hardly conveyed by its clear sentences. The straightforward moral judgments and the neat summaries seem hardly to take into account the kaleidoscope of Hellenistic-Christian cultures and the intricate sophistication of Byzantine thought. The Anglican theological students for whom this series was primarily intended will find themselves among familiar certitudes under a very English sky.

A very different convention is illustrated by the *Histoire de l'Église* of P. Jacquin, O.P. "*Ce n'est pas un manuel—les procédés pédagogiques dont se recommandent la plupart des manuels ne donnent de la réalité qu'une impression trop fragmentaire et souvent fugitive.*" P. Jacquin is a Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the university at Fribourg, yet he represents in our generation one of the most venerable of French traditions in historiography; he is of the school of Tillemont rather than of Duchesne. These two volumes will perpetuate his influence, for they provide a convenient quarry for his fellow lecturers throughout the seminaries of the Church. They treat of the first seven centuries of Catholic history both among the Latins and the Orientals, they are marked by a capacity for objective accuracy, by a zest for minute compressed detail and by an impatience with the theoretic, while each section is concluded with a carefully selected bibliography of modern studies. Yet, as the chapters pass by slowly, P. Jacquin is seen to write with an increasing surety and freedom.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.