

## REVIEWS

### EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI: A STUDY OF THE MAN AND HIS WRITINGS.

Five Essays by F. J. Foakes-Jackson. (Cambridge : Heffer; 4/6.)

It is not easy to review these lightning sketches with patience. Dr Foakes-Jackson has passed from his studies of Josephus to these studies of the 'first Church historian,' his attitude towards whom may be gauged by the remark that 'in a certain sense Eusebius was to Constantine what Archbishop Cranmer was to Henry VIII.'

This may prepare us for the series of shocks which follow : 'The Council of Nicæa met to *decide* on the creed and discipline of the universal Church,' which Church Constantine is later on described as having 'incorporated' into the Roman Empire; we are also told of Constantine's 'claim to control the Church.' Such statements should surely be out-of-date by **now**? Yet we find the same notion baldly set down by G. P. Baker, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Revolution, 1931* : 'He appointed the bishop of Rome, with a committee of bishops, to enquire into the Donatist controversy. Ten months later, he convoked the Council of Arles to deal with the question, and after close enquiry and debate he issued in the year 316, a formal judgment in full consistorium,' p. 213. What a travesty of the facts is here presented will be evident to anyone familiar with the case as set out in St. Augustine's many treatises on the subject, and Augustine died less than one hundred years after Constantine! When the Donatists found themselves condemned at Rome in 313, they appealed to Constantine who, **says** Augustine, 'allowed them another investigation, that at Arles (October, 314), that is by a fresh set of Bishops; he did not do this because he felt it was in any sense necessary, but he yielded to their obstinacy. Nor did the Christian Emperor dare when admitting their noisy and captious complaints, himself to pass judgment on a decision already arrived at by the Bishops who had sat at Rome; but as I have said, he provided a fresh set of Bishops.' *Ep. xliii, 20*; P.L. xxxiii, 169.

We are further informed that 'whether Eusebius is entitled to rank among the saints of the Church or not, his place among its doctors is certain.' We **also** learn that when the search for copies of the Bible was being carried out during the Diocletian persecution, 'it was *customary* for some of the clergy to surrender **books** which were not sacred,' and he instances the *Shepherd*, apocryphal **Gospels** and **Acts**. Can the author adduce a single instance of this beyond the case of Mensurius, the Archbishop of Carthage, who was accused of having **put off** the searchers with a medical treatise which they ignor-

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antly took for a copy of the Bible? Again, Montanism, we are told, 'was evidently not a heresy, nor does it appear that it was a schism.' The re-Baptism controversy turned, so we are informed, on the question whether 'its efficacy depended on the element of water and the use of the Trinitarian formula, or was it only valid when the Grace was bestowed by the Church'; the amount of confusion of thought here is amazing.

H.P.

BROADCAST MINDS. By Fr. Ronald Knox. (Sheed and Ward; 3/6.)

The jacket of this new edition gives a cheering picture of a jolly rough and tumble in which an ecclesiastic (presumably the author) is dealing a series of knock-out blows to his antagonists whom he has taken on at the rate of four at a time. Playing up to the picture, we endeavoured to catch the spirit of the book by imagining that we were watching a boxing contest with the interest of one who, though he may not have an intimate knowledge of Queensbury Rules, appreciates clean cuts, hard hitting, and straight fighting. At the close of each round it was pretty evident that Fr. Knox's opponent was in dire need of the sponge and towel. His blows are mainly directed against those writers who sciect from little handbooks statements and points of view which tell in favour of the thesis they want to establish, concealing whatever may tell in a contrary direction and then serving up the whole as the best conclusions of modern research, disarming all opposition by appealing to the sacred name of science. Such folk Fr. Knox calls the omniscientists, and aptly describes their policy as an endeavour to convince the man in the street, not of knowledge, but of ignorance, and to make him so ashamed of his limited brain power that he is only too willing to delegate the business of thinking to heads wiser than his own. With this aim before them it is not surprising that they should show a marked preference for pre-history as opposed to history. No one can contradict the statements of a pre-historian except of course by saying one doesn't believe them or by resorting to the more effective method of hitting him over the head; but the statements remain even if the battered body of their author is lying insensible, and many people will not only sympathize with the victim but thank him for quickening the dry bones of palaeontologp by breathing into them the spirit of imagination. Once you have stated a few interesting characteristics of people about whom little or nothing is known, it is easy enough to draw conclusions and make them yield any moral you like. The omniscientists have tried it on, and Fr. Knox has surprised them at their little game. Their trump card