

and society would have collapsed into anarchy if they had ever tried this out, it is obvious that the canonist thesis is logically rigorous only so far as it proceeds like Euclid's geometry by logical deduction without taking in any concrete information whatsoever. In the end the ideal pope on this way of looking at authority would be a mitred computer: the *reductio ad absurdum* of a logically barbarous theory. When this kind of reasoning is applied to kingship it has not even the superficial plausibility of the extreme canonists. Inevitably there must be a conflict between kingship and papacy which in the realms of this kind of 'logic' the papalists must win. But this has nothing to do with the real world and it is not surprising that the more extreme forms of canonistic papalism were developed *pari passu* with the decline and degradation of papal

authority in practice by Catholic princes in the later middle ages.

Dr Ullmann would probably reply that this is not his fault: *this* is what was so. I do not think he is right. He places too much emphasis on the pious platitudes of composers of protocols both to secular and ecclesiastical documents. There is a profounder sense of the nature of society to be found in the Middle Ages, I believe, somewhere between the high theories of the professional speculators and the unreflecting practice of lordship and vassalage. I suspect Dr Ullman's ultimate thesis, then, to be over-simple, but I am sure it is a beginning of a line of thought very well worth development. If then this book is too much of a short cut, it is a courageous one and it is never trivial and never irrelevant.

ERIC JOHN

A SOCIOLOGY OF ENGLISH RELIGION, by David Martin. *SCM Press, London, 1967. 153 pp. 25s.*

Despite the importance of the subject, the sociological study of religion in this country is still very much in its infancy. For this reason, among others, Dr Martin's book is fulfilling a real need. It gives a survey of the religious situation from a number of varied and useful angles, probably the first book to attempt such a task, with an extremely useful bibliography at the end. The book can be recommended therefore not only to those whose academic interests overlap with the subject, but also to the general reader who will find much to stimulate him.

The range of topics is considerable. The central topic of the book is dealt with in chapter four; the relationship between the ecclesiastical structures and the general patterns of society and community in England and Wales with passing references also to Scotland. Utilizing three sociological models often adopted in religious classification, church, denomination and sect, the author attempts to trace the relations between religion and society in England by a broad comparison and contrast with France and the United States of America.

Closely allied to this central chapter is the historical background outlined in chapter one, which concludes with an appendix recalling Charles Booth's reflections on 'Religion in London in relation to Class'. The appendix is an appropriate conclusion to a chapter which emphasizes from many angles the strong correlation between religious practice and

socio-economic class which is illustrated from three periods in this historical background: prior to the Industrial Revolution, the 1850s, and the beginning of the 20th century. In the first period disaffection from organised religion was catered for by a dissenting body usually evangelizing a segment, but not the lowest social segment, and gradually lifting it to a higher social plane. This process often exhausted its capacity to repeat the effort and a new dissenting body would step in to repeat the process for another generation. The second and third periods are illustrated from the census of 1851 and the surveys of 1886 and 1903. In the Census of 1851, only 36% of the total population who could have attended church did so on the census day. But the proportions varied from 57% of rural Huntingdonshire to 21% of London. In the cities it was not so much the size as the distribution of the classes that was significant: the lower the social class the less the attendance. The two surveys of 1886 and 1903, which were focused on London, showed conclusively that it was the groups which attended to social structures, like the Baptists and the Methodist Forward Movement with their concentration on central missions with social concern, which held their own, while the Anglican Church sharply declined in all social classes. Failure to influence the masses was not due to lack of trying. It was due in part to a cultural gap, to lack of communication, to uprooting from the countryside and to the fact that in the new environ-

ment Sunday was the only day one could visit one's relations and have any recreation.

The complexity of the religious situation is best seen in the variegated pattern of religious practice outlined in the second chapter, a statistical analysis of religious practice among Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Free Churchmen today. Much of the material of this chapter has been covered by other works, but the author's conclusions are sanguine and sometimes surprising. In particular, he shows how we must balance the evidence from censuses of attendance on a particular Sunday with the more significant evidence obtainable today from social surveys and opinion polls. When we do this, we note the striking resilience of the churches under unique pressures, and 'the massive fact remains that with every incentive to spend time in an alternative manner, one quarter of the population is in church at least once a month'. The last sentence of the chapter is even more surprising. 'Let it be said quite simply that in the course of a year nearly one out of every two Britons will have entered a church, not for an event in the life cycle or for a special personal or civic occasion, but for a service within the ordinary pattern of institutional religion.'

What has been the impact of science on our attitudes, beliefs and opinions? The author answers this question first at a general level and then by distinguishing certain large scale sub-systems of belief. At the general level, the difficulties of precise definition are made clear, the illogicalities of many of the responses make one wonder how reliable is the public opinion index for measuring in depth, when for instance over a quarter of the agnostics and atheists in the London Borough pray to the God whose existence they doubt. One of the most interesting sections in the book deals with five basic

sub-systems of belief illustrative of typical attitudes to religious experience in contemporary England. Two of the labels are attached to status groups, the upper and working classes, and three to ideological types, the Catholic, Evangelical and progressive, but these latter have specific locations in the country. Significant continuities are observable between the Evangelical and the progressive types, and between the upper and working classes. The author's attempt to define the Catholic type is possibly less successful. The emphasis on institutional religion rather than the Bible, the visual symbol rather than the verbal, the emphasis on dogma, the idealization of Merrie England, opposition to the egoism of capitalism and the enthusiasm for the organic community all this seems rather a description of the Catholicism of the 30s than of today. What would be interesting to know would be the continuities between middle-class and working-class Catholicism today, and what are the differences in attitude between first and second generation immigrants from Ireland and Poland? These are matters which we know very little about, and without them it is difficult to be certain that there is one Catholic sub-culture.

The last chapters of the book attempt to look forward. The fifth chapter suggests the most useful sociological models to understand the complicated patterns before us, and a final chapter suggests perspective for research, suggesting the need for accurate historical knowledge, the need for studies on the role of women in the church, and the influence of the young, the need also for studies on the local church comparable with Fichter's work in America, and studies of the wider processes in the administrative machinery of the Church.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

THE DIRECTION OF CONSCIENCE, by Jean Laplace. *Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1967. 192 pp. 25s.*

There was an old Dominican priest (he is still alive) who had given up reading everything except the Bible and *The Times* and who sat in his room most of the day listening to people. His place has now been taken by a new generation of polo-necked swinging types busily identifying with misfits. They do marvellous work in a restricted field. Meanwhile one still meets unexpected people from every field and denomination of the city who attribute a turning point in their life to a conversation with the old priest. The point of this story is not

to compare the new generation unfavourably with the old. The point is that if we knew more we would, I am sure, discover that the people the guru influenced *most* were the active types who work with the misfits. Spiritual direction is not an inward-looking cultivation of leisurely 'souls' with time for spirituality (though every spiritual director gathers such barnacles in his work with whom he should deal kindly but firmly), but the help and guidance given by one committed Christian to another. The direction of the help given is towards more