

the Spirit to its completed organisation the author could hardly avoid exposing the social ideas that lay implicitly in the movement. As soon as the Quakers found themselves obliged to draw up rules for ordering their society they were concerned to see that no member was in want and 'that none may live idle and destroyers of the creation'. An early movement towards anarchism had to be checked so that individual judgment had to be ready to submit to that of 'the Church'. Nevertheless the way of ascertaining 'the sense of the meeting' whereby the authority of the group was maintained did not diminish the essential individualism which lay at the root of the whole puritanical movement. It did however prevent individualism from running riot, so that without returning to the early Christian ideals of holding all things in common the Quakers achieved a great success in their mutual support of one another. The sense of the common good made an effective instrument of their poor belief, and this was not impeded but rather made more serviceable by the organisation. Poor Friends were actually prevented from drifting from the country into the city.

Such provisions and mutual interest has made the society so successful as a body in the material order, and Dr Lloyd's book, though rather uneven in its disposition of its matter, makes extremely interesting reading not only for the student of the history of Quakerism but also for those who are interested to see how different interpretations of Christianity work out in society. The Society of Friends provides an exceptional example of the balance between individual interest and the common good of the whole society. CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

REDEMPTION OF THE COMMON LIFE. By Jim Wilson. (Dobson; 7s. 6d.)

Here is another statement of the socialist approach to Christianity. Approach is the word, because at the end of the book the reader is convinced that Christianity has only been approached and not reached. The centre of the religion preached here is not Christ but 'the group' or the Church. That arises largely from the author's concern with the immanence of God. Although at the outset Fr Wilson states quite clearly that it is necessary to maintain a balanced view of God's immanence and his transcendence, it is soon quite obvious that he is bound by the terms of his approach and these are largely immanent. Thus, for instance, 'If God's nature is Trinity, we shall expect that the human race and its political and social life and its government will be democratic and not autocratic'. Therefore, 'Jesus the proletarian . . . would forge a world-wide commonwealth of men in league against oppression, striving for what was right and just and comradely'. So the story of Christ's life must be told with what might be described as 'selectivity': Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and Lazarus are ignored

and Christ is the friend (exclusively, it would seem) of the working classes and the enemy of the priests and ruling classes.

The truth however is far subtler than that. Christianity is no class religion because it is more than a remedy for social evil. The two facts that Fr Wilson omits, in spite of his good intentions (and a little amateur literary criticism will soon lay bare his complete sincerity and almost apocalyptic zeal), are the divinity of Christ and the effects of original sin on the human race. Although he believes Christ to be God, Fr Wilson describes the life of Christ *as if* he were man and as if his reactions to situations were only human. The whole problem of the Incarnation for us, in fact its mystery, is that unique union of two natures which do not cancel one another out. In Fr Wilson's Christ the humanity has overpowered the divinity, only temporarily perhaps but none the less effectively. So in the church which this Christ founded humanitarianism will be one of the chief characteristics. So the gravest sins are the social ones, and the problem of personal wickedness is not faced because the problem of personal relationship to God has been lost sight of in the social problem. Fr Wilson has had to present Christianity to the 'have-nots'; but the fact remains that the problem 'Am I a Christian?' is more fundamental than and a completely different problem from 'Am I a rich man or a poor man?', and can never be answered in terms of economics or society. At the best these can only make, in the strictest sense of the word, an approach.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE ENGLISH SECULAR CATHEDRALS IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By Kathleen Edwards. (Manchester University Press; 25s.)

This addition to the Manchester University Historical Series describes the organisation of the secular cathedral chapters in the Middle Ages, giving special attention to the fourteenth century. Use has been made of unpublished registers and accounts in the muniments of Salisbury and Lincoln, and of unpublished material relating to Lichfield and Exeter. The four main chapters of the book discuss the Canons and their residence, the Bishop and his relation to the cathedral clergy, the major Officers of the Cathedral Church, and the Minor Corporations and their members. It has, therefore, an obvious importance both as a study of part of the large quantity of untouched fourteenth-century material, and as a contribution to medieval ecclesiastical and administrative history. Although it does not claim to be definitive, it is indispensable to any student of the Middle Ages. The main attention is given to the administrative framework in the nine cathedrals which were served by secular canons, but others than the constitutional historian will find the book rewarding. The cathedrals affected medieval society in many ways, economically, intellectually and