

the Bodleian and put in a slip for *Kephalaia* by Mani? We are given no further information. Can it be that he simply copied both quotation and reference from another secondary source?

But I am genuinely grateful to him for making sense to me at last of St Simeon Stylites; what can have given this holy man the weird idea of living on top of a pillar? The answer is simple; it

was to escape the literally distracting attentions of the devout, who kept on tearing off bits of his clothes for relics. So he had his pillar built in order to get out of their reach. You can read all about it in Theodoret, *R.H.* 26. You will find this somewhere (though Professor Davies does not say so) in *P.G.*

*Edmund Hill, O.P.*

THE SOCIAL HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH by Stanley G. Evans. *Hodder and Stroughton, 30s.*

Canon Evans' purpose in this book is to trace the history of Christian social thought and action from the beginnings to the present day. There is an introductory chapter on the social hope of the Old Testament, followed by a discussion of the Kingdom of God in the Gospels; then we pass to early Christianity, the patristic era, and the Middle Ages. Canon Evans' thesis is that during the early and medieval periods the Christian Church maintained its social tradition as an integral part of the Gospel; the Renaissance and the Reformation saw the retreat of this tradition, and the modern age – from Andrewes and Bunyan to the World Council of Churches – its return. He is best on Christian social reformers of the Anglican and Non-conformist Churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Wesley and Wilberforce, Maurice, Kingsley, Marson and the rest. There is a review of modern Protestant social thinking, a chapter on the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and a discussion of Marxism. The final chapters are entitled 'The social God' and 'The Hope of the Future'.

This is a book written out of enthusiasm. The writer's concern is to preach 'the social God' and a society 'which is like unto him, that is, a society based upon love and justice, in which none is free to exploit his neighbour, in which all shall have full opportunities of self-expression, in which there shall be a large measure of equality. This is, in fact, something of what we mean by the Kingdom of God' (p. 257). The history of Christianity is essentially the history of the ways in which men

have striven to realize this vision. Canon Evans passes breathlessly from the Acts of the Apostles to the Apocalypse, from Abelard to St Francis, from Anabaptists to Chartists, pausing only long enough to bring out his theme. This is history and theology without complexities. Canon Evans' views on almost all subjects are highly personal: Anglican plainsong represents an almost uniquely low level of musical and artistic perception (p. 28); romantic love is a key aspect of the good life according to the Old Testament (p. 30); Jesus' sayings about adultery in the Sermon on the Mount are much more devised to safeguard the position of women in an unequal society than to tell us anything about marriage (p. 48); Newman saw all government as corrupt, saw no hope of changing it and thereby accepted the corruption (p. 148).

Canon Evans manages to admire both Père Hyacinthe in his apostasy and the teaching of Pope John XXIII, whilst the Church of Pius XI was simply 'in the same camp as Mussolini and Hitler and Franco' (p. 224). Similarly, the Church of England, by *conniving* in the resignation of Bishop Reeves of Johannesburg, 'performed almost more than the South African Government itself would have dared to ask' (p. 270).

It is a pity not to be able to like this book, if only because there aren't all that many Christians who want the revolution as keenly as Canon Evans does; but the revolution won't happen out of thinking like this.

*David Eccles, O.P.*