

Christian culture. To most of the world, Moscow and New York are the two cities of destiny or doomsday; Christians appear to be looking at Jerusalem and Rome, a lot of old photos. To Christians, Jerusalem is both a familiar dwelling-place and the longed-for goal of a pilgrimage. Mr Dawson is as much aware of Moscow and New York as he is of Jerusalem and Rome; the second half of his book contained both concrete suggestions for a radically new kind of course for students and an interpretation which is a sustained meditation on the Second Advent.

MARGARET WILEMAN

THE EARLY H. G. WELLS: a study of the scientific romances, by Bernard Bergonzi; Manchester University Press; 21s.

The popular image of H. G. Wells is that of a prophet and propagandist of scientific utopias, utopias brought into being and maintained by the use of science and governed by an élite of scientists and engineers. This is largely true of his later writings, but, although Wells himself towards the end of his life was inclined to impose it also on his earlier works, to make them out to have been more didactic than they actually were, Mr Bergonzi in this study of them shows that this is not an accurate assessment. To begin with, his use of science is imaginative rather than logical, a distinction which is made clear by comparing Wells with Jules Verne. They were often taken to make a similar use of scientific ideas, but each was in fact aware of their difference. Mr Bergonzi quotes from an amusing interview in which Verne pointed this out, 'It occurs to me that his stories do not repose on very scientific bases . . . I make use of physics. He invents', (p. 157), a verdict endorsed by Wells in 1933 in a preface to a collected edition of the romances. Although it was not a veneer disguising magic or making it possible for an age captured by scientific method to accept a fairy-tale, it was a poetic rather than a scientific use. But secondly, in these early works there is an ambiguity towards the scientist and his results; on the one hand, the Time-Traveller is a 'normal' scientist, though the utopia which he thinks he has reached turns out to be decadent and horrific; on the other, the central figure is more often an 'abnormal' scientist, an almost demonic figure, recalling, as Mr Bergonzi points out, the alchemists and Dr Faustus rather than Huxley and Wells' teachers at the Royal College of Science. It was not until the early 1900's that Wells, having exorcized this figure from his imagination and given his allegiance to Fabian Socialism, turned into the propagandist figure whom we now recognize.

Mr Bergonzi succeeds admirably in showing how certain *fin-de-siècle* themes were transposed in Wells' early writings, and how these writings were genuinely of the creative imagination, offering, in addition to a gripping story, a level of symbolic writing capable of interpretation in more than one way. The

upper and lower worlds of *The Time-Machine* are an example; they are interpreted by Wells himself as a biological development of the split in modern capitalist society, but the ease and power with which Wells draws up images of horror and decay suggests that they are rooted more deeply in some malaise of the psyche or in the world of the archetypes. The pre-occupation too with the scientist-as-chemist, evident already in *The Chronic Argonauts* (reprinted in an appendix here), a work written when Wells was twenty-one and re-wrote twice before it became *The Time-Machine*, suggests the flight of the shaman through his nine worlds to heaven rather than a Fabian progress to Utopia. Mr Bergonzi touches only lightly on the possible psychological explanations, but is prepared to defend Wells as a maker of myths, if only of minor ones. But, on Mr Bergonzi's own excellent analysis, it would I think be better to say that though Wells created mythical figures which are minor in comparison with Don Quixote or Don Juan, he did re-create or draw on certain major archetypal myths, the magical flight, the struggle of light and darkness, the beast from the abyss, the Prometheus figure, the final conflagration. These deeper springs were blocked by his conversion to Fabian socialism, but the works in which they were released are the ones which will last.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

Shorter Notices

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE EAST: Volume One (Thomas More Books, 35s.) is a revision of Donald Attwater's *Catholic Eastern Churches*, originally published in 1935. With his customary accuracy Mr Attwater has provided an invaluable account of the history, liturgies and present position of the various Eastern Churches in communion with Rome, and a series of well-chosen photographs adds to the usefulness of a book that should be of special importance as the preparations for the Council proceed.

LITERATURE AND PULPIT IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND, by G. R. Owst (Blackwell, 50s.) was described as 'valuable as it is vast' when it was reviewed in these columns on its first appearance in 1933. The new edition takes account, in so far as a re-impression allows, of new material. But substantially it remains unchanged, and it has survived its thirty years as a definitive account of the debt of English literature to the homilies of the medieval preachers.