

Apart from this admirable but brief Introduction, Dr Bourke adds little to the text in the way of commentary, though he has a few very useful footnotes. He does, however, employ a very expansive style of translation which frequently amounts to an elucidatory expansion of the Latin text; in consequence, the ratio of English ver-

sion to Latin original is much greater in this volume than, I think, in any other of the series.

A few slips have been noted. P. 25, l. 21, add 'not' before 'required'. P. 87, l. 34, add 'for' before 'which'. P. 127, l. 27, for 'inanimate' read 'animate'. P. 128, second n. 5, beginning of note is missing. E. L. MASCALL

CLASS AND RELIGION IN THE LATE VICTORIAN CITY, by Hugh McLeod. *Croom Helm*, London, 1974. xii + 360 pp. £6.95.

In his introduction to *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 6 (London, 1973) the editor, Michael Hill, commented that the development of the sociology of religion in Britain (in contrast to Europe and the US) had been 'characterised by a number of small-scale, in-depth contemporary studies and by a series of historical researches. History has often provided the British sociologist with his research laboratory. . .'. Since he wrote, a particularly rich crop of books on nineteenth century religious themes has proved his point—two by sociologists (A. Allen MacLaren, *Religion and social class: the disruption years in Aberdeen* [London, 1974]; Robert Moore, *Pit-men, preachers and politics: the effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community* [Cambridge, 1974]), and two by social historians (Hugh McLeod's book reviewed here, and Stephen Yeo's forthcoming *Religion and voluntary organisation in crisis*). That same volume of the *Yearbook* contained articles by three of these authors on related areas of their research.

These books are important not simply as contributions to the historical sociology of religion in Britain (effectively, of Protestant Christianity, since there is little detailed work here on Roman Catholicism; Antony Archer's valuable articles in this journal for November 1974, and January and May 1975, include the beginnings of the sort of treatment needed for such a social history of English Catholicism). Firstly, it is significant that each is a local study. McLeod, in his important article in the *Yearbook*, has argued convincingly that patterns of church attendance in England in the nineteenth century show wide regional variation, a pattern far more complex than the urban/rural dichotomy usually invoked. Thus it is impossible to

generalise about the patterns and determinants of church attendance, religious practice and religious belief simply on the basis of a study of one locality, or from evidence drawn randomly from different areas. One major way forward must be via scrupulous studies of religion in particular localities; and all these books contribute to this. Secondly, they make important additions to the wider social history of Britain since 1830 (an area of increasing academic activity in the last twenty years); and in particular to the social history of the working class. For instance, Moore has contributed to the reconsideration of clichés about the nonconformist conscience, and the Labour Party as an amalgam of Methodism and Marxism, by an examination of the inter-relationships of methodism, trade unionism and Liberal politics in a mining valley, and of the reaction of methodist union leaders to the rise of the Labour Party and the advent of Marxist socialists.

Hugh McLeod's book is concerned with class and religion in late Victorian (i.e. c. 1880-1914) London, the city in terms of size but not, as his own work makes clear, the *typical* city. It is a study of the religious attitudes, and attitudes to religion, of the people of London—not only, nor even primarily, those who were 'religious' in terms of church attendance and religious observance. It investigates the general belief systems of the various social groups, and how—if at all—these disposed them to approach religion.

The core of the book is contained in five chapters (2-7). McLeod starts by analysing the available figures for church attendance in London, to see what class and regional patterns they reveal. His major findings are, firstly, that church attendance was higher in areas of higher social status (this was especially true for the Church of Eng-

land but also largely for the nonconformist churches); secondly, that the major factor cutting across this pattern was the region of origin of immigrants into London—those from the counties to the south and west of the city (Anglican areas) having a lower rate of attendance than those from the counties to the north-east (historic centres of nonconformity). The two groups who fell outside this pattern altogether were Catholics and Jews, both of whom were concentrated in areas where the appropriate immigrant community clustered.

McLeod then goes on to discuss the religious attitudes of the London working class and middle class, first in general throughout London, then in specific areas (Bethnal Green, Lewisham). These chapters are in many ways an excellent piece of social history. Sub-divisions within both classes are carefully differentiated; several different types of evidence, including well-marshalled statistics, are drawn on. What he produces from this evidence is a study of attitudes and beliefs; he tries to show the role played by social pressure, conformism, genuine conviction and powerlessness in producing the shape and social distribution of religious belief at different levels of society. Within the working class (chapter 3) he distinguishes the majority as secular and parochial, their most important values solidaristic and communal. The religious minority were usually drawn from skilled workers, artisans and petty capitalists. His attempt to deepen and particularise this picture by a study of Bethnal Green (chapter 4), a very poor working class area, is somewhat disappointing. We learn much about the efforts of the Anglican clergy there, and their reactions to the area—especially that of the Anglo-Catholics; also of the various nonconformist denominations and their changing support. But we do not learn much new about the working class, or even the religious minority among them. Similarly with the chapters on the middle class. Their lives are described (chapter 5) as centred round the suburb, the family unit, and local clubs and associations. The detailed local study of Lewisham (chapter 6) gives an excellent account of the range of churches available, their clergy, and the roles played by lay people in the church structures; but tells us less about the laity and non-believers, especially that interesting

lower-middle-class group McLeod dubs (rather unfortunately) 'Unitarians' (those who accepted Christian ethics but not doctrine or dogma).

It is at this point that McLeod might have probed his evidence, which he has been both assiduous and imaginative in assembling, even harder than he does, and as a result been able to tell us more about the determinants of the different sets of attitudes depicted: These attitudes he ties closely to specific social groups; relates to wider areas of their consciousness; and connects, by the use of marriage statistics, to some aspects of the social world of the people involved. However, his explanations are couched in terms of generalisations about the overall place in society of a class or class-fraction; we are not given any closely-argued examples of how the beliefs of a particular social group related to their material situation.

Such a project—of further, closer scrutiny of McLeod's own period—could have advanced our understanding much more than does his attempt, in chapter 8, to situate the fairly static picture he has drawn in a process of development extending back over a century. Briefly, he argues that the weakening of orthodox Christianity among the educated classes through the spread of humanitarianism and rationalism, checked by the massive expansion of Evangelical Protestantism around 1800, was resumed around 1870; religious observance and church attendance declined, but the change was in social mores rather than in underlying values. However, the level of generality at which this argument is necessarily pursued puts it in the realm of the history of ideas rather than that of social history; the relationship between ideas and social practices is left unexamined and the various specific arguments are largely unconvincing. Only at the end of the chapter, once again in his own period, does McLeod regain his touch with a brief examination of two responses to this presumed process, the Anglo-Catholic movement and liberal religion; these are deftly described and good arguments advanced for their weak hold.

Those who have researched such questions will realise the considerable advance which McLeod's work represents. That he has not gone still further is a measure of the difficulty of the task.

T G ASHPLANT