

so now we are in danger of not developing our increasing knowledge of how social groups work in relation to a theological approach to the people of God' (p. 85). She points out that our growing realisation of the theological significance of the community has implications for sociology. 'It is only through *human* reality that man can reach God as Christ reached the Father for us all.' And so, 'To study and understand human communities, we cannot confine ourselves to the analysis of the way they work, the functions they fulfil in society. We must also consider their ends and purposes . . .' (p. 88). This is a very valuable plea for a reinstatement of the theological dimension, indeed of the theological basis, of our social thought. It means that 'Sociology . . . must look to the moral philosopher and the theologian for concepts and ideas concerning human values' (and, of course, human *action*, which is the stuff of history). This argument needs to be developed further than Miss Brothers actually takes it in her article, for the reorientation of sociological thought which it implies will be far-reaching in its effects. It must surely mean the restoration of historical perspective in sociology, and the end, among christians, of the false ahistoricism which has been quite popular among sociologists. It may mean a greater interest in marxist sociology, as we have begun to see the relevance to theology of marxist notions of man's history and activity. It must mean a radical reappraisal of sociological concepts of 'community' in a theological light, and some hard thought about the concept of 'religion' in the light of marx's critique of religion which seems now to make considerable theological sense (*cf.* the recent discussion by Adrian Cunningham in *Slant*). These and other explorations are urgently needed.

A meaningful sociology must therefore be grounded in a radical theology. But current sociological work is also relevant to christian concerns. Two good articles in this book deal with the sociologies of education and of crime,

and deserve to be widely read. (Although one would be happier about that on education, by M. B. Gaine, if the author had clarified the concepts of 'class' which play an important part in his discussion.) A third, on 'The structure and organisation of the Catholic Church in England', is an extremely competent treatment by A. E. C. W. Spencer of the church as an institution, a hierarchical structure of normatively-defined roles. Mr Spencer argues that there is a growing disjunction between the normative definition of the roles of many members of the church and their perception of them. Through their membership of other institutions and through knowledge of the acts of the Council and of foreign bishops, British catholics are adopting a more participative philosophy, and this will make the existing authoritarian structure of the church increasingly difficult to work in the future. This structure is also inadequate because of developments in British society since the Industrial Revolution, to which it has not been adapted. Mr Spencer outlines a more participative structure in the light of modern organisational theory, and shows how this should work better than the existing one. His analysis is entirely convincing, but it is as well to realise its limited value. It does not take account of any dramatic change in the relationship of church and world. The church organised as Mr Spencer would have it would do the kind of things the church tries to do at the moment much more effectively. But if the church is to have a more radical role – if christians are to become social revolutionaries, as *New Blackfriars* among others has sometimes suggested they should – there must be all kinds of changes in church structure, to correspond to the changes in the functions of the church, such as we can only begin to envisage. In this case, Mr. Spencer's proposals, although still useful, may prove not radical enough.

MARTIN SHAW

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELONGING by Hervé Carrier. *Darton, Longman and Todd*; 30s.

One of the basic weaknesses of the prolific discipline of religious sociology has been its reliance upon analyses of religious statistics, describing only the demographic characteristics of an area or group and failing to grasp the underlying social and personal realities which give these meaning. Many professional

sociologists have tended to assume that this movement, originally Catholic but now extended to other churches throughout Europe and increasingly elsewhere, is incapable of rising above the level of superficial descriptions of religious observance and the like. Hampered often by its clients' insistence upon immediate

relevance to pastoral problems, its future until recently seemed to lie in producing increasingly competent but not very imaginative analyses of the demographic features of religion. As such it was clearly useful, but it had a limited amount to contribute to a genuine understanding of the religious life today.

The publication of Professor Carrier's book, however, introduced a new dimension into the discipline. In his synthesis of work in both the psychology and sociology of religion, the writer discusses the relevance of recent studies for the idea of membership of the Church. His emphasis upon the psychological aspects of belonging to a religious group, what it means for the individual, does much to overcome the superficiality of the general approach of religious sociology. Received enthusiastically on its publication several years ago, it has shown those working in the sphere of religion with a pastoral aim in view that the concepts and findings of the psychology of religion can be used to give meaning to religious statistics.

In addition to its significance for those engaged in socio-religious studies, this survey of investigations provides the general reader with a very good introduction to what has been done. (A more critical approach to some of the studies might also have shown the reader what has *not* been done.)

But while Professor Carrier's splendidly documented book can be thoroughly recommended, this particular edition provokes less warmth. Firstly, it seems that, with the

exception of the cover, the American edition has been entirely reproduced, the spelling remaining American. Secondly, the bibliography was a notable feature of the original edition; this appeared in 1960 and since then a great deal of relevant work has been published and invaluable international bibliography on the sociology of christianity, he is clearly more aware of these developments than most. Surely, then, the publisher could have been expected to ask the author to bring the bibliography up to date for this edition.

Finally, the translation cannot pass without comment. This book should serve as a very good introduction to some basic psychological and sociological approaches to religion. The clumsiness of sentences like 'This postulate of apostolic utility, we believe, will not have diverted our attention from valid observation' (p. 17), or headings like 'Religious Belonging at the Level of the Communal' (p. 38) can only repel the reader. It is true that some of the unpleasant hybrids which have resulted from the uneasy encounters between sociology and religion have been in use for some time and the blame cannot be laid at the translator's door (though they are usually hyphenated, which somehow insulates the reader a little from their jarring, a device rejected in this edition). But the style of the original volume calls for adaptation of a drastic kind for an English audience, and this is completely lacking in the present edition.

JOAN BROTHERS

PURITY AND DANGER by Mary Douglas. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*; 25s.

Dr Douglas is a reader in Social Anthropology at University College, London and in this book she seeks to understand the rules of purity in any society modern or primitive as the enemy of change, ambiguity and/or compromise. The nineteenth century saw in primitive religions two special points which separated them from the other great religions of the world, namely that they were supposed to be inspired by fear and confused with defilement and hygiene. The author will have none of this. Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.

'We can recognise in our notions of dirt that we are using a kind of omnibus compendium which includes all the rejected elements of

ordered systems. It is a relative idea. Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom, or food bespattered on clothing, similarly, bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothing lying on chairs out-door things in-doors; upstairs things downstairs; under-clothing appearing where over-clothing should be, and so on. In short our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications . . . or a particular set of assumptions by which experience is controlled.'

I hope the author will forgive me for quoting extensively this lucid paragraph and the last sentence out of context, but the highly impor-