

part in the Western than in the Eastern Christian tradition. Barth is very Western in his stress on the logos, and it tends to give a sense of constriction to his theology, for all its breadth. Rosato has various ways of describing the consequences: the free, dynamic interaction of God with history and its future is not done full justice by Barth; the interaction of God's Spirit with man's is not adequately allowed for, except in Jesus Christ: the urgency of the social and political future, and the invitation to creative initiative in it, is played down; and the cosmic dimension of redemption, in which all creation is part of a process of new birth, is largely ignored. Above all, the sense of the Trinity as in open dialogue with creation, in which there can be ever-fresh surprises, is lost.

How would Barth reply to all this? Partly, perhaps, by stressing something hardly mentioned by Rosato: thanks. For Barth the supreme expression of human freedom was thanks, the perfect, inspired response to God. Thanks is by definition a 'secondary', responsive activity, but yet that does not rule out endless creativity and novelty within it. Barth's whole theology tries to conceive an infinitely rich divine reality, and he sees both his own theology and the whole of truly illuminated existence as the joyful attempt to express gratitude. God is a being in relation to whom thanks is the perfect, free fulfilment of life, and Rosato's plea for a relative human autonomy might seem to be trying to rescue human freedom not from a threatening competitor but from its ultimate delight.

Yet there is justice in Rosato's criticisms, in which he is joined by many other

commentators. Barth is unsatisfactory on the integrity and growth of human freedom, though his insistence on the non-competitiveness of God with man means that he gets the main lines right. More seriously, Barth's exaggerated logos theology does undermine the novelty and spontaneity within history and, ironically for one whose doctrine of God is act-centred, his concept of God is too static.

Any solution to these problems needs, however, to go beyond both Barth and Rosato. For example, neither of them deals with one central issue raised by my account of God's interaction with the world, the nature of space and time. Barth's concept of eternity as simultaneity is, I think the ontological basis for the lack of freedom, novelty and dynamics in his doctrine of the Spirit. Besides, neither theologian has taken seriously (or joyfully) enough the twentieth century experience of the Holy Spirit symbolized by the rise of a third force in world Christianity, the Pentecostals. The issue of the *power* of the Holy Spirit (central in the New Testament) is one to which neither does justice, though Barth in *Church Dogmatics* IV. 3 on the Blumhardts is on the right lines. The joy of God too is not let be its liberated self, though it does constantly bubble through in Barth.

Perhaps it is only a theology that has been through Barth and modern cosmology and Pentecostalism that is up to the job; but, again, perhaps the very concept of adequacy in a doctrine of the Holy Spirit somehow misses the joke.

DAVID F FORD

**RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE 1789-1970** by Hugh McLeod  
1981. OUP pp vii + 169. £8.95 (h/b); £3.95 (p/b).

Almost any undergraduate 'outline' paper covering the history of Europe between 1789 and 1945 will contain a token question on the social history of religion; but few students will attempt to answer such a question, not least because of the absence of a good introductory survey of the religious history of Europe during this

period. Dr McLeod has now filled this bibliographical gap admirably.

He begins by examining the impact of the French Revolution on religious practice in Europe. He then treats the social history of religion in Western Europe thematically, looking at rural and urban areas, the urban middle class and the working

class, and the significance of class conflict in shaping the attitudes of Europeans towards the churches. He concludes by surveying developments since 1945.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of Dr McLeod's survey is the way in which he brings out the many-sidedness of the Europeans' religious experience, without ever losing sight of the overall picture. He shows that the old thesis which associated the decline of religious belief with urbanisation is simply too crude – the Ruhr, Europe's fastest growing industrial region in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, remained a stronghold of the Catholic *Zentrum* party until 1914; conversely, contemporaries documented the mass alienation from the national churches in the rural areas of north-eastern France and the northern Netherlands. Similarly, the decline in organised religion which *did* accompany industrialisation and urbanisation in many areas did not signify a 'rational' or materialist view of the world.

Until 1945, the overwhelming bulk of the population of Western Europe remained nominally members of one of the Christian denominations. Militant atheism was relatively rare, embodied in such institutions as the socialist or communist parties, but not significantly contributing to the way in which Europeans saw the world. Most Europeans continued to regard the world in a fatalistic way and religion most commonly functioned as the institutional framework for supernatural aid in times of trouble. For example, in 1882, peasants in one part of Württemberg boycotted the local Protestant Church after hail-storms had badly damaged crops – and fatalism was as characteristic of urban industrial workers as it was of peasants.

Dr McLeod suggests that class conflict was the most significant factor shaping the attitudes of Europeans towards the churches. The failure of the churches to respond to the growth of urban centres with industrialisation often meant that immigrants from rural areas abandoned religious practice in the cities largely because of the

shortage of priests and churches; but the association of the churches with the dominant social groups also alienated many workers – an alienation which was most spectacularly visible in Spain during the 1930s – and was probably a more significant factor in the decline of mass support for the churches during this period. Everywhere religious observance was greater amongst women than amongst men. Dr McLeod suggests that this phenomenon is to be explained in terms of the poverty of women's social lives and their daily involvement in family concerns; the churches were the most significant sources of essential charitable aid and also offered spiritual support to women faced by problems which were apparently uncontrollable by human agents – sickness and death.

The emergence of a socialist workers' movement was to provide many workers with a sub-culture which fulfilled many of the social and emotional functions formerly exercised by the churches. But elsewhere the churches were able to continue to attract mass support and loyalty where they provided a sub-culture which insulated minorities from the hostility of a society which rejected them – for example, the strength of the Catholic church in working-class Irish areas of London and Liverpool is to be seen in this light. One of Dr McLeod's more stimulating insights is his suggestion that the decline of working-class support for the socialist parties which had traditionally represented workers' interests and provided them with a sub-culture and the decline of the church in ghetto areas in the twentieth century, are to be traced back to the same cause – the physical break-up of such working-class communities from the 1930s onwards.

All things considered, Dr McLeod has produced an admirable, clearly-written, comprehensive and balanced summary of the state of research on the social history of religion in Western Europe since the late eighteenth century, which will be a valuable aid to both students and teachers.

STEPHEN SALTER