

compensating for their personal and collective hurts and grievances. Secondly, I do not think that a psychoanalytical reinterpretation of a sociological interpretation gives an adequate account of religious persons, events, beliefs and behaviour precisely as religious, that is, as having to do with God.

That brings me to my final and most fundamental misgiving. Meissner attempts (p. xxix, n. 4) to distinguish between an explanation that is 'reductive', in which 'lower-order explanations might have validity in further extending understanding of higher-order phenomena', and one that is 'reductionistic'. I find it difficult to see how the account he offers of the origin of Christianity avoids being 'reductionistic', that is, by his own definition, one 'in which lower-order concepts are used to explain a set of higher-order phenomena in such a way that a lower-order explanation is regarded as complete and exclusive and the higher-order phenomena are regarded as having no independent explanatory validity on their own terms'.

JUSTIN TAYLOR SM

**HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF DUBLIN.** Ed James Kelly and Dáire Keogh *Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000.* Pp. x + 390, £30. 00 Hbk.

The introduction to this work bewails the lack of a solidly consistent tradition of historiographical material for the Diocese of Dublin, as compared to that enjoyed by other Irish dioceses. This book is therefore an attempt to respond to this inadequacy, both by applying to Dublin the conclusions of recent historical research, and by making use of new materials and the improved archival resources now available in the diocese itself. This rather weighty book (380 pages), contains articles from 16 Irish historians, all attempting to give colour and depth to previous narrative, and to clear the ground for further research. It is therefore from beginning to end a response to various different sorts of needs, and not a consistent re-telling of the history of the diocese.

The varied natures of these inadequacies are dealt with by the authors in different ways. First, there is a determined attempt to rework already well worn material in the light of recent revisionist history. The first few chapters deal with the medieval period, a story often told but usually in an anachronistic and triumphalist mould. Howard Clark and Ailbhe MacShámhrain emphasise the uncertain ecclesiastical status enjoyed by the diocese in its early years, trying to move away from the simplistic myth of a 'papal norwegian' Dublin. Relations with England have always been a dominant theme here, but Margaret Murphy looks at them afresh, and challenges the usual assumption that the corrupt Irish Church was reformed by the Norman English, but rather stresses the native character of the reform movement. The later chapters on the Reformation and Counter Reformation have a more restricted historiographical purpose. The former essay by James Murray attempts to apply the revisionist approach to the Irish Reformation associated with Bradshaw and Canny to the situation in Dublin, whilst at the same time developing their approach.

Secondly, many of the authors explicitly set themselves the task of

casting light on basic historical material which has been ignored in previous histories. Most of this material is biographical in nature. Thus we have Hugh Fenning OP's sketch of the neglected eighteenth century archbishops of Dublin, and Donal Kerr revives Daniel Murray, the forgotten archbishop of Dublin who was, so we are told, the rock on which the well known pastoral achievements of Cullen were to be built. Cullen himself is looked at afresh by Ciaran O'Carroll, as is the more recent John McQuaid who it seems has suffered since his death in the 1970s with the reputation of being simply an agent of reaction in the post conciliar Irish Church.

Thirdly, many of the authors have attempted to widen what the introduction refers to as the vertical and clerical tradition of ecclesiastical history which has been so dominant in the treatment of Dublin. So the editors have included essays on lay movements, female religious orders, and patterns of devotion and 'religiosity', which although well written, make a somewhat vague contribution to the work as a whole. Two articles on architecture may seem excessive, although McCarthy's treatment of the Greek Pro-Cathedral makes interesting reading.

This book sets itself an ambitious project, with the hope of injecting sudden life into this neglected corner of Irish history. And considering the heavy weight historians who have contributed to it, and the quality of their research and writing, it is very likely to prove a success. It would however prove unsatisfactory to those with only a general interest in Irish church history, or as an introduction to the narrative framework of this subject.

TIMOTHY CALVERT OP

**RELIGION AS A CHAIN OF MEMORY** by Danièle Hervieu-Léger, trans. by Simon Lee *Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000. Pp. x + 204, £50.00 hbk, £14.99 pbk.*

Although French thinkers, such as Foucault, Bourdieu and Maffesoli have made their mark on sociology with their concerns with power, culture and the tribe, the writings of those working in sociology of religion are less well known. Whereas Anglo-American sociology of religion is dominated by an agenda of secularisation, sects and individualism of belief that betrays a Protestantism, French specialists operate with a symbiotic, if not stormy relationship to Catholicism. It operates as a foil that marks French sociology of religion with panache, a wonderful theoretical and conceptual imagination, an assiduous concern with classification and a vibrant sense of context of the field of belief and its social construction. Unfortunately, the writings of many French sociologists of religion, such as Séguy, Isambert, Suaud and Dibia remain untranslated. It is against this background, that one greatly welcomes this translation of Hervieu-Léger's *La Religion pour Mémoire*, first published in 1993. As editor of the Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions and Director of Studies at the Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, in Paris, she stands at the centre of French sociology of religion. With a distinguished range of research into