to have realized. At the same time, her definition of 'common culture' remains tantalizingly inexact, and there are moments in the book when it would have been helpful to have a clearer idea of how she herself understands the term. She also does much to reveal the way in which spiritualism's appeal dovetailed with the broader movement toward subjective individualism in modern England, but this is a correlation she does not really explore. Nonetheless, *Modern Spiritualism and the Church of England* is well researched and clearly structured, and it will intrigue anyone concerned with the often elusive boundary between English church and society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto (eds.), *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 424, ISBN 978-0-415-57581-2 (pbk), 978-415-57580-5 (hbk).
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A colleague and friend of mine, the sociologist of religion Peter Clarke, recounted the following tale only a few weeks before he sadly and unexpectedly died. He had come to Cuddesdon for lunch, and he was recalling an overheard conversation between two female postgraduates shortly before he began to lecture. One turned to the other, and said,

> 'You know, I think you really should try Roman Catholicism'.
>
> 'Really? Why? I mean, why do you say that?'
>
> 'I don't know, really. I mean, I just think it's so totally *you*. I think you might find something in that, I guess. I think it would add something to your life – enhance, it maybe?'
>
> 'Gosh, really? I had never thought of it that way. It can't do any harm to try it, right? You know, I might give it a go…'.

This is zeitgeist; and in a single exchange between two women before a lecture begins. Neither one of them was especially religious. But both saw religion as something that might add a dimension to their lives: an enhancement. Religion here is a commodity, a resource that can add value and meaning in much the way that other consumable gifts might. And here, the exhortation is try before you buy. And so in this remarkable book edited by Woodhead and Catto, the new landscape of religion, belief and change is narrated in careful and challenging detail.

We already know, I think, that secularization – whatever that contestable process is – does not produce secularity. Rather, it squeezes and compacts religion into new margins and zones. Faith still flourishes, but as private and personal spirituality. Religion moves from the mainstream to the orbit of leisure time. Consumerism enables individuals to choose their faith, and once chosen, to choose the terms on which they consume it. The customer is king (or queen). Even for those who adopt conservative Christian values and belong to more fundamentalist style

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churches, there is plenty of evidence to show that the terms of believing and belonging are now defined more by the members than by the managers and owners.

But lest this sound a little too complacent, it is important to remember that there is *something* in secularization. True, whatever that process is supposed to describe, it can probably never do justice to the intrinsically inchoate nature of religious belief that characterized the Western European landscape and its peoples long before the Enlightenment, let alone the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century and the cultural revolutions of the twentieth century. 'Standard' secularization theories are weak and unconvincing because they tend to depend on exaggerating the extent and depth of Christendom. They assume a previous world of monochrome religious allegiance, which is now (of course) in tatters. But in truth, the religious world was much more plural and contested before the twentieth century ever dawned.

So what, exactly, has changed? As Woodhead and Catto show, and despite an understandable reticence to accede too much ground to proponents of secularization theses, it can still be readily acknowledged that the postwar period in Britain has been one of the most seminal and challenging periods for the churches and other faiths in all of time. Leaving aside its own struggles with pluralism, post-colonialism, modernity, postmodernity, and wave after wave of cultural change and challenge, the biggest issue the churches have had to face up to now is, ironically, a simple one: choice. Increased mobility, globalization and consumerism have infected and affected the churches, just as they have touched every other aspect of social life. Duty is dead: the customer is king. It is no surprise, therefore, to discover churches adopting a consumerist mentality, and competing with one another for souls, members, or entering the marketplace itself, and trying to convert tired consumers into revitalized Christians.

Thus, fewer regular or frequent church-goers now attend church twice on a Sunday, which was once normal practice. For most, once is enough. Many who do attend on a regular basis now attend less frequently. Even allowing for holidays and other absences, even the most dedicated church-goer may only be present in church for 70 per cent of the Sundays in any given year. Many clergy now remark on the decline in attendance at Days of Obligation (e.g., saints' days or Ascension-tide). The committed, it seems, are also the busy. The response to this from among the more liturgical churches has been to subtly and quietly adapt their practice, while preserving the core tradition. For example, the celebration of Epiphany may now take place on the Sunday nearest to 6 January, and not on the day itself. A number of Roman Catholic churches now offer Sunday Mass on Saturday evenings, in order for Sunday to be left as a family day, or for whatever other commitments or consumerist choices that might now fall on the once hallowed day of rest.

Added to this, we also note the rising number of 'new' spiritualities, their range and volume having increased significantly in the postwar era. Again, choice (rather than upbringing, location, etc.) is now a major factor in determining the spiritual allegiances that individuals may develop. Moreover, it is not easy to discern where the boundaries now lie between leisure, exercise and spirituality. As the consumerist-individual asserts their autonomy and right-to-choose, clear divisions between religion and spirituality, sacred and secular, and church and society are more problematic to define. Thus, consumerism and choice simultaneously threatens but also nourishes religion and spirituality. Spiritual self-help books and

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other products, various kinds of yoga and meditative therapies, plus an ample range of courses and vacations, all suggest that religious affections and allegiances are being transformed in contemporary society rather than being eroded. 'Secular' society seems to be powerless in the face of a curiously stubborn (and growing) social appetite for inchoate religion and nascent spirituality, in all its various forms.

While it is true that many in Western Europe are turning from being religious assumers to religious consumers, and are moving from a culture of religious assumption to religious consumption, in which choice and competition in the spiritual marketplace thrive, there may be little cause for alarm. For as the authors in Woodhead and Catto's book show, faith is just as vibrant in the twenty-first century as it was for the Victorians. It is just that today, in Britain, the landscape of belief really has changed, and that is what the editors so skilfully narrate.

Statistics for church attendance, if read crudely, retell one of the great lies of the modern age, namely that secularization is 'real'. It is, rather, an older sociological and interpretative construct that is placed upon select data, and continually reapplied. Thus, secularization theories tend not to take 'implicit' or 'folk' religion that seriously; and neither do the proponents of the 'classic' theory pay much attention to the rising interest in spirituality. Similarly, the appeal of fundamentalism and new religious movements in the West, to say nothing of the explosive growth in Christianity and Islam in the developing world, are also dismissed. But as Woodhead and Catto explain, such phenomena cannot be ignored. Religion and faith are diversifying, not dying. This presents new challenges to faith groups, of course. But it indicates a slightly out of control liveliness, not an imminent death.

Ultimately, crude readings of church attendance or plotting declining membership figures for faith groups say very little about the faith of a nation; believing and belonging should not be confused. In contemporary Western society, very few people choose not to relate at all to the church, or to mainstream religion. In any secular age, there is space and demand for religion, faith and spirituality. This is important, for it reminds us that religion provides enchantment within modernity, and that in Britain, at least, churches are still often the only bodies that provide public and open places within a community for tears, grief, remembrance, laughter and celebration. The great achievement of Woodhead and Catto's book is that they show us that religion – Christian and otherwise – is alive and well. But that the challenges faced in Britain by faith groups really are new, and will require some tenacious and imaginative engagement.

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Robert Tobin, *The Minority Voice: Hubert Butler and Southern Irish Protestantism, 1900–1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. viii + 302, ISBN 978-0-19-964156-7.
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Anglicans in southern Ireland are a rare species, declining from about 10 per cent of the population at the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 to about half

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