

an extension of the modern mind, obsessed with our infatuations—'salvation history'—and all the rest of it. Literary explanations are minimized in any observation of differences between one evangelist and another. Every detail is pounced on as pregnant with theological significance. And the critic has a kind of snobbery that assumes that the evangelist must have a unified system of thought and clear logical pattern in regard to all his problems. One feels that a little more commonsense and common experience would have suggested

that writers in the first century, or indeed any century, do not work on the rigid mental lines of their commentators. More account could be made of the very obvious fact that at least two of the evangelists are repeating what had been said before. The sources are used to prove the differences between the evangelists, but they also prove their similarity. Some explanation of this patent fact is called for. Perhaps some scholars fail by their very intensity and closeness to the objects of their study to see wood instead of trees.

ALFRED BAKER, O.S.B.

**BORDERLANDS OF THEOLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS**, by D. M. MacKinnon. *Lutterworth Press*, 1968. 35s.

This book is divided into three parts, consisting of papers on theology and philosophy of religion, on ethics, politics and philosophy of history, and on metaphysics and epistemology. One is immediately astonished by the author's erudition and range; but even more impressive is the constantly questioning temper of his mind, and his steadfast refusal of easy solutions, whether 'conservative' or 'radical', to philosophical and theological problems. To be a pupil of Professor MacKinnon's is to be deprived of the insidious luxury of belonging to a school.

The section on theology is dominated by the insistence that Christian belief commits one to assent to propositions about matters of fact; that it cannot be reduced to a mere outlook on life, whether couched in idealist or existentialist terms, without becoming false to itself. This is why, as the author says in the essay on Christology, the decline of the idealist tradition in philosophy, though superficially it made the intellectual climate so much more inimical to Christian belief, was in many ways more healthy for it. It became much clearer that Christian faith entailed belief that something was actually the case about the world. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, he was stating something that he believed to be the case independently of his statement of it; he was not *making* Jesus the Messiah in the act of hailing him as such. Whatever be the defects of logical positivism, Professor MacKinnon is surely right that its concern with verification, with validation of theory by facts which happen to be the case but might not have been the case, is something which is neglected by theologians

to their peril. Sure enough, belief in the Resurrection has implications for Christian life here and now, but its meaning is not exhausted in these implications, since it essentially involves a historical claim; and if this claim is false, Christians will have believed in vain.

To judge by the writings of many modern moral philosophers, you can engage either in moral philosophy, or in inquiry into real moral problems, but never in any circumstances into both at once. Professor MacKinnon's writings are unusual for the manner in which they marshal technical ethical arguments for the confrontation of serious moral issues. There is a devastating treatment here of the palliatives with which Christians are inclined to quieten their consciences, and are abetted in doing so by the moral theologians, on the issues of politics and war. The advocacy of Collingwood, perhaps the most under-rated of first-rank twentieth-century philosophers, will perhaps persuade more people to read his work.

The last section is closely concerned, in its discussion of Professor Wisdom and the work of Strawson on Kant, with the limits of intelligible discourse, and the bearing of these on the work of the theologian. There are some tantalising hints, here and in the rest of the book, on the relation of metaphysics to poetry and other literature, which I hope Professor MacKinnon will expand on some later occasion.

It is impossible to summarize adequately a book which is so wide-ranging and sceptical (in the deepest sense). It may perhaps convey to those not fortunate enough to have been his pupils Professor MacKinnon's qualities as a teacher.

HUGO MEYNELL

**THE PRIVILEGE OF MAN**, by Kenneth Cragg. *Athlone Press*, 1968. 208 + xii pp. 42s. net.

Hitherto Mr Kenneth Cragg has mainly concerned himself with Muslim-Christian dialogue; and he has done much to make Islam more

comprehensible to Christians. But in every book he has written his meaning has been obfuscated by what seems to be the very

conscious obscurity of his style. In the present book his theme is wider, he opposes the combined 'witness' of the three great Semitic monotheisms—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity treated in this unchronological order—to the existentialist philosophy of 'alienation' which he sees as typical of the modern technological age. Here, if anywhere, he thinks, in this 'authentic' Semitic tradition the answer is still to be found.

It is, then, a pity that the author, so far from emancipating himself from the cramped aridity of what one cannot help feeling is a self-imposed style, has involved himself in it more deeply so that all too often his meaning simply does not come through. This is not a carping criticism but a very serious one; for it is quite clear that he is trying hard to say something important, something that means a great deal to him but which never comes to the surface because of his obsessive use of language so unusual as often to be unintelligible. To avoid cliché is admirable, but to put pure abstruseness in its place defeats its own purpose; for the points made clearly here and there lose all their trenchancy in the accompanying verbal labyrinth.

Perhaps the title of the book does not matter very much; but what he says in the preface speaks volumes of his use of and attitude towards language.

'I toyed with the title: "In Stead of God", deliberately phrased and spelled that way. This would have fitted but would have plainly have risked misleading the reader.' Alternative titles he considered were 'The Caliphate', 'Considering man', and 'In Lieu of God'. All these he rightly rejected as 'deceptive'. In other words they do not clearly indicate what he means to say—namely, that he wishes to consider man seen as the 'Caliph' or 'vice-gerent' of God. The ambiguity of his rejected titles he had the perspicacity to see, but in the body of the book much worse ambiguities are almost omnipresent—the unusual word used in an unusual way in an unusual context—a practice that is not only exasperating to the reader but a grave disservice to the author who obviously has a message to convey, committed as he is to a 'venture' he hopes 'will be justified' (p. 24). Mr Cragg is quite literally the prisoner of his own style; for it is his style, not the content of his thought, that stands between him and the reader. His attempt to come to terms with the modern world and to treat with it sympathetically is admirable and encouraging, but it is the greater pity that what he has to say about

the Semitic God is not only in itself incomprehensible to the modern world he addresses but made doubly so by the way in which it is said. The high baroque is not an idiom in which technological man is at home.

The book is in eight chapters (lectures), the first and last two of which concern the predicament of modern man. Transitional are chapters ii and iii entitled respectively 'God is, and Man is his Caliph' and 'His Secretarie, Abraham'. The titles, once the allusions have been explained, faithfully represent the contents. As 'Caliph' of God man is entrusted with the running of the world but in obedience to God; and this idea, though most typical of Islam, is common to all the Semitic faiths. We are then introduced to Abraham—a key figure again in the three faiths, but one which is differently interpreted in each.

"Seed", "standing" and "suffering"—in the Abrahamic shape of each—seem properly to be taken as, in a primary way, the clue to the Hebraic, the Muslim and the Christian heritage of Abraham.

Here again one wonders what is the significance of the Islamic 'standing' or 'station' except that it provides alliteration, since neither word seems particularly appropriate to a 'devoted doer of God's will' (p. 74).

There follow three chapters devoted to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, in that order. The chapter on Judaism is deeply disturbing; for it seems to apportion far more guilt to Jewish 'exclusiveness' than is altogether seemly. Moreover, the interpretation of the passage from the Old Testament to the New in terms of a passage from 'nation' to 'person' seems one-sided in that it separates Christ from the 'New Israel' which is the Church.

Again one wonders whether Mr Cragg really means what he says when taking us with him from the Old Testament into the *Merchant of Venice*, he declares:

"A man more sinned against than sinning", Shylock was, truly. Yet has he not provoked his prey to prey on him?"

The inference, on the face of it, is that Jewry (persecuted by the Christians once the Christians were in a position to persecute) offered the first provocation. Nor is the matter cleared up by the Delphic pronouncement that follows: 'If his is the greater provocation, where in the depths of history does the provoking derive?' The next sentence, however, roundly condemns Anti-Semitism but does not seem to have much logical connexion with what goes before. This kind of writing is typical of the whole

book: time and again cohesion and clarity are recklessly sacrificed to the quirks of a highly individual and opaque style. The message does not come through. This is particularly true of the last chapter which, one assumes, is intended to be the summing up of the whole. It is entitled 'The Significant Absence and the Real Presence', and the 'dialectical' argument seems to be that the more God appears to be irrelevant in the technological world, the more is he really present—the more, one supposes, is the need for him felt. Possibly. But, as all are agreed, he must be re-presented in a way that

makes sense to post-Christian man. Despite touches of real originality it is doubtful whether Mr Cragg has succeeded. Despite his 'dialogue' with both Marx and Camus this is clearly not a world in which he is at home; for the audience he addresses is simply through with the Semitic God whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, and insofar as it shows religious tendencies at all, these are directed much more towards the immanent God of the Indian religions: hence its interest in Zen—and Teilhard de Chardin.

R. C. ZAEHNER

**AN INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL COUNSELLING**, by Michael J. O'Brien, C.S.V. *Alba House*, New York and Dublin, 1968. 272 pp. 35s.

**PRINCIPLES OF PASTORAL COUNSELLING**, by R. S. Lee. *S.P.C.K. ('Library of Pastoral Care')*, London, 1968. 135 pp. 15s.

A large question mark hangs over the future pastoral work of the priest in a rapidly changing Church. The most far-reaching changes will come from the changing of Church structures which is now beginning, from the way in which authority is understood and exercised in practice, from the specialized work which will be called for in a team ministry, and from changes in the leadership functions of the priest. These changes are the result of the renewal of theology, especially since Vatican II, but they have also been very much influenced by the insights derived from sociology.

Within this sociological framework, and interacting with it, is the pastoral relationship. How is the priest to go about his delicate task of helping people, of helping the individual, to know God and to know what God wants of him? How is he to help a man to develop his full spiritual potential? The psychology of pastoral work has a more limited field than its sociology, but it has to penetrate more deeply into personal relationships, and it has a longer tradition.

These two books deal with the priest's relationship to the individual, and especially with the role of the priest as counsellor. In this field, both our knowledge and our attitudes owe a great deal to the findings of Freud and his successors about the psychodynamics of personality development, and to the psychological counselling of Rogers. But these advances in the human sciences raise all the more insistently the question, What is the role of the priest? What is specific about the priest as counsellor? How is he different from the layman? What part should counselling have in his total function as a priest, in his mission? And

there is the important question of authority, with its many facets. No one today wants to be authoritarian. But the priest will inevitably be seen as an authority figure, an official representative of God and of the institutional Church. How far can he (and should he) free himself from this image? Can he really follow to its logical conclusion the 'non-directive' method of Rogerian counselling, especially when dealing with problems of faith and morals?

Father O'Brien, an American priest-psychologist, deals briefly with these wider questions in his first chapter, and defines pastoral counselling as 'a way of proceeding in an interpersonal relationship between a priest and a client which seeks to free the client's capacity to live his life more fully as a child of God than he does presently, with greater openness to reality and inner harmony'. He goes on to give some fictional examples of the priest in different helping relationships. These illustrations are valuable, though the tone is sometimes paternalistic: 'Father presented a few principles of the spiritual life at the end of each interview'; '... he felt he had learnt valuable lessons through his association with Father William.' There is an air of pious clericalism about this which makes one's flesh creep, and which goes all too well with the dreadful dustcover and the photograph of the author inside the back flap. But it would be a pity if the reader gave up in despair at this point, for the main body of the book is free from this tone of complacency and is much more 'client-centred'. The main theme, in fact, is that the object of counselling should always be the development of the