

height only in spite of herself and in spite of her environment. Mysterious, dynamic forces were at work in Israel and all the persistent efforts which have been made to explain these forces have so far resulted in failure. They cannot be explained by . . . a natural predisposition on the part of the people, nor can they be elucidated by claiming that they were derived from other peoples. . . . What made Israel were forces from above' (p. 11).

The effects of these forces can be examined in the nation's beliefs and worship, and in their changing manifestations as the main influences on the nation's life passed from the monarchy to the prophetic movement, and finally to the Judaism of the post-exilic communities. Despite their dispersion, these communities formed 'a great, united, worshipping community, with Jerusalem as its place of worship' (p. 300). It is impossible to generalize about this community without at the same time falsifying it. On the one hand, 'the Jewish priestly mind diluted the content of the prophetic inheritance, by translating it into its own scholastic terms and interpreting it according to its legalistic conceptions'; on the other hand, 'Judaism conducted the prophetic flood into calm, priestly channels.

Judaism was rich in the religion and faith of the prophets, but this became crystallized in many different institutions and practices as it spread over the centuries' (pp. 308f.).

But Professor Renckens is at his most interesting when he traces the power of the prophetic themes in the life of the nation. The divine reality, transcendent yet immanent, holy and living, was intimately associated with every aspect of Israel's life, for she had been chosen by God and belonged wholly to him. This is the true ground of all social justice and effective worship, and the nation inevitably suffered whenever it denied this ground by formalism, injustice, political aspirations or mere national pride.

Both books, in their different ways, make a vital point. The religion of Israel cannot be reconstructed or even satisfactorily described, for it was inseparable from the total life of the people. It was the religion of a closely knit, worship-centred community, but precisely because of this its experiences are valuable for the worship-centred community founded by Jesus Christ. Both books succeed in making this experience more accessible.

JOSEPH RHYMER

THE EXPERIENCE OF PRIESTHOOD, edited by the Rev. Brian Passman. *Darton, Longman and Todd*, London, 1968. 165 pp. 25s.

This book contains: a wise and sympathetic Introduction by Archbishop Hurley, and 'essays by thirteen English-speaking priests of all ages and backgrounds', to quote the large claim made by the blurb. At the end is an essay by a consultant psychiatrist, which seems to be valueless. Of the priests' essays, the first is moderate and balanced, and reveals humility and humour. None of the others reaches the same standard, and most, not all, express frustration and disappointment. Probably the writers have not presented a correct view of themselves: there is a suggestion of hectic excitement about them which makes for imbalance. Certainly it is difficult to believe that profound unhappiness prevails among priests to the extent that this book suggests, viz. in ten out of thirteen.

One wonders what justification the editor supposed he had for the book. What he says is: 'The success of the book, *The Experience of Marriage*, prompted the idea of a similar book on the priesthood', which is a notable instance of *obscurum per obscurius*. To us the publication

seems regrettable because likely to do more harm than good.

The contributors, indeed, write with evident sincerity, and no one, certainly no fellow-priest, could fail in sympathy. Also they are usually moderate and anxious to be fair; and only rarely bitter. And there is much truth in their complaints. It is true, for instance, that the celibate state is often marked by loneliness and a sense of isolation from the mass of men. It is true, too, that presbytery life has often been difficult, that parish priests may fail to understand and trust their younger assistants; that moral theology has an unattractively legalistic aspect, especially to those who do not bear in mind the principles of interpretation tucked away in earlier pages of the manual. And there is overwhelming evidence of grave shortcomings in seminary training up to the recent past. Other features of priestly life can be burdensome. But in this book there is far too little account of the considerable changes for the better already visible.

But the reason why the issue of the book seems

regrettable is that it offers an unworthy picture of the priesthood. Prayer in any substantial degree is brushed aside as 'monastic' and therefore unsuitable for secular priests. There is a faulty attitude towards disappointment and suffering, no reminder that a priest is *alter Christus* not only in what he does but in what he suffers. Obstacles to the thorough performance of priestly work should be removed so far as possible; but some will always remain, and a priest should recognize crosses when he sees them, and accept them as did the apostles and the apostles' Master. Probably these writers do so, but are too modest to admit it. Their modesty is misplaced.

As the priest's life is ill portrayed, so also his work. *Ars artium est regimen animarum*, and it calls for careful preparation. Yet here we have priests who, fresh from a seminary training which they describe as woefully inadequate, are ready to plunge into bustling activity, confident that they know what to do and how to do it. Perhaps those repressive parish priests were wise to use the curb. It is strange but true that in this twentieth century of Christianity we do not yet know how to preach the gospel. We may be certain of this, however: without a prayerful inner life, disappointment and unfruitfulness will mark the experience of priesthood.

H. K. BYRNE, O.S.B.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN A SECULAR SOCIETY, ed. Bernard Tucker. *Sheed and Ward*, London, 1968. 242 pp. 32s.

This is not a symposium in the normal sense, but a collection of essays loosely grouped round the subject of Catholic education in our present society. The editor prudently forestalls objection by warning the reader that this is not going to be a 'for' or 'against' argument, and that his aim is to provide a varied assortment of material for future discussion rather than to look for a unifying principle. This aim he has achieved. To one reader at least, the contribution which seemed most relevant to the English situation was the lucid and unpretentious essay written by two French teachers, Monique Aubry and Jacques Dard of the Equipes Enseignantes de France. The translator of this chapter (thanked in the preface but not mentioned by name) is to be congratulated on his workmanship. The essay reads like the work of one person, and its modesty of approach is enhanced by its economy in style and its clarity. Basing their suggestions on their long experience of working as Christian teachers in state schools, the writers claim that it is no bad thing for a child to learn early that believers are outnumbered by unbelievers. Their experience has led them to believe that a child's faith will become more truly personal and more deeply rooted if he learns how to live in a pluralist society, since

the Church is not just one element in such a society. Their approach, however, is neither purely empirical nor purely expedient. They end by providing a solid theological reason for their suggestions, namely, that the Church should practise poverty not just materially but also in her methods of evangelization. The spirituality of this chapter is reminiscent of that of Charles de Foucauld.

It would be captious to complain that the phrase 'in a Secular Society' begs one question and by-passes another, since it is a handy title of which the everyday meaning is clear enough. Nevertheless, the note of defensiveness is a recurring feature in more than one essay. One chapter (and a vigorous chapter) begins, indeed, with the words: 'Two of the commonest criticisms of the Catholic position'. Nor is this altogether surprising. The Council's Declaration on Christian education, for all its positive claim that the Church must care for the 'whole life of man' carries faint overtones of regret in the subsequent words 'even his life on earth in so far as it is connected with his heavenly calling'. The material provided in this collection, useful as it is for discussion, needs to be studied in the light of Harvey Cox's recent analysis of secularization as the fruit and not the enemy of Christianity.

M. A. WILEMAN

METHODISM DIVIDED. A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism, by Robert Currie. *Faber and Faber*, London, 1968. 348 pp. 63s.

Methodism Divided is an impressive study of the forces that created factions within and break-away movements from the Wesleyan Church after the death of John Wesley, and of the factors which, subsequently, promoted the gradual re-unification of Methodism, cul-

minating in the 1932 creation of the Methodist Church in the U.K. In the course of this analysis Dr Currie lays bare the conflicts which emerged between the laity and the ministry, the centralized administration of the connexional hierarchy (notably the Wesleyan)