

idity of style. Vatican II remains the great turning-point: the "caesura" in 1962-65 is comparable only with the breakthrough from Judeo-Christianity in the middle of the first century (chapters 6 and 7). He frequently alludes to post-conciliar attempts to slow down or neutralise the changes. The papacy will have to scale down its claims (chapters 8, 9 and 10). The Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith "may perhaps show some traces of the influence of conciliar theology, but it is still too neoscholastic in its nervous opposition to modern theological experiments" (p 95). The arguments in the Roman "declaration" of 1976 that women could never be ordained are not convincing (chapter 3). Perhaps one day it will be possible to have freedom of conscience together with the authority of the magisterium in the Catholic Church (chapter 4). Far from its being an optional

extra it is the duty of the Church to promote economic development in the Third World (chapter 5). Catholic spirituality will have to become far more concentrated on essentials ("we shall speak of Jesus and not of the Infant of Prague"), personally committed, communal, but also traditional and ecclesial (chapter 11). The reunification of the churches around the papacy is nothing like so difficult a task as many suppose (chapter 12). Catholics today have to learn "to think and to live the Incomprehensible very comprehensibly" (chapter 1). Catholics must not be driven out of the Church just because they can make little or nothing of some dogma (chapter 2). The book concludes with a characteristic meditation on "the inexhaustible transcendence of God".

FERGUS KERR O P

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRONTIERS OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: Essays presented to D. M. MacKinnon, edited by Brian Hebblethwaite and Stewart Sutherland. Cambridge University Press, 1982 pp ix + 252 £17.50.

Donald MacKinnon retired in 1978. A fine photograph (by Ramsey and Muspratt) and a list of his published writings (compiled by Paul Wignall) enclose this splendid collection of essays offered to him by colleagues, pupils and friends. He taught in Oxford from 1937 to 1947, then in Aberdeen until 1960, and finally in Cambridge. Stories about him abound. When pupils meet they soon fall to exchanging anecdotes, attempting to reproduce that extraordinary voice (Winchester and Oxford no doubt, but the cadence of Argyll). My own tales go back to the moral philosophy classroom at King's College, Aberdeen, more than thirty years ago. But he introduced Victor White to John Layard; Gervase Mathew and Ian Hislop were among his friends; he wrote the foreword to Cornelius Ernst's essays. So one could go on. It may not seem like it from the standard literature, but MacKinnon has been the most effective and influential philosopher of religion in Britain for the

past twenty or thirty years. But he has never had a "line", and he has been a *teacher*, rather than a writer.

This collection does him proud. None of the twelve essays is make-weight. Some contain passages of great beauty: Ronald Hepburn's remarks on mortality, for example: "exchanging, if we can, fear and resentment at the certainty of death for wonder at the life which it will close". Geoffrey Lampe writes instructively on the Magi; Christopher Stead scrutinizes the notion of God as "mind"; Nicholas Lash and Roger White, very differently, focus on questions about analogy; Stephen Sykes returns to the need for systematic theology. Moule, Cupitt, Bernard Williams, Torrance, and the two editors make up the round dozen. Well designed, and beautifully printed, the collection makes a worthy offering to a great teacher. It is also, appropriately, an important contribution to the philosophy of religion.

FERGUS KERR O P

FREUD, MARX AND MORALS by Hugo Meynell. Macmillan, 1981 pp xii + 209 £18.00.

This book covers more than its sensibly abbreviated title suggests. For there are chapters on Laing and Lorenz as well as Marx, while that on Freud deals with Jung also. The over-riding object is to construct, and to vindicate against opposing views, a

morality which is rational; and hence, it is argued, objective as well as non-relative. It is as part of this project that the author "summarises a number of influential accounts of the nature of man, and the moral conclusions which have been and

may be drawn from them". He "tries to bring out how these might be confined into a single consistent view" (p x).

The philosophical core of Meynell's main project consists, I think, in two contentions. The first, putting things in my way rather than his, is that Hare and others are wrong to try to distinguish moral from other systems of conduct-directing principles by their formal characteristics alone. It is necessary also to refer to the aim and point of the whole exercise; "... a man who did not admit that at least *in general, other things being equal*, a man is morally good so far as he sets himself to contribute to the well-being and satisfaction of other men, would not know the meaning of the phrase 'morally good' ..." (pp 167-70: italics original). This is, surely, something which has been neglected yet is both crucial and true.

Meynell's second and more fashionable contention challenges the Humian insistence upon "the logical gulf between statements of fact and judgements of value, between descriptive statements on the one hand and prescriptions or expressions of emotion or what you will on the other hand" (p 160). Meynell pursues a fresh line of attack. To show that a normative utterance is compatible with any particular descriptive statement is not to show that it is compatible with any and every disjunction of such statements. He is perhaps too hasty in concluding that the list of all the grounds which could coherently be deployed in support of the claim that something is good must be finite. Nevertheless, so long as we accept the normative identity of descriptively indiscernibles, it seems that from any statement that two things are normatively different it must follow that they are in some way also descriptively different. (The Leibnizian phrase new-coined for the previous sentence refers to the point that two otherwise identical objects could not be the one good and the other bad.)

Meynell's treatment of his selection of seminal thinkers is at times sympathetic to a fault. The charitable suggestion, for instance, that for Marx the dominant drive was hatred of poverty and of injustice could scarcely survive a study of the *Briefwechsel*; it did not, we may recall, with Sir Karl Popper. Again, is there any good reason to maintain that "the wars waged by Christian nations have been ... peculiarly bloody" (p 154)? Perhaps it is peculiarly scandalous that Christian nations should have warred against each other at all. But have these wars been, for any given level of military technology, peculiarly bloody?

In general Meynell is admirably willing to face, rather than to try either to evade or to suppress, uncongential facts. But his enthusiasm for "the truth and importance of Marx's insights" leads him to overlook

spectacular increases in the indices of criminality in most if not all the advanced welfare states. It is a little late in the day to say, without qualification "That tendencies to selfishness and crime are encouraged by economic and social inequities; and that social reconstruction ought to be aimed largely at ameliorating those factors which really compel some persons to be criminals, and increase the tendencies towards crime in others ..." (p 82).

However — unlike some colleagues in the Department of Politics at Leeds, who would apparently dismiss all the work of Lorenz for no other or better reason than that it is "reactionary" (p 194) — Meynell is prepared to accept "a corollary ... that different races are liable to differ somewhat from one another in the average predispositions to behaviour of their members" (p 60). This implication, which he rightly insists must if true be admitted to be true, Meynell finds "ideologically repulsive" because he sees it as "one central premise of racialism" (pp 60 and 61).

It would be salutary for Meynell, and for others, to reflect that here is a predicament which they have contrived for themselves: first construing racism as in whole or in part a descriptive doctrine; and then refusing to allow that Hume was fundamentally right to insist that prescriptive conclusions cannot be deduced from purely descriptive premises. For if racism, as something morally obnoxious, is, as I would myself maintain, a matter of advantaging or disadvantaging people on the basis of the race or racial group to which they happen to belong; and if, as I would also maintain, albeit now with some qualification to take account of the Leibnizian truth mentioned above, Hume was about *ought* and *is* fundamentally right: then the discovery that some racial groups contain disproportionately many very low and disproportionately few very high IQ's, or that they are way above average naturally inclined to this or that, will carry no racist implications whatsoever. We can, and should, still continue to give a completely colour-blind consideration to all candidates for anything; each strictly on his or her individual merits, or demerits.

One final, friendly protest. Meynell is writing on a subject of much more than narrow professional concern, and usually he succeeds in making himself widely intelligible. But he should not, when he introduces some distinction to which he proposes to return, label its terms with unmemorable letters or equally unmemorable numerals. Anyone wishing to be read and understood has here to follow the example of common speech. This deals with the ambiguity of the word 'funny' by drawing a mnemonic divide between 'funny' (ha ha) and 'funny' (peculiar).

ANTONY FLEW