

THE WAY OF TRANSCENDENCE. Christian Faith without Belief in God, by Alistair Kee. *Penguin Books*, 1971. 35p.

As far as I know, there are few books published on how to play bridge without bidding and tricks, or tennis without rackets, balls and courts. But books on how to be a Christian without believing in God continue to pour from the presses. Mr Kee's is both scholarly and clearly written; it constitutes an excellent introduction to this strange phenomenon, surely one of the most bizarre in the history of human thought.

The thesis of the book is as follows. If Christianity is to become meaningful to modern man, it must be established once and for all that it is not essentially concerned with belief in God. 'God' belongs to an out-dated substantial, mythological and metaphysical scheme of things which is quite inconsistent with modern man's practical attitudes and concerns. However, the people of ancient Israel and the traditional Church were clearly on to something in their talk about 'God'; and the task of contemporary theology is to bring out what this is in language which makes sense to modern man. The trouble with most radical theologians, as Mr Kee sees it, is that they have got rid of God, without managing to preserve the important truth that the Judaeo-Christian tradition has been on to in its talk about God. This is that reality presents 'an insurmountable obstacle to men pursuing their own ends, and . . . a never-failing source of power to pursue quite different ends' (203). Men who pursue their own selfish and trivial ends follow what Mr Kee calls 'the way of immanence', and men who pursue the quite different ends of love and service of their fellow-men follow 'the Way of transcendence'. Jesus Christ, a

prime exemplar of this form of life, may be regarded as the incarnation of transcendence, and by regarding him as such, modern man may be wholeheartedly Christian without compromising his modernity by concessions to mythology and metaphysics.

I cannot believe that most modern men have a theory of knowledge and reality of such crudity as that presupposed in this book; if they do, they surely invite pity rather than emulation: Contemporary philosophy, as opposed to that which was fashionable thirty years ago, shows that the old questions of metaphysics are very much alive. Mr Kee admits the inadequacy of positivism; but I do not think he follows through the consequences of this admission. To examine seriously the relationship of Christianity to science and contemporary culture demands the kind of acquaintance with the history of philosophy and with scientific method of which neither Mr Kee, nor most of the authors whom he summarizes and commends, can have any conception. Of course it is notorious and scandalous that Christians have traditionally used their preoccupation with God and religion as an excuse for doing nothing for the good of those among whom they live; but the cure for this is not to propose a redefinition of Christianity such that it is not essentially concerned with God and religion, but only with practical concern for the common good.

Yet I hope this book will be quite widely read—as a list of symptoms of the disease which is contemporary 'radical theology', rather than as a blueprint for Christian revival.

HUGO MEYNELL

LOGICO-LINGUISTIC PAPERS, by P. F. Strawson. *Methuen & Co*, London, and *Barnes & Noble*, New York, 1971. viii+249 pp. £2.75.

This book collects papers of one of the most justly respected philosophers writing in English today. Though all the papers have already appeared, between 1950 and 1970, it is certainly useful to have them in one book. The one small complaint that could be made is that a worthwhile and saleable book like this should have and can surely afford to have (a) a subject index and (b) an explicit reference to some of the most important discussions of the papers it contains. In both these external goods this book is lacking. Like the king's daughter, however, it is otherwise within.

New readers should begin with no. 9,

'Meaning and Truth', which introduces the heroic struggle seen by the author to be joined between the Communication-Intentioners and the Formal Semanticists. (Add Strawson's own name to the list on p. 172 of captains of the C-I party.) Paper 8 strikes a blow for the C-I cause, while papers 6 and 7, against Quine and Chomsky, at least make difficulties for the FS. Papers 10-12 reveal dissension (versus Austin or Mr Warnock) within the camp of the C-I. Papers 1-4 treat of singular reference and predication, and may be read in connexion with the author's *Individuals*, 1959, 137-247, Paper 5, 'The Asymmetry of Subjects and

Predicates', while continuous in a way with this last group, is important enough to be taken as introducing a new stage in the author's thought, and as indicative of his current interests. (It is the most recently published paper in the collection.) While there is not a paper in the book (save perhaps the faintly dispirited one disputing with Chomsky) which does not merit, and has not received, more detailed attention than is in place here, I shall attend to 'Meaning and Truth' alone.

The simplest way to join the C-I party, we are told, is: 'present and elucidate a primitive concept of *communication* (or communication-intention) in terms which do not presuppose the concept of *linguistic meaning*; then show that the latter concept can be, and is to be, explained in terms of the former' (172). The articles of war of the rival party, viz. the FS, are: 'the syntactic and semantic rules together determine the meaning of all the sentences of a language . . . by means, precisely, of determining their truth-conditions' (177). Strawson's contention is that the notion of truth-conditions itself cannot be explained or understood without reference to the function of communication: 'Reference . . . to belief-expression is inseparable from the analysis of something true (or false)' and 'it is unrealistic to the point of unintelligibility—or at least, of extreme perversity—to try to free the notion of the linguistic expression of belief from all essential connection with the concept of communication-intention'.

Some remarks. This resounding victory claimed for the C-I may be a little too quickly claimed; and it may even be that the struggle itself, between the FS and the C-I, is not what Strawson claims it to be. The move from 'belief-expression' to 'communication-intention' is sound, but it is dubious whether 'Reference . . . to belief-expression is inseparable from the analysis of something true (or false)'. Linguistic expressions taken *qua* T/F statements can well be distinguished from the same tokens

taken *qua* belief-expressions or credal affirmations, as this reviewer shows elsewhere. It is precisely where belief-expression is first insinuated into the account of the FS that some Laocoon of the latter camp should resist the importation: *Equo ne credite, Teucri*. The struggle could then shift to its true ground, with the difference seen to be not, *pace* p. 176, that the C-I insist, while the FS refuse to allow, that the meaning-determining rules of a language can be understood only with reference to communication-intention; but that the "meaning" which truth-conditions are capable of determining is *not* the meaning, without scare-quotes, which a comprehensive account of 'meaning' as used both by the vulgar and by philosophers in some of their more important utterances, would have to explain. Thus the justifiable complaint of the C-I is not that the FS account fails in what it is calculated to do (and at least Davidson, in his recent work, would seem willing to make the more modest claim involving only "meaning" and not meaning) but that what the FS type of account is calculated to do, is not good enough for important purposes.

Professor Strawson is not easy reading. While almost always clear as to what he is saying, he is too often convoluted in the saying of it. And he sometimes says things of prime importance to the reader in insignificant-looking footnotes. Yet this book is a fine example of a leading philosophical technician at work on questions whose significance is often far from being merely technical: theologians, for instance, might do something more valid with "communication-intention" than with some of the things they have bought in recent years from other markets.

'These manticists' (190) is just a pleasing misprint for 'the semanticists': descriptive metaphysics, unlike the cultic fringes of devotion to Wittgenstein or Heidegger, perhaps, has not yet fallen among the soothsayers.

LAWRENCE MOONAN

ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE, by Joel J. Kupperman. *Allen and Unwin*, London, 1970. 156 pp. £2.75.

The title of this book should be sufficient to ensure that it will not be overlooked. Implicit in it are both a challenge and a promise which, in the present climate of Philosophical Ethics, command attention. Happily, the author does not disappoint the expectations raised.

What is being challenged, of course, is the imperialism of Science which has claimed (or its court philosophers have claimed) the world

of Knowledge for itself—'the sciences'. Ethics, we have been told, is not a science, and so it has been banished from the realm of knowledge. Cognitivists have always disputed this sentence, and they will obviously expect to find an ally in Professor Kupperman. It is the special merit of his book that he proves to be a critical and an original ally.

The main burden of the argument is that