

seriousness and is a *theologia illusoria* in which it has ceased to be a *theologia crucis*' (p. 233). More brutally Luther is quoted: 'To seek God outside Jesus is the devil' (p. 235). But Ebeling is very sensitive to the need for a true assessment of scholasticism and feels the need to affirm that no scholastic theologian advanced 'the opinion that man became righteous in the sight of God through his righteous works' (p. 153). On grace Luther and Aquinas are not so far apart. It is the philosophical approach specified in the complementarity of grace and nature which divides them.

Luther's passionate and personal theology must lead not to the harmonies of grace and nature but to the polarities of law and gospel; letter and spirit; person and work; faith and love; kingdom of Christ and kingdom of this world; freedom and bondage. These provide the method and the content for this book which is undoubtedly a very competent and enlightening introduction to Luther's thought. Ebeling expounds the thought, and largely ignores the theoretical and practical difficulties, such for instance as were raised in Pelikan's *Spirit versus Structure*. The debate, partly with Erasmus, about the bondage and the freedom of the will is dealt with briefly but very well. Erasmus is

shown, I think rightly, not entirely to have understood Luther's proposition, but, again rightly, is not unduly scolded. I think the author fails to carry conviction on a central issue which recurs several times. He argues that Luther's *sola fide* is necessarily a battle on behalf of love, whilst scholastic faith, by contrast, is possibly a dead faith. Probably he is too short of space to argue this at the necessary length, and it does not seem to be really clear. But on one point, he affirms that the scholastics did transform the Aristotelean concept of *habitus*, and seems to imply that Luther had not really understood this, thinking he must attack any such psychological category in his determination to see the person, whole, in the sight of God.

The book is peppered with good quotations from Luther. Here is part of one: 'The Epistles of Paul are more of a gospel than Matthew, Mark and Luke. . . . Much more depends upon the word than upon the works and deeds of Christ. . . . Even if the miracles of Christ did not exist and we knew nothing of them, we would nevertheless have enough with the word, without which we could not have life.'

JOHN M. TODD

**SYMPOSIUM ON J. L. AUSTIN**, edited by K. T. Fann. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, 1969. 486 pp. £4.

Times have changed since the unfortunate Mark Antony had to choose between burying Caesar and praising him. Most of the material collected in this symposium (in fact a variety of reviews and papers published over the past decade or so) does both.

The first section of the book is devoted to biography and general considerations of Austin's philosophical style and technique. This is far and away the most rewarding part of the book, especially the piece by Stuart Hampshire, who shows a genuine and all-too-rare sensitivity to the real significance, the *subvertive* significance, of Austin's work as a philosopher and, even more, educator. His 'patient literalness', constantly recalling us to reality (which means, for Austin as for Aristotle, particulars) involved the most radical 'tampering with the beliefs of his audience'. 'The true conservatives, in philosophy as in politics, are those who accept discussion of traditional problems within the traditional terms. However heterodox the conclusions on which the supposed rebels congratulate themselves, no Church or ruling party feels itself seriously

threatened by this re-shuffling of the officially approved cards. But there are signs of official fear, and therefore of righteous anger, when the whole game of established argument and counter-argument is held up to ridicule.'

A fine specimen of such righteous anger is C. G. New's 'A Plea for Linguistics', in part II of the book, which seeks to demolish Austin's method of linguistic philosophy in the name of empirical linguistics. C. G. New's general points are perfectly sound: to rely on intuition rather than amassing evidence about how we use words very easily leads to such idiosyncratic Humpty Dumptyisms as A. J. Ayer's agonizings over the word 'know'. But a temptation does not entail a fall, and C. G. New does not make any serious attempt to show that Austin is *in fact* guilty (such attempt as he does make rests on fairly serious misrepresentation of what Austin actually taught). Now it is precisely this tendency to avoid facing actual *facts* that so much annoyed Austin. Short-cut generalizations are the curse of philosophy (and quite a few other things—perhaps they are the characteristic ailment of our civilization), and

it is perhaps not unfair to suspect that this is the real motive underlying C. G. New's attack on Austin (why Austin, of all people? Surely the least guilty, in this regard, of all English philosophers).

Not that Austin was infallible. But, as he kept reminding us (like Newman before him), we get into impossible muddles if we make too many generalizations from particular possibilities of error. The possibility of hallucination does not indicate a general unreliability of human eyesight. And similarly in speaking: to say that English is 'my language' is to say that, for practical purposes, my intuition of the language will be correct, and will correspond to that of other English-speakers. And, as Urmson testifies, this was in fact the experience of Austin's study groups.

Generalizations are very impressive, we approach them 'cap and categories in hand'. But reality is rather less tidy, rather more diverse, including the reality of human language (and Austin's study of the performative dimension is as much a classic as Wittgenstein's parallel campaign to place talking firmly back into life situations). Stuart Hampshire points out the affinity between Austin and Aristotle, who was 'more interested in making true statements, however dull, than in being interesting and dramatic'. 'Clarity, I know', as Austin remarked, 'has been said to be not enough: but perhaps it will be time to go into that when we are within measurable distance of achieving clarity on some matter.'

What matter, was of little systematic concern to Austin. For him, philosophy had no particular subject matter. He compared it to a sun, from which, periodically, lumps of matter would separate themselves and define themselves as formed planets (physics, grammar, and so on). So, bit by bit, philosophy is got rid of, the only way it ever can be, by 'being kicked upstairs'.

Austin, for all his academic and even trivial appearance, is not an academic philosopher, and (contrary to C. G. New's allegation) he actually advised against starting from recognized philosophical loci. His aim was educational, in the fullest sense; he was interested in pulling the 'firm ground of prejudice' from under our feet, in taking our 'blinkers' off (Walter Cerf), by confronting us ruthlessly with

the simple facts usually hidden from us by the 'blinding veil of ease and obviousness'.

Apart from Stuart Hampshire, and perhaps Walter Cerf (who makes an all-too-brief attempt to situate Austin *vis-à-vis* Husserl and Heidegger), I doubt if a single one of the contributors to this collection has really grasped this point. Austin quite clearly shows that 'action' is a dummy word, for instance, used to replace a wide range of other, disparate, words; yet we find Professor Forguson writing on 'Austin's Philosophy of Action'. The minutiae of his arguments are picked up and twisted around, polished, refuted, emended; but the essential point is missed, namely Austin's 'respect for existence and its variety' (Hampshire again). 'Why *must* there be a conceivable amalgam, the Good Life for Man?', as Austin asked. The whole point of his method, as again Hampshire points out, is to confront people with an option; not just to throw their theories into disarray, while leaving the ingredients intact. Austin's arguments are always *ad hominem*, and designed to lead to an experience. They are not contributions to any eternal dialectic going on in an hermetically sealed lecture room. Austin wants to wake us up, to subvert and disconcert us, if necessary with all the arrogance of a Heraclitus; to this end he keeps recalling us to what we already know, to everyday facts, to the obvious, to the diversity, all the things enshrined in our everyday language. This may not be the end of philosophy, but it is certainly the beginning, as he used to say. The diatribe against sense-data is not simply a refutation of a particular philosophical doctrine, but an attempt to liberate us from the consequences of the 'original sin' of Berkeley, which expelled us from the garden of perceptual innocence. It is quite beside the point that Ayer may not have said what Austin undertakes to refute. To recall Austin to the professional lists is to betray him utterly.

And, I am afraid, this is a book by and for professionals—always excepting Stuart Hampshire. If you are a professional, you will probably disagree with everything I have, in my presumption, been saying, in which case this is a good four pounds' worth. Otherwise, keep it for something else.

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