

**GOD AND THE SOUL**, by Peter Geach. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1969. 138 pp. £1.25.

Professor Geach has style. To read this volume through, even for one who has read some of the essays contained in it as articles previously published and has heard the author read earlier drafts of others, is to enjoy a series of flashes of wit, of verbal felicity and of stinging reproof that only a Pope or a Johnson could rival.

Professor Geach has learning. How many of our contemporaries could illustrate his remarks, now with an allusion to the construct state in Hebrew, now with a reference to Gödel's theorem, now with a quotation from Horace, an acknowledgment to Browning, a comparison with one of Lewis Carroll's *juvenilia*?

Although a great part of Geach's beliefs about God and man reveal themselves in these relatively few pages, readers who expect a systematically expounded theology and anthropology will be disappointed. It is a collection of papers, some of them unlikely to interest those who lack concern for and familiarity with topics of an austere philosophical character. Discussions of individualized forms or of the two ways of inserting an existential quantifier into a given context are not going to find a wide readership amongst the inmates of present-day seminaries. Nor will Geach's views on topics more fashionably canvassed always appeal to the popular vote. He is inclined to think it rational to accept as valid a causal deductive proof of God's existence, and he believes that certain practices are absolutely forbidden by Divine law.

Geach often expounds and seldom questions

the views of Aquinas on the matter under discussion. Sometimes this will seem surprising, as when Aquinas is shown to have held that the human soul which survives death is not a human being. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the new translation of '*Et cum spiritu tuo*', Aquinas would have denied that I am the same as my soul. Sometimes Geach's interpretation of Aquinas is controversial. Dr Kenny, in his book on the Five Ways which appears in the same series as the volume under review, disputes Geach's account of Aquinas's doctrine of *esse*. I myself find it difficult to avoid ascribing a two-name theory of predication to Aquinas in the light of *Summa Theologiae* I<sup>a</sup>, qu. 85, a. 5 ad 3<sup>um</sup>, although Geach on page 44 maintains that those who regard him as having held this theory are wrong. But no one has Geach's skill in producing citations from the Thomist corpus which seem relevant and interesting to the contemporary conceptual analyst.

Professional philosophers who have used some of these papers for quite untheological ends will welcome the convenience of having them available in a book. Theologians who wish to discover how the professional philosopher's tool-kit can be made to serve their own science will find this volume full of examples. Theology could scarcely be better advanced at the present day than by as many of its practitioners as are capable of it carefully scrutinizing and painstakingly criticizing the arguments with which Geach here presents them.

C. J. F. WILLIAMS

**THEOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS**, by James Richmond. *S.C.M. Press*, 1970. 40s.

**THEISM AND EMPIRICISM**, by A. Boyce Gibson. *S.C.M. Press*, 1970. 50s.

One sometimes fears that there are only three varieties of reflective writing on religion; scepticism, sophistry, and tripe. These two books do something to restore one's faith that there are others. Also, different as they are from one another, they share a point of view which is at once (in my opinion) commendable, and (which is not at all the same thing) becoming increasingly fashionable. This point of view is that which insists on the necessity and tries to show the practicability of natural theology—that is to say, of the attempt to show that, on the basis of general reflection on the nature of our experience of the world, it is reasonable for us to believe

in the existence of God. If belief in God is not something which can be shown to be reasonable by reflection on our experience of the world, it seems to me that there are two alternatives: either that it is so obvious that there is a God as not to require argument, or that belief in God is unreasonable. That God exists is surely not obvious; and it seems to follow that, unless natural theology is a viable enterprise, the only reasonable stance is atheism.

Richmond's book is a clear and useful survey of these trends in philosophy and theology which have combined to make the enterprise of natural theology seem mistaken.

The author excels at accurate and business-like thumbnail sketches of the thought of individual philosophers and theologians. Towards the end of the book he brings out the curious similarity between the problem of the self and the problem of God, and the tendency of radical empiricism to make nonsense of the latter only at the cost of making nonsense of the former. Boyce Gibson's work is more profound and personal, though perhaps less immediately attractive and clear. As he sees it, the development of philosophy has tended to be unfortunately affected by the notion, attributable to Plato, that there is a straight issue between rationalism and empiricism, and that no compromise is possible between them. His own idea of the road to knowledge, which he sees as more Aristotelian, is experience

including and informed by intelligence. Like Richmond, he has some interesting comments on the problem of the self, and he complains that the conventional empiricist account of the self is an unempirical deviation from true empiricism, since the empiricist's 'personal role in the act of reducing disappears, along with what he is reducing, into the depersonalized unit to which he reduces it' (p. 11). In general, he argues that there is a kind of verification in practice which is possible for faith in God, which renders it fundamentally consistent with any form of empiricism that does not collapse through internal difficulties. The book as a whole is at once erudite and closely argued, and should reward sustained thought and careful reading.

HUGO MEYNELL

**SPEECH ACTS: an essay in the philosophy of language**, by John R. Searle. *Cambridge University Press*, 1969. 45s.

The status of language in religious studies these days has never been higher, particularly in theology, where the search for new language-games in which to talk about or to God has reached fresh heights (or depths, depending on your point of view). Subjecting the language of theological expression to critical scrutiny has been extremely beneficial: at least the weaknesses in our expression are now more recognized, and hence more readily avoidable, than hitherto. But there has been little positive thinking on a sufficiently large scale to produce a linguistic tool-kit that can get anywhere near the edifices constructed by the old language-games. The reason for this, I am fairly certain, is a failure to develop an approach which is broad enough to cover all uses of language—not just the specific issues of traditionally formulated dogma, but the sociological, political, psychological and many other facets of everyday intellectual existence which a contemporary theology has got to come to terms with, and, ultimately, integrate. All the suggestions so far have been much too restrictive to provide the basis for any general theory.

Where can any such general theory come from? Charisms apart, there seem to be two possibilities. Linguistics itself might be of help, if so many of its proponents were not currently trying to turn themselves inside-out, claiming to be cognitive psychologists in disguise (I am referring, of course, to current trends in generative grammar). The other possibility is Philosophy — philosophy of

language, in particular. Searle's book falls within this category, and its presence for review in a religious journal might well be accounted for in terms of an archetypal hope that perhaps *this* book will give us a lead as to how we should handle some of our perennial linguistic problems. I don't think it will, but it is an interesting enough book for all that. The reason for its relatively restricted interest might be summarized by saying that readers would learn a great deal about the methods, principles and wranglings about the subject 'philosophy of language' from this book—much less about the phenomenon 'language' itself.

The book is easily summarized. It consists of two parts: the first is an attempt to provide a theory of speech acts; the second tries to apply this theory to the clarification of various fallacies in philosophy, and to the solution of certain philosophical problems (the way in which 'ought' can be derived from 'is', Russell's theory of definite descriptions, and the meaning of proper names). I shall not spend any time on the second part: it is a fairly technical discussion, along (as far as I can tell) orthodox philosophical lines, of various viewpoints associated with these problems; and it does not, it seems to me, make all that much use of the theory proposed in the first part, which is the core of the book. What is this theory, anyway?

The concept of 'speech act' falls within a very clear tradition: it derives directly from