

WORDS ABOUT GOD: THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, edited by Ian T. Ramsey. SCM Press, London, 1971. 244 pp. £1.50.

The difference between this and other Readers in the Philosophy of Religion is made clear by the editor at the outset. It is not his intention to offer 'a general panorama' of the Philosophy of Religion in history, but to assemble materials that bear on a philosophical discussion of theological and religious language. It is a collection that should be especially welcomed by the theologian, since it puts his finger on the pulse of contemporary British philosophy with judicious selections from the major figures. It will also be of value to the philosopher: to the beginner, obviously, but also as a reminder to all of the need for historical perspective in a discussion which has often been guilty of historical naiveté.

The Editor's general introduction is devoted to what he calls 'a broad background survey of the development of empiricism over the last half century and more'. The bulk of its thirteen pages, however, is taken up with the broadening of empiricism that comes with the second phase of Wittgenstein's work. Of particular interest here are the suggestions of similarity which Bishop Ramsey purports to find between his own emphasis on the disclosure basis of understanding, and such remarks of Wittgenstein's, about coming to understand, as that 'the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought' (p. 11. cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 197e). Unfortunately the reader is left to make what he can of the suggestion; later, when introducing selections from the *Tractatus*, he hints tentatively at another possible link, this time with remarks of a rather different nature, about 'things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.' (p. 92. cf. *Tractatus* 6.522.)

It would probably have been inappropriate, however, to digress on this point, since the Introduction and editorial comment throughout the book are intended to help the general reader to pick his way through the philosophical material. In this respect the editor's contributions are well judged. Not only does he take care to relate the different discussions to the main theme of the book—especially useful when the selections are from such as Russell,

Waismann, Strawson, etc.—but he will also, on occasion, take issue with the argument, or give an indication of how he thinks the discussion should develop.

The Readings are conveniently grouped in four sections. The first, entitled 'The Language of Religious Belief: Some Classical Discussions', makes unmistakably clear how perennial is 'the contemporary' problem of religious language. A generous allotment of space to Maimonides and Aquinas (*Summa Q. 13*) are particularly helpful here. The remainder of this section is a useful source for Bishop Ramsey's own thinking, drawing as he does on Berkeley's *Alciphron*, H. L. Mansel, and Bradley, to underline particularly the importance of what he likes to call 'first person language' and 'theological reticence'.

The next two sections, constituting almost half the book, should prove invaluable to theologians and to any reader unfamiliar with contemporary British philosophy. Besides predictable selections from Russell, Wittgenstein (*Tractatus*), Ayer, Ryle and Austin, there is a goodly portion of Waismann's important paper 'Language Strata', and an extract from Max Black's *Models and Metaphors*. These latter selections, coupled with his own remarks on Wittgenstein in the Introduction, provide an excellent preparation for the final section which takes up, once more, the theme of 'The Logical Character of Religious Language'.

The editor has wisely limited himself, in this final section, to one of the most fruitful themes in the present discussion, a theme which he himself did much to highlight, viz. the role of metaphor in theological thinking, and the possibility of delineating the logical character of such thinking. Papers by Hepburn and himself are usefully offset by a glimpse of Evans-Pritchard's discussion of the same question with respect to Nuer Religion.

One inaccuracy, in the Introduction, should be noted: Wittgenstein's connection with the Vienna Circle is complex, but he did not at any time 'belong' to the circle. There is also a misspelling, on page 168, of H. Feigl's name.

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ST THOMAS AQUINAS: SUMMA THEOLOGIAE. Vol. XVIII: Psychology of Human Acts (Ia IIae vi-xvii), Thomas Gilby, O.P. *Blackfriars*; London: *Eyre and Spottiswoode*; New York: *McGraw-Hill*. xvi + 236 pp. £2.10.

St Thomas's discussion of the psychological composition of a human voluntary act, which

is based partly on Aristotle and partly on the work by Nemesius attributed to Gregory of