

refers to a closed collection from which all others have been excluded. The perception of 'prophet', then, is very much wider than that which has been gained through modern critical study.

This point established, he goes on to identify four modes of reading these books, looking at Jewish sources, Josephus, Philo, Deutero-canonical books, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran literature and, of course, the New Testament. The range of material used is impressive. He devotes the next chapters to four 'modes of perception', declining to give names to them since this may only mislead. They may be described roughly as the reading of the Prophets (i) to discern ethical norms by which to live life, (ii) to gain information about the present from their predictions about the future which is now often regarded as at hand, (iii) to discover the divine plan in history without necessarily any idea that its end is near and (iv) to understand more fully the nature of God, especially as just, and the mysteries of the divine realm he inhabits. To write a summary such as this is to realise the inadequacy of any summary.

In all this the question is raised of apocalyptic and its relation to prophecy. In the end, though he will allow the use of 'apocalypse' to describe the genre, he refuses to use the word 'apocalypticist' or 'apocalyptic movement' for he finds no evidence that such a distinct group of people ever existed. The view that they were the successors of the prophets when prophecy came to an end after Ezra is seriously challenged though the changes in outlook that took place at that time are fully recognised.

In the preface there is a hint that he will continue the journey backwards through time into the pre-exilic period. Let us hope this hint soon becomes a reality.

HARRY MOWVLEY

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT AND WRONG** by Bernard Mayo. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*. 1966. Pp. 176.

How better to characterize this expertly crafted book than to say that it could almost be regarded as a singularly competent and illuminating travel guide through the several complex and intricate *Sehenswürdigkeiten* of contemporary ethics and ethical theory? Not that it is any mere compilation of the relevant historical facts and details of developments in ethics in the present century. It is no mere Baedeker. Rather what Professor Mayo does is to provide his readers with a most insightful and incisive sorting out of the several issues, as well as the relevant arguments pro and con, that are all to be found in the thickets of present-day moral-philosophical discussion, meta-ethics as compared with ethics; freedom vs. determinism; naturalism vs. non-naturalism; prescriptivism as over against descriptivism; law as compared with morals; ethics of aspiration or of goals, as contrasted with ethics of duty and obligation. Moreover, so far from proceeding in the manner of any mere survey, Professor Mayo proceeds, as it were, dialectically, so as to progress toward the establishment of what he takes to be the right position in ethics, viz., that of Prescriptivism.

For the purposes of this review, therefore, I propose to try to trace out the main steps in what it seems to me this dialectic of Professor Mayo's amounts to, showing how it does manage to achieve the end which Professor Mayo wishes to achieve, but also how that same dialectic can be carried right on toward a further undermining of that very Prescriptivism which Professor Mayo has been so anxious to establish. Let me, accordingly, try to point up my review in terms of three main questions, each of which Professor Mayo considers successively in his book.

First question: What is it that distinguishes the moral from the non-moral? For as Professor Mayo avers, 'the central question of meta-ethics is simply to find what distinguishes the moral from the non-moral.' And this first question Professor Mayo would

appear to answer by saying that right and wrong—what we ought to do and ought not to do—are in no wise to be determined in terms of what we as human beings may want to do or not want to do, or what we consider to be to our own advantage, or in our best interests. No, and his reason for his refusal ever to compromise moral prescriptions by making them dependent upon things like human ends and purposes and interests is that, whereas moral prescriptions—duties, obligations, etc.—are in the nature of the case universalizable in contrast mere desires, likings, feelings, preferences never are: to recognize that I ought to do thus and so is to recognize also that any and every human being is under a like obligation, given like circumstances; but to acknowledge that I like something, or prefer it, or find it to be in my interest, in no wise implies that anyone and everyone must needs feel the same way about it as I.

And now for question two: how do we human beings go about discovering the moral, or the right as distinguished from the wrong? This question Professor Mayo answers unequivocally: there is just no way in which as human beings we ever can hope to discover what our moral obligations are by looking to nature, or by simply consulting the facts. Not only would it be anomalous to suppose that things like 'oughts' could have an existence in the world of nature—they would be nothing less than decidedly 'queer' entities, as Mackie suggests. But in addition, trying to derive an 'ought' from an 'is' would clearly commit Hume's fallacy, much as it could also play fast and loose with Moore's open-question argument. And even more decisive, perhaps, is the consideration that mere facts, just as such, have no moving appeal, as one might say, whereas prescriptions, in the nature of the case, are hortatory in their import: they are imperatives, in short.

But if moral prescriptions, then, are not to be derived from a regard for the facts, how do we come by them? And here Professor Mayo responds by saying that moral prescriptions are things that we human beings simply invent or make up; they emanate from us, and reflect no more than our own human legislation, so to speak. Indeed, it is much as Kant says: we are so to act that we can *will* that the maxim of our action shall be a universal law.

Still, one might wonder: would this not tend to render all moral prescriptions and moral obligations purely subjective and arbitrary, and thus not really objective at all? And what must this not entail, if not a hopeless relativism as regards all moral principles: what is right and what is wrong will depend only on what has been legislated into existence, be it by the civilization, or by the community, or even by the individual himself?

To such a charge of relativism, however, Professor Mayo's answer would seem to be somewhat along the lines of Professor Hare, and in terms of his twin considerations of *freedom* and *reason*. Of course, as human beings we are free to legislate into existence whatever moral prescriptions we choose. Yet all the same, insofar as such prescriptions would claim to be moral prescriptions, they would need to be so conceived and so formulated as to meet the formal, rational requirements of universalizability—and even more specifically of a universalizability such as would involve the 'reversibility test'. (p. 124) That is to say that I must recognize that I fall under the scope of my own prescriptions, no less than do others. As a result, our human moral prescriptions will turn out to be indeed relative as to their content, which is bound to vary according to the concerns and interests of the prescribers; and yet not as to their form. For the formal requirement of universalizability will guarantee that such freely stipulated and determined moral prescriptions and decrees will be neither arbitrary nor discriminatory.

And with this, we are led to our third and final question, which is, 'But why should I be moral?'—'Why need I,' that is to say, 'feel bound by any prescription or recommendation for action, if I don't want to be?' And to this question, it would seem, the very dialectic of Professor Mayo's argument so far can lead to no other conclusion than one which decisively undercuts Professor Mayo's own position of moral prescriptivism. For just consider how the third question in effect asks what possible reasons a person can have

for his feeling bound by a moral 'ought'. And yet when one stops to reflect on the matter a bit, is it not only too apparent that there would seem to be no other way in which one can ever justify one's heeding requirements or prescriptions or recommendations of any kind, unless it be in terms of considerations to the effect that unless I do heed such prescriptions I won't be able to achieve those particular ends or purposes or goals which I have set for myself?

After all, it can hardly be a proper reason in justification of an 'ought' just to say that I ought because I ought. And yet the only alternative would presumably be to try to justify 'oughts' in terms of what our ends and purposes are, and whether what it is said we ought to do can be seen to be necessary to the attainment of those ends and purposes. But this would clearly tend to undermine Professor Mayo's entire contention in answer to the first question, and that was that properly moral 'oughts' and obligations are never such as to be trumped by mere considerations of what our purposes, goals, or interests might be. Oh, it's true that when one says that 'oughts' can only be justified in terms of what we human beings want or desire, this need not be taken to mean that just any desire can trump a moral 'ought'. Instead, Plato's consideration in the *Euthyphro* becomes relevant here: Are things good because they are beloved of the gods; or are they beloved of the gods because they are good? Accordingly accepting the latter alternative, we rightly desire things only because we recognise them to be truly good; and likewise what we ought to do or ought not to do, the right and the wrong, are to be determined solely in terms of what that natural good, or natural perfection, or natural end, is for each of us, considered simply as a human being.

Nor is this the only adverse effect which Professor Mayo's dialectic can have upon his own position of moral prescriptivism. For in addition to undercutting his answer to the first question, we can now see the very same dialectic to have the effect of undoing his answer to the second question as well. For if moral prescriptions are to be determined in the light of what the good for man is, or what man's natural end is, then ethics cannot but involve an appeal to nature, or a research into nature—all in order to learn what the human good or man's natural end must needs consist in. And with that the tables are indeed turned on Professor Mayo, and on his championship of Prescriptivism in ethics. For rather than its being the likes of Immanuel Kant, or R.M. Hare, who are to call the tune in matters of ethics, it now turns out to be figures more like Aristotle and Aquinas and the whole natural law tradition that would seem to be on the right track, when it comes to determining what a proper philosophy of right and wrong needs to be.

HENRY B. VEATCH

**BEING AND TRUTH: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JOHN MACQUARRIE** edited by Allietair Kee and Eugene T. Long. *SCM Press, 1986*, pp xviii + 462, £25.

**THEOLOGY, CHURCH AND MINISTRY** by John Macquarrie. *SCM Press, 1986*, pp x + 211. £6.95.

Twenty four friends and former students have united to honour John Macquarrie as he retires from the chair in theology at Oxford which he has occupied since 1970. In a short autobiography at the beginning of the book he traces his 'pilgrimage' from the 'High Kirk' movement in the Church of Scotland (he was an Army Chaplain and then had a parish in Brechin) to ordination as an Anglican priest (in 1965), and from research in Glasgow on the influence of Heidegger's philosophy upon Bultmann's theology to the status of a well-respected and widely consulted exponent of traditional Anglican orthodoxy. The book includes a photograph of the honorand and a bibliography of his writings.

Masao Abe compares Heidegger favourably with Zen Buddhism, Takeuchi Yoshinori