

FREEDOM AND IMMORTALITY. By Ian T. Ramsey. (S.C.M. Press; 16s.)

The new wave of philosophical theology from the universities brings a second book by Professor Ramsey of Oxford. His findings may be as meagre as he thinks at the end, but the important thing is the empirical spirit of the book. His chummy alliance with ordinary language and shared situations commits him to trying to show, or find out, what we mean by concepts like 'freedom' and 'immortality', and ultimately by religious language in general, starting from the commonly available and sanctioned resources of contemporary empiricism. What he does is to bring words back to their 'empirical anchorage'. By deriving their meaning, or letting it re-emerge, from real life, he shows us how it might be possible for some of our own scholastics to rid their language of many of its technical and less meaningful aridities.

And yet we might have helped most where he is weakest. He locates the word 'soul' simply by the paradigm of its use in the Bible; here, by recovering the Hebrew mode of thought, he thinks we can bypass the obstinate dualism that besets our own tradition. But does it, and can we? The Greeks have taught us, for good and all, to distinguish between body and soul. If this leads people to treat the soul as a hidden double of the body, it is salutary to reprobate them (and to remember, as he does, that they are not necessarily talking about nothing). But there is no way out of tackling the dualism, and overcoming it, *conceptually*, in continuity with our own cultural formations. It is simply gerrymandering to propose the 'logical good sense' of the Hebrews, and to leave it at that.

'The human body', Wittgenstein said, 'is the best picture of the human soul.' Taking the hint, that the soul becomes *visible* in the body, we might offer St Thomas' concept of the soul (as *actus corporis*) as a starting-point for restating the logic of our talk about ourselves in a respectable way, and for discovering a more radical basis for the transcendence Professor Ramsey wishes to affirm. By producing a *phenomenology of the body*, we might make out what it is that subtends talk about the soul. 'Particular analogies do most sensibly shew us', Butler could say, 'that there is nothing to be thought strange, in our being to exist in another state of life.' The only kind of ground we can have for doubting it is 'some such imagination, as that of our gross bodies being ourselves; which is contrary to experience'. For us now, with our experience flayed by so many rival categories, there cannot be this trust; and yet we *are* more than our bodies. It is about the nature of our *being*, creatively exhibited, that one would wish to speak explicitly.

We do not suddenly become immortal when we die. If we are immortal at all, we must be so here and now. Professor Ramsey assembles cases of ordinary situations, like insights and decisions,

which, by defying exhaustive description in spatio-temporal terms, disclose our capacity to transcend manifest behaviour. The repeated failure of the spatio-temporal categories to net our lives shows that we are immortal. He reads 'immortal', rightly, as 'im-mortal'; the content of immortality is simply that some of our activities are of such a kind that language about perishing cannot apply to them. It is what St Thomas is getting at, when he insists that whatever 'meaning' and 'intention' mean, they at least mean non-bodily activities.

He concludes from this that the soul *subsists*, and though it is doubtful if he means any more by this than Professor Ramsey means, he is being explicitly *ontological*. It is true that we are still haunted by idealist metaphysics, but need we be any longer so chary of producing some *realist* metaphysics? It is important to keep metaphysics on the ground, visibly tied to real life and ordinary language, and this is the incontestable service offered by linguistic analysis. But to recognize linguistic analysis, especially as practised by the late Professor Austin of Oxford, as contributing to a phenomenology of the body, encourages one to hope that the persistent oddness of our language about ourselves might produce some bolder, more substantial, affirmation of what we are. There is at any rate (as Professor Hampshire's new book also shows) no longer much excuse for despairing altogether of English philosophy. It is sometimes closer, and more *engagé*, than some of the custodians of the *philosophia perennis* realize.

F.K.

LORDSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP. By Eduard Schweizer. (S.C.M. Press; 10s. 6d.)

Christian discipleship means following the person of Jesus Christ. Professor Schweizer prepares us for the development of his argument by setting out an analysis of Jesus' own words about this to his disciples. To answer his call was for them a new departure into freedom, breaking with old ties, even with themselves, in order to follow Jesus through rejection, suffering and death, and so to glory. But once he was taken from them, how was discipleship to continue? The early Church was forced to reflect theologically in order to solve this problem, and the approach to the solution varied according to the preoccupations of particular Christian groups.

The Jewish Christians of Palestine, burdened with a sense of sin, were concerned to see how a sinner could become righteous before God. This led them to concentrate their attention on Christ's death, and to develop a new interpretation of it. In the earliest days of the Church, says the author, the passion and death were considered simply as fulfilling God's will for his Righteous One, who, according to the