

Austin, and before him, Wittgenstein, and focuses on the idea that language has uses as well as structure—functions that have to be evaluated independently of their truth value and verifiability. We use language to command, promise, swear, explain, and so on; and these would be different kinds of speech acts. One particular category of speech act cited by Austin was the ‘performative’—here the language used is an integral part of the action (when the man says ‘I baptize you . . .’, part of the act of baptizing is the utterance used). Now what we have in Austin is a set of stimulating but scattered observations about speech acts. There is no theory outlined in any explicit, systematic way. Searle’s aim is to construct such a theory—or, at least, ‘to provide the beginnings of a theory of speech acts’ (p. 131). He certainly does develop a number of helpful ideas; but they do not, in this book, emerge very clearly as a theory either. Searle talks a lot about criteria, hypotheses, assumptions, and so on—but I do not get a coherent picture out of all this. I think the main reason is the absence of clear definition to organize the reader. As far as I can make out, the term ‘speech act’ itself is never defined: Searle *characterizes* the concept at various places, but does not define it, e.g. page 16: ‘the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts (of certain kinds to be explained later) are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication’. In Chapter 2, he attempts to ‘state a set of . . . conditions for the performance of particular kinds of speech acts’. A more precise account is not given of the term, and the reader is left to work out an integrated view of it himself. A far more detailed treatment is presented in Chapter 3, but this is in connection with the derived term ‘illocutionary acts’ (another

concept of Austin’s, though not used by Searle in precisely the same way, cf. p. 23, fn.). However, the term ‘illocutionary act’ is not defined either, but characterized: ‘Stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc. = performing *illocutionary acts*’ (p. 24).

I found this book illuminating in places, and frustrating in others. I lack the philosophical training to appreciate any nuances present in the in-fighting. Apart from the absence of definition, I was also worried by a certain tension between stated aims and practice. Searle claims that his book, being an essay in the philosophy of language, is an ‘attempt to give philosophically illuminating descriptions of certain *general* features of language, such as reference, truth, meaning, and necessity’ (p. 4, my ital.). But what exactly a general feature is is not clear; and later he sees the book’s methodology in highly specific terms. ‘I am a native speaker of *a language*. I wish to offer certain characteristics and explanations of my use of elements in *that language*’ (p. 15, my ital.). There seems some kind of contradiction here. I also have an in principle worry about any linguistic theory which claims to be general and yet exemplifies its claims solely from one language—especially if this language is English of a fairly restricted kind. Sketching a theory of speech acts, in outline, is easy enough (I am speaking relatively!). Applying it in detail is a very different story. And with speech acts, where socio-linguistic and stylistic problems turn up everywhere (though Searle does not refer to this literature), it is the detailed analysis of problem cases which will be the ultimate measure of the explanatory power of the notion. For this, however, the theologian, as everyone else, will have to wait. A charisma, indeed, might be a better horse to back.

DAVID CRYSTAL

COUNCIL OVER POPE, by Francis Oakley. Herder, \$5.95.

It is becoming obvious that the peculiar nature of the Church, extended over time, coping with, adapting itself to many different social structures, requires a theology peculiarly sensitive to history, and historical study done in full awareness of theological perspectives. It is also apparent that, apart from pioneer work of Père Congar, we have precious little of either. Professor Oakley’s book is a worthy exception.

He takes as his starting point the famous

or notorious decree of the Council of Constance, *Haec sancta* and its slightly later sequel *Frequens*. They were promulgated in a time of schism and were meant to reform a Church in which many were in doubt as to which was the true pope. *Haec sancta* sought to draw attention to the Council’s authority to make even the claimants to the papacy accept the measures necessary to reform the Church in head and members. In view of the situation, unless we were to assume a papalism so extreme

that even the dissolution of the Church into permanent schism was preferable to criticizing a pope, however dubious his claims to office, it is obvious that *Haec sancta* was an honest and moderate solution to a desperate crisis. It was the schism, not the extreme theological opinions of certain radical 'conciliarists', that produced the decree, as Mr Oakley has no difficulty in showing. But when the schism ended the decree was still there, on the statute book as it were.

In the climate of the extreme monarchic and hierocratic papalism of the last century or so, a multitude of Catholic historians and theologians have sought to get rid of it. They have tarred the fathers of Constance with the same brush as extremists like Marsiglio of Padua, though there is not the slightest doubt this is a slander. They have invented queer distinctions so that *this* part of the Constance *acta* is authoritative—this is necessary since the restoration of an indubitable line of popes depends on it—and *that* part is inconvenient and unauthoritative. They have assumed that all the time every right-minded man really knew who the true pope was. This, in spite of the fact that to judge by the *Annuario Pontificio*, and the various Catholic Encyclopaedias, no one, not even the Pope, really knows exactly what names should be included in the true line of Peter's successors. It is doubtful if even the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* can show a record of greater disingenuity in altering or obliterating awkward facts than the historiography of the conciliar movement. It was the schism and the need to deal with it that prompted *Haec sancta*. It is understandable but nevertheless wrong that when the schism was ended and the pope could once again resume his normal role, conservative opinion should seek to dodge the lesson Providence had set up for the Church—that however great the papal position it is a position within the Church, not over it, and that ultimately the pope is no less bound by the basic rules of the faith than any other baptized person.

Mr. Oakley moves from his very convincing vindication of the decree to some theological comments on the present state of the Church and the present exercise of papal authority.

He points out that *Haec sancta* has precisely the same kind of authority as *Pastor aeternus*, which says such very different things. He does not waste his time or ours attempting a synthesis of these opposites. He accepts a much greater relativity in such matters than is usual. In this I am absolutely sure he is right. He rejects the abuse of the *semper idem* view of the Church. (How right Wittgenstein was to spend so much time on asking what is meant by following a rule, by saying this is the same.) He accepts that there are radical discontinuities in historical theology and indeed in the way the Church functions. He argues that we are in the grip of just such a crisis of identity, or rather of discontinuity, now. He rejects very firmly the notion of a 'post-ecumenical' Church, a cartel of like-minded ecclesiastics shedding a dogma here and a doctrine there to create a monopolistic corporation able to live in comfort without competition or criticism. His positive suggestions are interesting. He has taken Charles Davis very seriously, as any one who aspires to say anything sensible about the structure of the Church these days must. He wants a new council, a Vatican III, which if called by the Pope will be because he has been under pressure from a lobby composed of laity and clergy agitating in each substantial body of Catholics. Mr Oakley sensibly does not attempt to predict or presume to prescribe what such a council would do. It would be aware of the successor of Peter all right, but it would take the view that today's situation was much more like that of Constance than that of the *Kulturkampf* that prompted Vatican I. Not that we have a schism but we do have a crisis of confidence in the capacity, honesty, and good intentions of the Church's present government. If necessary Mr Oakley thinks the Pope can and must be told to behave like a successor of Peter. To some this will seem bold and extreme but Mr Oakley's argument deserves reading in its context, which is of a genuine concern for the ordinary, puzzled Catholic laymen and cleric. He has much that is valid and relevant to say and he says it clearly and well. His book ought to be read.

ERIC JOHN

NEW WAYS IN THEOLOGY, by J. Sperna Weiland. Logos Books. Gill and Macmillan, Dublin. 222 pp, xv, 18s net.

If this survey of Protestant new theology does not receive the same welcome in this country

as in its country of origin (it is the work of the professor for the history of theology in