An Essay on the Foundations of our Knowledge. By A. A. COURNOT. Translated by M. H. MOORE. (New York : Liberal Arts Press. 1956. Pp. lxx + 615. Price $9.00).

Unable " to understand why Cournot's philosophical work has not had a wider audience ", Professor Moore has spent much of the last twenty years translating and finding a publisher for this 600 page book. Cournot (1801-1877), who was in the neo-criticist tradition, is known as an economist, especially as an econometrist, and writer on probability, but neither the Encyclopaedia Britannica nor any philosopher I have met has ever heard of his philosophical works. Despite the pleasant fluency of this translation—I have had no opportunity to check its accuracy—and despite a central thesis which seems to me important, it is most improbable that the book will interest anyone except a specialist in nineteenth century French philosophy.

According to Cournot, " Philosophy has as its object the order and reason of things ", and we " may be able to understand a little of the nature of man and his rôle in the world only by observing the connection of all the phenomena of nature and their hierarchical progression. . .". As a result, we are given an extremely long and detailed examination of the various departments of human knowledge which culminates in a classification and co-ordination of them all. Much of what he has to say in this examination is sound enough—indeed, he explicitly anticipates the twentieth century hatred of those things which " fly in the face of common sense " or which indulge in a " mere abuse of words " —but it does not give the impression of adding up to anything. The points get lost in the excellent illustrations, the pattern in the detail.

Being rightly convinced that the statements of philosophy are neither like those which can be established in the factual sciences nor like those which can be demonstrated in logic and mathematics, he concludes that they must be statements of probability. He seems to have reached this view partly on the grounds that since " the idea of a harmonic order in nature is essentially correlative to the notion of chance ", and since philosophy looks for order, philosophy has to do with probabilities. But his main reason is that answers in philosophy are similar to theories in science in so far as the latter try to find an order and harmony in the facts discovered by scientists, and since theories are, he believes, only probable because they only more or less suggest an order among the facts, therefore, philosophical solutions are also only probable. This view of the work of philosophy as a harmoniser of data is, I think, an important anticipation of the Wittgensteinian view that what we have to do in philosophy is to assemble examples in order that a pattern or order among them may spring to mind. Cournot says : " To grasp the intelligible relations of things in all their truth . . . to choose the sensible images which are least imperfectly fitted to the expression of such relations . . . will be the work of an artist. . . . In his own way, the philosopher will be a poet or a painter ". He further thinks that philosophy has some of the personal character of the work of an artist ; and he allocates it to a particular mental faculty.

But of course Cournot did not think of the data, which are to be assembled in order to be harmonised, as examples of the uses of words. Furthermore, his view that the resulting philosophical statements are only probable, even though he distinguished this kind of probability from the numerical kind in mathematics, seems to me a misleading way of putting his point that the philosophical answer which puts the facts in an illuminating order is not provable by empirical or mathematical methods, but only to be ' welcomed ' or rejected.

Professor Moore's long introduction to the book is too old-fashioned to be helpful to a modern reader who tries to appreciate Cournot.

ALAN R. WHITE

Faith and Logic. Edited by BASIL MITCHELL. (London : Allen & Unwin. 1957. Pp. v + 222. Price 21s).

This book consists of essays by seven Oxford philosophers and theologians who are members of the Church of England. Its one typically Anglican quality is the lack of unity among the contributors, and this disunity extends through style and substance in such a way as to suggest a basic ambiguity in the whole enterprise. Is this philosophy or apologetics ? Are the authors concerned as philosophers to set out what Mr. R. M. Hare in his characteristically trenchant essay calls the anatomy and physiology of religious discourse, or are they concerned as Christians to defend their doctrines against charges of vacuity and meaninglessness ? It may be that there is nothing to preclude the same arguments from being employed for both purposes ; but at least it ought to be borne in mind that these are two distinct tasks. To put the matter another way : the assessment of religious belief is no doubt a matter on which philosophers will, like anyone else, continue to disagree. So is the truth or falsity of particular theological doctrines. But on the logical status of religious belief, on those characteristics which

determine the place of religious utterance on the map of discourse philosophers, whether sceptics or believers, surely ought to be able to settle their differences. Religion may be concerned with mysteries ; but the philosophy of religion is concerned with problems and it is the nature of problems to have solutions.

The two most straightforward essays in this book are both descriptive studies of how a particular set of arguments or terms are used. Mr. G. C. Stead, writing on " How Theologians Reason ", presents an excellently lucid account of the domestic arguments of theologians, of how questions are settled within theology. Peculiarly valuable is his stress on the relation between theology and other disciplines such as historical criticism. The only failing of this essay is that the picture of theology which it presents is perhaps more restricted to specifically English (as contrasted with Continental Protestant and Catholic) theology than Mr. Stead allows.

Mr. M. B. Foster in the outstanding essay of the collection examines how contemporary philosophers use the word " we " when they assert that philosophy is concerned with the way in which *we* use language. Mr. Foster argues that such statements are not empirical generalisations about linguistic usages but affirmations of adherence to standards of linguistic propriety. His argument brings out an element of commitment in philosophical analyses which is often obscured and he connects this illuminatingly with religious commitment. His essay is full of valuable asides on the history of philosophy. To underline the importance of reading it is perhaps more valuable than any attempt to summarise it more fully.

The editor, Dr. Austin Farrer and Mr. I. M. Crombie are concerned in a more conventional manner with the use and justification of Christian discourse. More or less explicitly in all three essays an argument is being carried on with a verificationist critic of religious belief and one result of this is that all are hindered by a predicament which anyone who attempts to write about religion today must experience. Ought one to begin with the philosophical difficulties and show how and whether they can be met ? Or ought one rather to begin with the whole matter of religious and theological utterance and try to show how it is logically organised ? The defect of the latter course is that one may seem simply to evade crucial questions ; the defect of the former, which is the course chosen by these writers, is that one may seem to ignore what theological writers actually do say on the topics in question. This lack is most apparent in Mr. Mitchell's essay on " The Grace of God ". What is extremely valuable in it is an analogy between religious thinking and thinking in the humanities, which it would be interesting to see pressed further. Dr. Farrer and Mr. Crombie provide models of clear exposition which disappoint only because their authors are compelled, no doubt for lack of space, to present theses which raise a great many questions which they do not answer.

Mr. R. M. Hare has both a more vigorous style and a more original approach than any other contributor, but his essay is the most enigmatic. He attempts to carry over certain conceptual discoveries in recent moral philosophy to the philosophy of religion and it is very much to be hoped that he will expand what he says here about " Religion and Morals ". Almost all Mr. Hare's assertions raise difficulties, but the manner in which he provides tentative answers to these suggest that here there may be something of the first importance.

Mr. J. R. Lucas writes ostensibly on " The Soul ", but actually on the mind, or more accurately, on *The Concept of Mind*. His essay is a sustained critique of one type of behaviourism which ends with a discussion of the moral consequences of belief in the soul that is oddly unrelated to what has gone before.

Analytical philosophy, for largely accidental, historical reasons, found its early adherents in those who were either indifferent or hostile to religious belief. This book is one more testimony to the fact that the type of philosophical analysis which we owe to Moore and Wittgenstein is indeed a method and not a doctrine, and a method which philosophers of widely differing beliefs can use fruitfully. As such, it puts us in the debt of all the contributors and more especially of the editor.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

Essays in Sociology and Social Philosophy. By MORRIS GINSBERG. Volume I : *On the Diversity of Morals.* (London : Heinemann. 1956. Pp. xiv + 329. Price 25s). Volume II : *Reason and Unreason in Society.* (London : Heinemann. 1956. Pp. vii + 328. Price 21s).

These collections of essays are the first two volumes in a new edition of Ginsberg's works. *Reason and Unreason in Society* was first published in 1947, and is reprinted without alteration. Of its three parts, the sociological studies of Part I and the studies in the philosophy of law and morals contained in Part III date mostly from the 1930's, while the essays on various aspects of national character which form the second part