

sylogism we have given above, and it is of the utmost importance in any ethical treatise that they be clearly distinguished one from another. He admits the major, and he implies that it must be admitted as a preliminary to any discussion. This is perfectly true; a man who denies that 'good ought to be done and evil avoided' must be adjudged morally, and therefore mentally, deficient. Once this is granted there is no longer any problem of an 'imperative factor'—it is there, and there's an end on't. It enters the concluding particular moral judgment directly from the major premiss. The minor merely states the moral character of the particular action. With this in mind it is hard to appreciate Fr Coventry's difficulty. He gives as his aim 'to make an honest enquiry into the sphere of ethics; to state the sense of dissatisfaction which hedges this study about' and he has accomplished this latter purpose to a much more vivid degree than he perhaps intended; he has certainly stated the 'sense of dissatisfaction' more vividly than the subject warrants. If it was the author's purpose to show the ethical chaos consequent upon the rejection of traditional teleology he has succeeded; but he should have stated this purpose in more explicit terms. It is hard to know when he is giving his own views, when those of others, and finally whether he agrees or disagrees with the latter.

The most that can be said for this rather confusing work is that it stimulates at times, and in opening the problem serves, though inadequately, as an 'introduction to ethics'. The chapter on freedom, and his treatment of the moral argument for the existence of God, are valuable. We feel that we cannot agree with Professor McKinnon's remark in the preface that '*Morals and Independence* seems an example of . . . the good introductory book' nor can we recommend it to students embarking on a study of Ethical theory. It is more liable to confuse than introduce. JULES BONSAN.

**KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.** By Reidar Thomte.  
(Oxford University Press; 18s.)

The limelight of popularity recently thrown upon Jean-Paul Sartre and modern atheistic existentialism has indirectly darkened the arena which anyone who intends to embark upon a study of Kierkegaard must enter. Existentialism has been elevated into a philosophy and Kierkegaard and Sartre have been bracketed as its exponents. About the only thing they have in common is the denial that it is a philosophy. Kierkegaard is essentially a religious writer, deliberately and explicitly, and Mr Thomte has supplied the need there is for an introduction to his thought. It would be a mistake to expect an easy book: Kierkegaard's own thought was not easy and any condensation must increase the difficulty. In a sense Kierkegaard makes a Protestant approach to a Protestant problem. He does not question the validity of Christianity but he examines the personal relationship of the Christian man to Christian doctrine.

The answer is put in terms of subjectivity and 'inwardness' not because he denies but because he takes for granted objective truth. The problem is a psychological one and was bound to arise eventually out of reaction against the Hegelian view of history. 'One thing has always escaped Hegel—what it means to live'. That was the error Kierkegaard combated, the divorce of thought from life, contemplation from ethics. He foresaw the spirit of so-called detachment in which 'intellectuals' can sit back and contemplate 'climates of opinion', systems of ethics and religious doctrines all as specimens of human thought. The delirious despair of Kierkegaard's aestheticist is all too easy to visualise in 1949 and is a far more tragic figure than Sullivan's 'super-aesthetical' young man. It is beyond the aesthetic, ethical and religious stages that Kierkegaard finds the problem which is the centre of human life, 'Now I ask how I am to become a Christian'.

When we see that question in its context and feel its pathos we remember that Kierkegaard has been regarded as Scandinavia's foremost thinker and prose writer. But here is neither the gigantic Teutonic gloom nor the Aryan despair: there is none of the rootlessness that haunts Ibsen nor even the bleak emptiness that sometimes mars Hans Andersen. Kierkegaard's esteem as a writer can only be measured by his teaching, for style is something more than the power to titillate the reader's sensibilities. Style is the invasion of time by eternal truth, and two truths lay behind all that Kierkegaard wrote: the transcendence of God and the creatureliness and sinfulness of man. To become a Christian was to reconcile these two facts: the problem was how, and the sadness came from humbleness, not despair. Mr Thomte has done us a service by opening the gate upon Kierkegaard's thought and showing us the grace with which problems are posed even when they are not solved.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

ALTERNATIVE TO SERFDOM. By John Maurice Clark. (Blackwell; 8s.6d).

Like a good many other people Professor John Maurice Clark is of the opinion that not only State collectivism but also *laissez faire* capitalism lead in the long run to something very like serfdom. He does not, like Professor Hayek, maintain that we must return to something like a *laissez faire* economy if we are not to tread the road to serfdom; but he is not very clear about what the Alternative to Serfdom is. In this series of lectures, delivered at the University of Michigan in the spring of 1947 he gets as far as suggesting that the alternative to serfdom is 'group organisation'. But that does not tell us very much.

Professor Clark is an economist and is concerned with immediate policy rather than with long-term possibilities. He is concerned with the world, in particular the American world, as he finds it and the possibility of modifying existing tendencies; with the growing power