that from which we needed to get away. Incidentally, once one asks what the commitment, as distinct from an (impossible) decision to believe in God, could be, one sees yet another way in which the temptation may have arisen for Braithwaite to shape his view of Christian belief in the way he did.

The book could have been improved by spending less time on some fairly obvious and uncontroversial commentary, and giving more time to following the issues through to a deeper level of philosophical significance. As it stands it is sufficiently comprehensive and suggestive to form a basis for a fairly traditional introductory course in the philosophy of religion, though quite a lot is left to the teacher to do by way of sharpening, enlivening and developing the various issues raised.

O. R. Jones


With the amount of material now being published on Wittgenstein, Anthony Kenny’s fear that his book will appear superfluous is understandable. It escapes superfluity not only, as he says on p. vii, because it emphasises the continuity of Wittgenstein’s thought and traces its evolution through the little studied works of his middle years, but also because of the clarity and fine attention to detail which characterises the account. This book is the product of a very full study of Wittgenstein’s work and exhibits a coherent and sure grasp of the whole of his philosophy.

The most important part of the book is the chapter on the private language argument. Previous discussions of *Philosophical Investigations* have failed to provide a comprehensible interpretation of these crucial passages which does not leave them open to obvious objections. Kenny succeeds where others have failed and makes many obscure remarks of Wittgenstein clear in the process.

Kenny wishes to argue strongly against those who have thought that Wittgenstein’s later work has little in common with his earlier. His statement of the continuity thesis is of course presented with qualifications, but one wonders whether his interest in it has not led to a comparative neglect of Wittgenstein’s best work in the book. Of the twelve chapters in the book, four are devoted to the early philosophy and only two to the *Investigations*. The middle works get a chapter each, as does *On Certainty*. There is an opening biographical sketch and a closing chapter on the continuity of Wittgenstein’s thought.

Kenny is very concerned to show that Wittgenstein never abandoned the picture theory of meaning despite jetisoning the metaphysics of the *Tractatus*. But Kenny himself notes (pp. 69–70) that an essential part is played in the
theory by the metaphysics and its attendant process of analysis: though propositions admittedly do not look like pictures, they can be shown on analysis to be such. Without this appeal to an ideal language as the end point of analysis the picture theory becomes innocuous. The eight propositions Kenny lists as defining the picture theory amount to little more than a linguistic theory of necessary truth. Undoubtedly such a theory is present in the later work: in the arguments against the incommunicability of sensations, for example. Though one must doubt whether the later philosophy as a whole, or the private language argument in particular, stands or falls with it.

The *Tractatus* study of meaning and symbolism is divorced from any concern with how we know about meaning. In the *Investigations* this concern is to the fore because the discussions of the nature of meaning proceed via discussions of the nature of understanding and explanation. Given this, it is strange that Kenny should say: ‘Wittgenstein being preoccupied with the theory of meaning was comparatively uninterested in epistemology for much of his life’ (p. 204). Wittgenstein was not interested in putting forward a theory about the structure and foundations of knowledge but he was interested throughout his later work in how we know about things. This informed and coloured his concern with meaning in those books and this is what marks them off sharply from the *Tractatus*. It is not for nothing that people have thought that to appreciate the *Investigations* is to realise that the *Tractatus* is a dead end.

**Peter Byrne**


Mr Ward contends that to understand what is really meant by belief in God it will not do to simply consider the assent to some such proposition as ‘There exists an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good creator of the universe’. To so understand we must look to both the background and living contexts in which the concept of ‘God’ is actually employed; something contemporary philosophers of religion have allegedly ignored. To do this we must look to the social context, the experiential context, the credal context and then, it seems, to the general context in which such belief has its home, namely that of the apprehension of Transcendence. The first six chapters of this book attempt to set out a view of the nature of the religious context in which belief in God finds its proper place; the last six attempt to elaborate the specifically Christian concept of God. For reasons of space I shall limit my comments to the first six chapters. Mr Ward claims that his account is both descriptive and recommendatory (p. 231), so one must ask whether what he says is plausible as a descriptive account and if problematic