

FOREWORD

ON Friday evenings in the winter months London members of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and their friends meet in a small hall in Bloomsbury – 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1 – to listen to, and discuss, lectures by foremost British, and visiting, philosophers. The Institute has a quarterly journal, *Philosophy*, edited by Professor H. B. Acton, in which wide-ranging philosophical issues are debated in as lucid and non-technical a manner as the subject-matter permits. Such are the demands on the space of this journal, however, that no more than two or three of each year's lectures can be reproduced in it. In response to requests by members of the Institute living too far from London to attend the lectures (the Institute has a world-wide membership) arrangements have been made for a limited number of them to be recorded for broadcasting by the B.B.C., and for all of them to be published in a yearly volume, which is for sale to members of the general public as well as to members of the Institute. This is the first such volume, containing lectures delivered during the winter of 1966–7.

The lectures in a particular session are on more or less closely related topics. In 1967–8, for instance, nearly all of them will be on issues in the philosophy of religion. Some of them will be by people whose teaching has contributed to the re-examination of traditional views about God that is a feature of contemporary professional, and popular, theology.

The lectures reproduced in this first volume are concerned, not with God, but with man: man as an agent, a being who acts and reflects on his actions. Even the very concept of man as a free agent is questioned. In what does his experience of being free consist? Can man be free and yet his actions be predictable? How is a man's own explanation of what he does related to the scientist's account of what goes on in his brain

and nervous system? Are his 'deliberations' and 'decisions' really nothing but his brain processes as they are subjectively apprehended? And what are we to understand by the notion of man as a moral agent? Can studies of how people use words to persuade and prescribe reveal the nature of morality, or do they leave out what is essential – reference to the grounds of moral judgment? Do they favour an unduly individualistic account of morality? How is the concept of being moral related to that of playing a role in society? These are but a few of the questions to which answers are sought in this volume.

The lectures are by G. P. Henderson, Professor of Philosophy at Queen's College, Dundee; Aurel Kolnai, Visiting Lecturer at Bedford College, London; Bernard Mayo, Reader in Philosophy at the University of Birmingham; Alan R. White, Ferens Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hull; David Pears, Student of Christ Church, Oxford; C. H. Whiteley, Reader in Philosophy at the University of Birmingham; The Earl of Halsbury, President of the Royal Institute of Philosophy; G. N. A. Vesey, Reader in Philosophy at King's College, London; R. J. Hirst, Professor of Logic at the University of Glasgow; C. K. Grant, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Durham; G. J. Warnock, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; Gilbert Ryle, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford University; and Richard Wollheim, Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at University College, London.

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