

Is it correct to say, as I've said, that "the indirect form of Christian witness properly distinguished as 'Christian teaching' . . . typically includes both properly metaphysical teaching about things that are to be believed (*credenda*) and properly moral teaching about things that are to be done (*agenda*)" ("Paul in Contemporary Theology and Ethics": 295)?

That Christian teaching necessarily *implies* properly metaphysical as well as properly moral teaching, and in *that* sense includes it, is clear enough. But it now seems to me misleading to say that the *credenda* and *agenda* taught by Christian teaching are themselves only, or even primarily, "properly metaphysical" and "properly moral" teaching respectively. Although they certainly have properly metaphysical and properly moral implications, they themselves are properly religious. Thus, for example, even the supposedly "metaphysical" dogmas of the trinity of God and of the divine-human person of Jesus Christ are properly religious, rather than properly metaphysical, teaching. To this extent, or in this sense, then, my statement now seems to me to be incorrect—and to contribute to the unfortunate impression I fear too many of the things I've said may have given, that religion, in my view, is ultimately reducible to metaphysics and/or morals and so is not "the necessary and indispensable third" after all.

The underlying problem, of course, is how to distinguish the properly existential language of religion not only from the properly empirical language of science and history, but also from the properly existentialist-transcendental language of metaphysics and, in its own way, also of ethics. My several attempts over the years to solve this problem now strike me as either confused and unclear or inconsistent. All I know is that, on the one hand, I can never wholly accept a noncognitivist understanding of the properly existential language of religion and that, on the other, I am more and more convinced of the important moment of truth in "functional" analyses of such language about whose distinction, if any, from noncognitivist understandings I remain anything but clear and certain.

Perhaps the most I can say at this time is that any account I can envisage as at all adequate will need to include at least two statements: (1) that the properly existential language of religion all has to do, directly or indirectly, with commending our authentic self-understanding; and (2) that such language is, in its own way, cognitively significant, if only because the self-understanding it commends as authentic can really be so only if it is realistic and so appropriate to, or authorized by, strictly ultimate reality in its meaning for us and therefore also in its structure in itself.

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