

By "empirically falsifiable," is meant factually falsifiable with a specific difference. Any utterance may be said to be factually falsifiable if there are some at least conceivable facts that would render it false. But whether any such utterance is also *empirically* falsifiable is another and independent question. For even though all factual utterances must somehow apply, or fail to apply, through experience, experience itself comprises more than its merely empirical aspect, strictly and properly understood. Along with the external sense perception of ourselves and the world, which is properly distinguished as "empirical," we also enjoy an inner, nonsensuous perception of our own existence as interrelated with others and with the inclusive whole of reality as such. Although this other properly "existential" aspect of our experience perforce discloses more than mere fact, being the perception as well of the metaphysically necessary, some of what it discloses, including our own existence, is indeed merely factual, with the consequence that at least some of the utterances that apply through it are themselves factually falsifiable. Even so, they are *existentially* rather than empirically falsifiable, since the experience through which they apply, or fail to apply, is not the experience we have through our senses, but our nonsensuous experience of our own existence.

Among such factually falsifiable utterances are those about the primal fact of human existence as well as about the world and God as related to it or to other facts specifically as such. To be sure, even some anthropological utterances may be, in a broad sense, metaphysical. Although human existence is entirely factual or contingent, and so in principle different from the strictly necessary existence of God and, in a suitably different sense, of the world as well, it nevertheless has a unique primacy, which insofar entitles it to be included among the objects of metaphysical understanding. It has such primacy because, although it is certainly not constitutive of reality as such, God alone being the individual who is that, it is constitutive of our *understanding* of reality. But for the fact of our existence as human, not only would we have no understanding whatever, not even empirical or scientific, but we also would have no understanding of the inner nature of reality as such. We ourselves are the one existent whose nature we understand by being it, by understanding it, so to speak, from within as well as from without. Consequently, such knowledge as we can have of the inner nature of

anything else we can have only by way of analogy with whatever we are able to know of our own existence.

Because this is so, there is one sense of the word "anthropology" in which it is properly taken, along with "cosmology" and "theology," to designate the nonempirical inquiries of special metaphysics. Nevertheless, since our own existence, unlike that of God and the world, is merely factual, such utterances as we can make about it, or about the world and God as related to it or to other facts, are merely factual claims that could conceivably be false.

Because religious utterances are typically of this kind, being about human existence and its authentic realization, many, if not all of them, are factually falsifiable. Of course, the qualification is essential, since foundational religious utterances about God's existence and essential nature and activity are strictly metaphysical and so in no way subject to factual falsification. But true and important as this is, it is also true that specifically religious utterances are in many cases the kind of utterances whose truth or falsity is entirely a matter of fact. Given the essential content of these utterances, indeed, it could not be otherwise. Thus, from the standpoint of Christian faith, for instance, this logical truth but reflects the truth of its own witness that our creation and consummation alike are not necessary but free, being entirely the gift of God's grace to be obediently received by the faith that works through love.

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Given the axioms of classical Christian theism, especially the arch-axiom of the divine "simplicity," it follows necessarily that no assertion about God can be factually nonfalsifiable unless all assertions about God are so. In other words, the classical theist can consistently construe the theistic issue as a properly metaphysical issue only by accepting the implication that it is *nothing but* a metaphysical issue—with the further implication that God is insofar forth irrelevant to our life in the world because it can be of no possible relevance to God.

But how different the case of the neoclassical theist, who frankly rejects the axiom of "simplicity," maintaining instead that God is not a monopolar but a dipolar God, who—although existing necessarily as God—essentially exists only as the God of some world of contingent individuals other than Godself, to all of which God is related internally as well as externally. Given these alternative axioms, the fundamental assertions that God exists and exists as God, as the one universal individual who is the all-inclusive ground and end of all other individuals and events, are all strictly metaphysical assertions and as such immune to factual falsification. But if these assertions are true, they necessarily imply that any number of other, merely factual assertions must also be true, even though they do not imply, of course, just which such assertions actually are true. Furthermore, necessarily included among such assertions are certain factual assertions about God, all of which have the general form of asserting that God is somehow appropriately related internally to just this, that, or the other particular world of contingent individuals and events that in fact happens to exist. Being factual, these assertions about God are so far from being immune to factual falsification as to be factually falsifiable in a perfectly straightforward sense. Had some other world existed than actually exists, God would be appropriately related to it instead, and any assertion that God is somehow related to the actual world would of necessity be false. This need not imply, naturally, that such factual assertions as may be made about God are also *empirically* falsifiable, in the sense, say, that their meaning is equivalent to their "empirical expectations."

Although for a neoclassical theism the truth that God exists and exists as God is strictly metaphysical and therefore factually nonfalsifiable, God's essential nature as God, as modally coextensive with all actuality and all possibility, implies that God is also the ever-growing whole of all factual truth, and therefore precisely "supremely relevant." One may also observe that, although the sheer existence of God as metaphysically necessary can indeed make no factual difference, this is not at all so of my belief in God's existence or of my willingness to entrust myself here and now to God's real, factual relation to me and my world and to live in loyalty to them—loving God and all other things in God. To both belief in God and obedient faith in God, in the sense of trust in God and loyalty to God, there are very real factual alternatives; and so far as the witness of Christian faith is

concerned, they make just the factual differences that are by far the most important for every single one of us.