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I have said (e.g., in "Theology without Metaphysics?") that "at its deepest level," our self-understanding "is not variable but constant, because it is constitutive of our existence as such, as beings who understand that they exist and therefore exist, as it were, to the second power, or in an emphatic sense of the word." This is evident, I say, "from our unshakeable confidence, implied if not expressed, not only that we are, and that others also are together with us, but that the whole, too, is as the circumambient reality by which we are all encompassed" (141). Elsewhere, I have spoken of "the basic faith in the worth of life, the underlying trust and loyalty, constitutive of existence as such," in such a way as to imply that it, too, is "not variable but constant"—and for the same reason (cf., e.g., Notebooks, 26 June 1980; rev. 29 April 1995).

I have usually gone on to hold, however, that "[w]hat is not constant but variable . . . is just how we understand this threefold ultimate reality of ourselves, others, and the whole. Although we cannot fail to understand it somehow, we can and do understand it differently, in its structure in itself, as well as in its meaning for us. . . . For the very capacity that enables us to understand ultimate reality also allows us to misunderstand our understanding, and thus to understand ourselves not only falsely rather than truly [*sc.* at the level of explicit understanding], but also inauthentically, in conflict with our deepest understanding, instead of authentically, in harmony with it [*sc.* at the deeper level of our implicit understanding of our existence]" ("Theology without Metaphysics?" 141 f.).

I continue to think that both points need to be made and that this entry to my Notebooks belongs together with such others as those of Summer 1997; 1 June 1988; and, especially, 1 September 1999.

20 January 2009 (Inauguration Day)