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*Cydnabyddiaeth a Chyffes*

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## I WHAT KIND OF SITUATIONS ARE RELIGIOUS?

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In this book I hope to show how the concern of contemporary philosophy with language has implications for theology—its claims and apologetic, its problems and controversies. I shall argue that, far from being necessarily irreligious, logical empiricism provides us with a tool which can be of the greatest service to theology, making possible between philosophy and theology not only a new co-operation, but a new venture altogether.

Our leading questions must be

(i) *To what kind of situation does religion appeal?*

(ii) *For these situations, what language is appropriate currency?*

(i) Joseph Butler, in his defence of religion, argued that (a) we are more than 'gross bodies', and (b) 'probability is the very guide of life'. These two claims express the character of religion as (a) an odd discernment, and (b) a total commitment.

Various illustrations of each of these features.

(ii) Religious language will thus (a) be constructed from object language which has been given appropriately strange qualifications, and (b) centre on 'God' as a keyword which itself becomes the subject of significant tautologies.

No religious apologetic, nor religious teaching will be worth while if it does not (i) evoke the appropriate kind of situation and (ii) recommend language of suitably odd currency.

Chapters II, III and IV give examples to illustrate and develop this view, and show what implications it has for religious controversy.

## II SOME TRADITIONAL CHARACTERIZATIONS OF GOD: MODELS AND QUALIFIERS

In this chapter we show how some traditional phrases of philosophical theology can be given a logical structure suited to the situations they contrive to talk about:

(i) The attributes of negative theology such as 'immutable', and 'impassible'.

(ii) The characterization of God by 'Unity', 'Simplicity', 'Perfection'.

(iii) Other traditional attributes and characterizations:

'First CAUSE'; '*Infinitely WISE*'; '*Infinitely GOOD*'; 'CREATION *ex nihilo*'; '*Eternal PURPOSE*'.

Here, especially in (iii), are models (in small capitals) and qualifiers (in italics). The function of the model is to found the theological story on empirical fact; the qualifier (a) develops such stories until a typically religious situation is evoked and then (b) claims an appropriately odd logical placing for the word 'God'.

Illustrations of how puzzles and problems are needlessly caused by erroneous logical allocations.

Some general reflections, and a note on the problem of evil.

### III CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE:

#### I. THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE

##### PART I. SOME GENERAL REFLECTIONS

Has the language of the Bible a suitably odd structure, making appeal to the kind of situation we have mentioned? Locke's claim for a 'plain and intelligible' account. More recent attempts to assimilate the language of the Bible to science; to history. 'History and interpretation'. Merit and demerit in the existentialist claim. 'The Word of God'.

##### PART II. SOME PARTICULAR EXAMPLES

A. *Naming God*

B. *Prophecy and Apocalyptic*

C. *Virgin Birth, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension*

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D. *Son of Man*

E. *Miracle Language*

### IV CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE:

#### 2. THE LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

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I. The Christian claim is for distinctive situations, and these were originally expressed in a logically riotous mixture of phrases. Christian doctrine begins in an endeavour to systematize these phrases by bringing alongside some dominant idea or model; but qualifiers are always needed to safeguard the Christian claim. In such logical plotting heresy often arises by neglect of logical complexity; the problem of Orthodoxy, however, is to preserve *both* impropriety *and* intelligibility. *Illustrations*: Sonship and Logos; *Theotokos*; hypostatic unity; *Communicatio idiomatum*; Patripassianism.

II. At least three logical areas may be distinguished in Christian doctrine:

(a) *The construction of a revised apex word* (Trinitarian formula) with the traditional Creeds as logical rules for its use.

(b) The attempt to talk of Christian situations in terms of some *relational word* (Justification; Redemption, etc.). Important to be clear about the logical status of such a word; has it 'Key' status? Is it empirically verifiable in terms, e.g., of ethical concepts?

(c) The attempt to talk of Christian situations in terms of *object words* such as 'Church', 'Episcopacy', 'Sacraments', whose various logical placings it is very important to distinguish if unnecessary misunderstandings or confused claims are to be avoided.

Here arise many possibilities of logical blunders and cross-purpose talking. Importance of logical mapping as a preliminary to controversy or doctrinal discussion.

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