

Isn't there a difference between "the meaning of God for us," on the one hand, and "the decisive re-presentation of (the meaning of) God (for us)," on the other?

There is, indeed, as becomes clear enough precisely when the words enclosed in parentheses in the second phrase are seen to be essential to making its meaning fully explicit. The meaning of God for us is one thing, the decisive re-presentation of the meaning of God for us, something else.

But, then, what account is to be given of the other concepts and symbols that theistic religions typically develop in addition to their constitutive concept and symbol "God" (cf. *The Point of Christology*: 37 f.)? Are they really ways, as I've said, of "explicitly identifying someone or something that decisively re-presents God?"

Well, if they are, my statement is nevertheless elliptical and needs to be completed by considerations to which I have hardly given sufficient attention. In the first instance, the function of such other concepts and symbols is to talk about the meaning of God for us, once "God" is understood either metaphysically to mean, simply, the structure of strictly ultimate reality in itself or else is understood existentially or religiously as meaning no more than that there is some ground of basic confidence in the worth of life, and therefore a primal source authorizing some self-understanding as authentic. Therefore, if one can truly say that such concepts and symbols are ways of identifying someone or something that decisively re-presents God, this is so only because anyone or anything that decisively re-presents God does so precisely by decisively re-presenting the meaning of God for us.

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