

Contents

A Word of Thanks vii

PART I

1. **THE PLURALIST CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY**

Introduction: Pluralism and Revision 3

The Crisis of the Christian Theologian in the Modern World: The Disenchantment with Mystifications 4

The Crisis of the Modern Secular Mind: The Disenchantment with Disenchantment 10

2. **FIVE BASIC MODELS IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY**

Introduction: The Need for Models 22

Orthodox Theology: Believers and Beliefs 24

Liberal Theology: Modern Secularity and Christian Belief 25

Neo-Orthodox Theology: Radical Contemporary Christian Faith and the God of Jesus Christ 27

Radical Theology: Secular Affirmation and Theistic Negation 31

The Revisionist Model: A Critical Correlation 32

3. **A REVISIONIST MODEL FOR CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY**

First Thesis: *The two principal sources for theology are Christian texts and common human experience and language.* 43

Second Thesis: *The theological task will involve a critical correlation of the results of the investigations of the two sources of theology.* 45

Third Thesis: *The principal method of investigation of the source "common human experience and language" can be described as a phenomenology of the "religious dimension" present in everyday and scientific experience and language.* 47

x : BLESSED RAGE FOR ORDER

Fourth Thesis: *The principal method of investigation of the source "the Christian tradition" can be described as an historical and hermeneutical investigation of classical Christian texts.* 49

Fifth thesis: *To determine the truth-status of the results of one's investigation into the meaning of both common human experience and Christian texts, the theologian should employ an explicitly transcendental or metaphysical mode of reflection.* 52

4. **THE SEARCH FOR ADEQUATE CRITERIA AND MODES OF ANALYSIS**

Common Human Experience and Language: Modes of Analysis 64

Christian Texts: The Possibility of Their Interpretation 72

The Need of Criteria of Appropriateness

Interpretation Theory

The Task of Critical Correlation 79

PART II

5. **THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF COMMON HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND LANGUAGE**

Foreground: Purpose and Structure of Part II 91

The Concept of Limit 92

Limit-Questions in Science 94

Science and Religion: Their Relationship

The Religious Dimension of Science: Self-Transcendence as Scientific Authenticity

The Religious Dimension of Science: Self-Transcendence and Limit-Questions

Limit-Questions in Morality 100

Religion and Morality: Identical or Distinct?

The Logic of Limit-Questions in Moral Discourse

Limit-Questions in Morality

Limit-Situations in the World of the Everyday 105

6. **RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Background: Analytic Philosophy and Religious Language 120

New Testament Language: The Breaking of Forms 124

Proverbs

Proclamatory Sayings

Parabolic Language

New Testament Limit-Experience: A Possible Mode-of-Being-in-the-World **131**

7. THE QUESTION OF GOD: METAPHYSICS REVISITED

Introduction: Limit-Language and Limit-Concepts **146**

Religious Language and Cognitive Claims: The Possibility and Necessity of Metaphysics **150**

Ian Ramsey: The Prospect for a "Theological Metaphysics"

Frederic Ferré: The Logic of Theistic Language and the Place of "Metaphysical Facts"

Schubert Ogden: Faith, Religious and Theistic Representative Language, and Metaphysics

Religious Language and the Impossibility of Metaphysical Language: Anders Nygren **157**

Deductive Metaphysics

Inductive Metaphysics

Metaphysics as Conceptual Poetry

The Uses and Abuses of Religious Language **160**

Metaphysics and Metaphor

Metaphysics and Myth

8. THE MEANING, MEANINGFULNESS, AND TRUTH OF GOD-LANGUAGE

The Philosophical Situation: The New Metaphysics **172**

The Theological Situation: The Search for an Appropriate Formulation of the Meaning and Truth of God **175**

The Meaningfulness of Christian God-Language: The Search for an Adequate Limit-Language **187**

9. THE RE-PRESENTATIVE LIMIT-LANGUAGE OF CHRISTOLOGY

Introduction: The Question of Christology **204**

The Fact of the Need for Fiction **207**

The Fact of Evil **211**

xii : BLESSED RAGE FOR ORDER

Fact and Possibilities: Actualizations and Representations **214**

Christological Language as Re-presentative Limit-Language **218**

10. ***HISTORY, THEORY, AND PRAXIS***

Introductory Summary **237**

Practical Theology: The *Praxis* of A Revisionist Theory **240**

Index of Persons 259

Index of Subjects 263