D. Z. Phillips, FAITH AFTER FOUNDATIONALISM

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of love. Lucas further argues that if God is personal, God is rational, although also inscrutable, which gives rise to the need for revelation. God cannot be simply the God of the philosophers, but "he must be also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Father of Jesus."

Soskice has a useful and salutary essay defending the theological realist's use of metaphor to describe God. The realist insists on divine realities while conceding our inability to catch them with our theological formulations. On the other hand, instrumentalists, e.g., Feuerbach, Cupitt, (and Kaufman?) take theological formulations to be action-guiding but not referential in the traditional sense. Soskice suggests that the contrast parallels the realist-instrumentalist contrast in the philosophy of science, and she goes on to propose plausible ways of supposing that religious talk, for all its metaphors, culture-boundedness, etc., may be "reality-depicting." Such a realist need not be the hard-line dogmatist feared by Kaufman; she might be well aware of and even agree with the kinds of considerations that sway instrumentalists—the pervasiveness of metaphor, the ties to social and cultural contexts, and the expectation of future changes in vocabulary—while remaining consistent in her realism.

The other essays in this volume, especially those by Harré and Dummett, are stimulating, and all warrant additional examination and criticism. This Festschrift comprises a fitting tribute to Basil Mitchell and his contributions to philosophy of religion.


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This book will be loved and hated. It is vintage Phillips, a further development of some of the ideas that he has expounded and championed in earlier books. There is some that is new in nuance and much that is new in the focus of his concern, but there is no great change in philosophical direction. Those who find a strength in Phillips' approach to philosophy of religion will find that strength again in this book. Similarly, those who fail to find a strength in his approach will not be disappointed. For those sympathetic to Phillips' Neo-Wittgensteinianism and interested in its development, this book will provide Phillips' thinking about recent turns in reflection on religion, notably "Reformed Epistemology," but more too. For those not sympathetic or not acquainted with Phillips' thinking, it will provide a readable opportunity to enhance their philosophical literacy regarding what is undeniably a significant mode of contemporary philosophy of religion. Accordingly, I recom-
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Phillips' new book to all: it is not a book to be received with indifference. Phillips' book is divided into four parts. Let me say a little about the content of each of these four parts before I go on to raise some criticisms and to say what I think is the book's primary virtue. Part One is the longest, taking up nine of the book's twenty-two chapters. The entire book is an examination of philosophical, sociological, and theological reflection on religion after the passing from favor (among many) of foundationalism. In this first part Phillips looks at Plantinga's rejection of classical foundationalism and argues that Plantinga nevertheless remains "within a foundationalist tradition" (p. xiv). Arguably this is correct regarding the author of "Reason and Belief in God," one of the two articles by Plantinga that Phillips cites. Phillips wrote this book in 1985-86 and does not address Plantinga's more recent thinking, such as his view that rationality has to do with the proper functioning of our faculties, nor does he examine William Alston's reliability-of-practices view, although he criticizes some of Alston's comments in "Christian Experience and Christian Belief," in which Alston develops this view. Phillips' main philosophical target in Part One is Plantinga and his "foundationalist" view.

Plantinga goes wrong, Phillips believes, in great part because he fails to appreciate Wittgenstein's insights, and he brings out this point by contrasting Plantinga's thinking with Wittgenstein's. For instance, for Wittgenstein our religious practices and beliefs have and need no "external justification." For him, while there are "basic propositions" in religion they are basic in being "held fast by all that surrounds them" (p. 123), not in being the bases on which religious belief rests. For Wittgenstein, there is no metaphysical "underpinning" to religion, no question about the basis on which religion rests, no question about an ontological reality that exists independently of believers' way of life. On all of these points Wittgenstein and Plantinga diverge. Plantinga is trying to show that Christians have a right to believe as they do, but, as Phillips sees it, the proper function of philosophy is not to justify, but to try to clarify through analysis and description (pp. 95-96, 113, and passim).

In chapters 10, 11, and 12 of Part Two Phillips deals with the views of Richard Rorty in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. For Rorty, "our certainty will be a matter of conversation between persons" (p. 142). Also, in his view, "the fall of foundational epistemology...has the beneficial consequence of 'preventing man from deluding himself with the notion that he knows himself, or anything else, except under optional descriptions'" (p. 149). The first does not hold for even talk about "tables and chairs," nor, for different reasons, does it hold for "our talk of God" (p. 146), Phillips argues. The second may hold for matters of taste, where "talk of options is at home" (p. 151), but it does not hold for morality or for "obeying the eternal will of
God," which will hardly be seen as optional by the religious believer, Phillips observes (p. 152). While Rorty may be correct in saying there can be no reference to "eternal standards," Phillips allows, he is wrong in seeing himself as aligned with Wittgenstein on these points, and he is wrong, and un-Wittgensteinian, in his "relativistic conception of knowledge as consensus opinion" (p. 164). In the remaining two chapters of Part Two Phillips criticizes Peter Berger's sociological view of religion, which, as Phillips sees it, does not heed the "grammar" of religious concepts, but instead offers "four metaphysical abstractions": that man is the inventor of meanings, which coerce him because he desires to be accepted by a group in order to gain protection against anomy (p. 171).

In Part Three Phillips treats the thought of two post-foundationalist theologians who have been influenced by Wittgenstein: George Lindbeck and Paul Holmer. Lindbeck cites Wittgensteinian categories, but goes astray, Phillips argues: Lindbeck thinks, for instance, that the form of life category can allow that religious stories are "intrasystemically [and] ontologically true" (p. 214). No, says Phillips: the question of truth can arise only within a form of life. (I am not sure that the two points are not compatible, but I shall not pursue it.) Holmer does better. He, for instance, fully appreciates "the internal relations between the meanings and the use of words" (p. 246), an important Wittgensteinian dictum for Phillips.

These first three parts are mainly directed against various views. In Part Four, in a positive application of his Neo-Wittgensteinian approach, Phillips examines the "formation" of religious concepts, in particular the concept of mystery. Here, I would say, Phillips is at his best. He is not primarily battling errant, "confused," views nor prosecuting heretical versions of Wittgenstein's teachings, but doing what he sees as the task of philosophy: descriptively probing religious practice in order to clarify it. (At the end I shall return to an edifying instance of this.)

A number of questions might be raised about Phillips' book. For one thing, although he now refers to "the heterogeneity within Christianity" (p. 239), he still refers to "believers" (e.g., pp. 71 and 203-04) and tells us authoritatively what they are doing and how they will react to this and that—as though they were a tight little band that lived near Swansea, with which he is in constant and favored touch. Second, related to this, we should observe that, following Rush Rhees, Phillips allows that doctrinal conflicts are "grammatical conflicts," i.e., conflicts over the rules for the use of religious concepts (p. 216). Why, then, we might ask, can there not be various religious ways of life with different grammars? If so, perhaps there is one that corresponds to the Reformed epistemologist's conceptions, in which it is meaningful to try to show that one's religious practices relate to an ontological being that exists independently of those practices. Third, Phillips regularly rejects views
by, finally, appealing to some Wittgensteinian principle. Thus, he rejects Alston's idea that an epistemic practice is "innocent until proven guilty" on the Wittgensteinian grounds that our epistemic practices are "simply there" and it makes "no sense" to call them innocent or guilty (p. 25) and he rejects Berger's claims because, while Berger cites uses of language, they are instances of "language idling" (p. 168). Such reasons, though they help us understand at least Phillips' Neo-Wittgensteinianism (and that is worth something, as I said earlier), probably settle little philosophical hash. Phillips, by the way, adds a nuance to his Neo-Wittgensteinianism, and to the kind of criticism he brings against Alston (a criticism that is related to the Wittgensteinian idea that philosophy describes but does not justify "forms of life") when he observes that Wittgenstein did allow that religious practices themselves can be confused: the example is that of scapegoating in Leviticus (p. 307: the reference is to a MS by Wittgenstein). This seems to allow that there may be a point to defending religious practices after all (against "confusion," at any rate). Phillips does not comment on the connection. Fourth, although Phillips insists that philosophy is not in the business of refuting theories, and "there are no theories in philosophy" (p. 201), and even though he says his book could equally well be entitled Against Theory (p. 195), he is himself offering what looks to be a theory of religion, parts of which are his brand of non-cognitivism (p. 204), his and Wittgenstein's "regulating" view of religious belief (p. 71), the view that religious belief is "groundless" (pp. 125-26), and the view that God is not an object or being (p. 204). Again, he argues against other theories. True, he does not argue that they are false; he does not argue that they are mistaken, but that they are "confused." Still his aim looks like refutation.

Also a question can be raised about Phillips' treatment of the subject of self-deception. Reformed epistemology, he says, sees non-religious noetic structures as deficient. I think Phillips is right that, for those following Calvin, there should be something fundamentally amiss in not acknowledging God. For Calvin it is sin that leads to a denial of the sense of God, and, as Phillips sees, for Reformed thinking (and for a wider tradition of which it is a part, we may add) sin amounts to self-deception (p. 102). So Reformed thinkers like Cornelius Van Til see all unbelievers as self-deceived. But their reasons for saying this, Phillips argues, are not general enough or are question begging. Phillips apparently thinks that some believers and some unbelievers may well be self-deceived and some on both sides may well not be. So, who is right? What is needed is some understanding of the logic of self-deception. There is such a logic, as Phillips sees it, and he refers us to his and Ilham Dilman's Sense and Delusion (p. 102, n. 8). But he cites no point of that logic that would support his claim against Van Til's. Later (pp. 121-22) he introduces a different "context" of talk about self-deception, for which his earlier
criticisms do not apply, he says. This is where someone who was deceiving himself says, for instance, "All those years I thought I knew what love was, but I was deceiving myself. Now I see what love really is." In the first context, for the first "kind" of self deception, showing that a person was self-deceived depends on showing that "throughout the years he had not really wanted what he said he wanted." Regarding the second kind of self-deception it does make sense for believers to claim that all unbelievers are self-deceived, for Phillips, since what is involved here is not changing an "opinion" within a "set of values," but "changing as a person" by gaining a new understanding of, e.g., what love is. However it is not clear that all cases of the first "kind" are cases of one's not really wanting what one says one wants—perhaps there are some self-deceived about God who really want there to be no God. Again it is not clear that there are two basic kinds of cases here. Perhaps both should be subsumed under a general analysis of self-deception, as they would be under the view of self-deception as a willful suppression of what would lead one to a painful recognition. Moreover, having the logic of self-deception before ourselves should help one in thinking about the challenge to religious belief of projection views, such as Freud's and Berger's. (Phillips does not speak of "projection," but sees that Berger has this kind of view (p. 178). While Freud was antireligion, Berger of course is not. Both Freud in The Future of an Illusion and Berger in The Sacred Canopy, it should be noted, appreciate that it does not follow from a belief's being a projection that it is false. It would follow, though, that such beliefs are irrational or non-rational.) All Phillips can say, in a way echoing A. J. Ayer on moral disputes, is that it is "totalitarian on either side of the fence" for belief to accuse unbelief and for unbelief to accuse belief of "rationalisation" (p. 108).

The strongest part of Phillips' book, to my way of thinking, is the last part, where he is concerned with religious "concept-formation." Here he conveys a sense of how certain experiences in the world can vivify religious belief. At one point he draws upon the work of Jacob Fries. Fries describes an incident in his life in which he and some others are in a small open boat off a rocky cliff when a storm overtakes them. The sea quickly comes up and the little boat is thrown about as the waves crash against the cliff. Up one wave and down another they are flung. As the oarsmen strive against the raging sea, Fries is struck by the thought of God's omnipotence, and in the midst of his danger he becomes newly aware of God's inscrutable will (pp. 280-81). It is in settings such as these, Phillips suggests, that one comes to a sense that one's life is in the hands of God. I think that all of this is useful. It is not only in the distant past that believers have come to a new sense of God's presence. "The sense of belief in God is itself rooted in reactions such as reactions to the storm," Phillips says. And this too is good, although Phillips does not tell us whether he means "rooted" in the way an irrational
reaction is rooted in experience, or rooted in the way a belief can be grounded in experience, or rooted in some other way. In a further commentary on the storm episode Phillips says that "the notion of God's will is formed, not in a search for explanations, but in the abandonment of explanations." When in such a storm situation one realizes there is an absence of anything to show why one should perish or not one comes to a sense of being at God's mercy and, through it, to a sense of wonder at the contingency of life. In this way there is a "dying to the understanding." Phillips goes on (pp. 283-89) to explore this "dying to the understanding" in a different setting, involving one's relation to others. Here he uses to good effect the episode of Mrs. Turpin's revelation, in Flannery O'Connor's short story.

In these discussions we have Phillips consulting and describing aspects of religious life. Here he is doing the "looking" that Wittgenstein recommended, and the results are edifying. This is not to say that we should accept his descriptions as definitive or, indeed, any of his commentary, nor that we should reject it. Descriptions usually have a point and the point can skew them, and the lessons drawn from them can be off or just right. These are matters for reflection. But the substance of the descriptions remains as nourishment for philosophical reflection.


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To refer to this volume as Freddoso's "translation" of Molina is correct but woefully inadequate. Freddoso's 81-page Introduction is not only a superb commentary on the late-medieval controversy over foreknowledge and middle knowledge; it is also a major philosophical work in its own right. My recommendation to the reader is that she begin by reading the first three sections of the Introduction (deferring sections 4 and 5) as rapidly as possible so as to provide orientation for the sixteenth-century controversy. Then, she should carefully work through the translation, finally returning for a leisurely re-reading of the entire Introduction for its original philosophical insights. In this review I shall comment briefly on the translation, and then more in detail on Freddoso's Introduction.

In his preface, Freddoso notes that the has resisted the temptation to divide Molina's very long sentences (a topic of complaint even in the sixteenth century!) into shorter ones, because "after several attempts at it, I become convinced that I could not do this without altering the sense of the original" (p. x). In spite of this, Freddoso has achieved a remarkable clarity in his