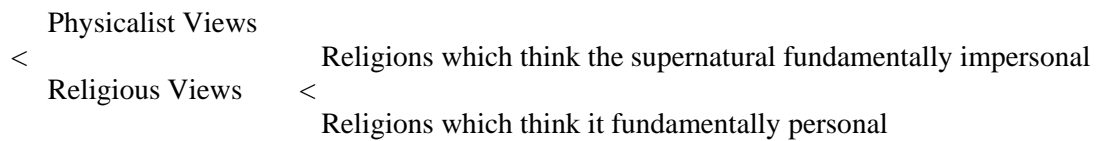


INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

LECTURE ONE

One could divide worldviews in this manner:-



We'll concentrate on the last. More specifically, we'll look at the central claim of monotheistic religions, the claim that there is a God. What does this mean? Are there any reasons for believing that it's true? Are there any reasons for believing that it's false?

THE PROPERTIES OF GOD

PROPERTY ONE: PERSONHOOD

"In regarding God as a [see cautionary note below] person, theists regard God as someone who is rational; who has beliefs; who is to be treated as an object of moral respect; who reciprocates that attitude towards us; and who can perform actions, actions which paradigmatically include verbal communication." If there is a God, He has these properties maximally.

PROPERTY TWO: 'INCORPOREALITY/TRANSCENDENCE'

Question: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for a particular section of matter to be a part of one's body?

Possible Answer One: Its being a section of matter one can learn about directly. But this isn't a necessary condition – Anaesthetised hand example. Might be a sufficient condition.

Possible Answer Two: Its being a section of matter one can control directly. But this isn't a necessary condition – Paralysed hand example. Might be a sufficient condition.

Disjunction not a necessary condition - Anaesthetised and paralysed hand example.

But they are jointly sufficient conditions – statue example. Therefore, God's being incorporeal would imply there is no section of matter He learns about directly or can control directly.

PROPERTY THREE: OMNIPRESENCE/IMMANENCE

Entails universe is God's body (or at least a part of His body). "In short, because it is a sufficient condition of being corporeal that one can learn about the state of some section of matter directly and can control it directly, then it is a necessary condition of being incorporeal that one cannot do this for any section of matter; yet because it is a necessary condition of omnipresence that one can learn about every section of matter that there is directly and control all of it directly, then it must be a necessary condition of omnipresence that one be corporeal."

Solution:

Construe Incorporeality/transcendence = God's not being more present anywhere in the universe than He is anywhere else

Construe Omnipresence/immanence = God's not being absent from anywhere in the universe

CAUTIONARY NOTE

Naturally, you might disagree with me at any number of points, but one claim I make in the lecture is that all theists agree that God's *a* person; that's just wrong: Christians think that God is *three* persons (the Doctrine of the Trinity). Bringing the Trinity into view would complicate the articulation of my arguments, but, I suggest, not fundamentally affect them. So I'll keep it out of view.

It is also worth underscoring that though *I* think theists should think of the universe as God's body, most theists don't agree. Look up 'Theism' (and 'Atheism' and 'Agnosticism', whilst you're at it) and 'Deism',

'Pantheism' and 'Panentheism'. I think that the account I give is theistic rather than panentheistic, but some would disagree.

And then finally, what I say about God not being present anywhere in the universe more than he is anywhere else would need to be withdrawn and a modified claim issued in its place were a divine person to become or have become incarnate; again, I suggest this would complicate but not fundamentally affect my argument, i.e. what I say could be readily made compatible with Christianity.

SUGGESTED READING

D. Dennett, 'Conditions of Personhood' and 'Where am I?', which are chapters 14 and 17 in his book *Brainstorms*.

T. J. Mawson