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Analytic Philosophy and Christianity

Hironobu Mase

This article is intended to represent one of the most prominent features found in the recent Anglo-American religious world, namely the one that can, perhaps most properly, be characterized as 'the greater intimacy between philosophy and theology', or as 'the dialogue between them'.

It is generally known that one of prevalent movements in philosophy till quite recently was that of 'logical positivism', and that it had confined the language in which we could speak meaningfully about the world, quite narrowly to the frames of 'scientific' language and consequently refused to acknowledge other kinds of language, e.g. the language of ethics, theology etc. as meaningful. But this narrow view has proved to be inadequate.

So there begins the new movements of 'logical empiricism', which proposes to analyse empirically more general function of the languages and to attain the meaning expressed by them. From this angle the philosophy gains the new access to the language of religion.

On the other hand the new beginnings are seen also in religious world. Several of Anglo-American theologians are now trying intently to absorb the fruitful result of insights of philosophy and to understand the function of religious—especially christian—language.

The writer of this article tried to trace and represent the main phases of this mutual influence between philosophy and theology.