

Toward a Theology of Religions

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The following will be far from a full theology of religions. Such a thing may in principle not be possible; it is any case beyond my capacity. I will merely propose three possible building blocks for such a theology.

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The first is a foundational observation. Religions are often thought of as paths through life. Let us here so regard them. But it is then often supposed that there is one common destination— “salvation” or “fullness of being” or “personal fulfillment” or “happiness” or whatever one may call it—to which all these paths lead, and that this is why they are together called “religions.” Despite the wide distribution of this supposition, it is a rather crude empirical error, which one is likely to make only if committed beforehand to some ideology or theology that insists it must be so.¹

The phenomenological facts are otherwise: rather than

1 The most obvious case of a theology that does this is, of course, some current brands of Hinduism, that in effect claim we are all Hindu anyway, and ought to admit it.