

In his discussion with Kamlah, Bultmann implies that a genuine life of submission is missed by either of two ways of living:

- (1) by disposing of what is disposable, instead of submitting; or
- (2) by (mis)understanding even one's possibility of submitting as something one can dispose of.

In this connection, Bultmann specifically mentions the "boasting" of Jews who are proud of their being faithful to the law and that of Gnostics who similarly take pride in their wisdom as examples of the second way of living so as to miss one's authentic existence (*New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*: 28).

Earlier in the same part of the same essay, Bultmann appears to make something like the same distinction in discussing two different ways of living "according to the flesh" in the Pauline sense of the words:

- (1) so as to give oneself with desire and imprudently to the alluring possibilities of what is visible and can be disposed of; and
- (2) so as to lead one's life self-consciously and calculatingly on the basis of one's accomplishments, i.e., "the works of the law" (16).

On the face of it, there is evidently a convergence between these two sets of distinctions—or, as I should think, two different ways of making the same distinction—on the one hand, and certain other distinctions that theologians and philosophers have made, on the other. I think especially of distinctions between:

- (1) sensuality (*concupiscentia*) and pride (*superbia*); and
- (2) freedom in the negative sense of being able to pursue anything one pleases and freedom in the positive sense of being able to pursue what is worthy of one's pursuit.

Perhaps another more or less similar distinction is that between relativism, and hence lawlessness, or subjective arbitrariness, on the one hand, and absolutism, and hence merely formal obedience or objective legality, on the other.

In any case, I can pursue these reflections only by wondering about the function of religion in relation to the ways of living, etc. thus distinguished. It seems clear enough that religion is or implies the denial of relativism in that

it calls for abandoning all lawlessness, pursuit of pleasure, sensuality, worldliness, and living by disposing of the disposable. It presumably follows, then, that religion *either* simply reinforces the law that precludes such relativism, and so on, possibly enacting certain "religious" laws alongside moral laws or in place of them; *or* religion reinforces the moral law only "dialectically," in that, even while reinforcing the moral law, it also functions to preclude all absolutism, legalism, pride, works righteousness, and "boasting"—in short, any way of trying to dispose even of one's possibility of genuinely submitting and obeying the law's demand.

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