

According to Bultmann, "theology does not 'teach' in the sense in which philosophy 'teaches' when philosophy seeks the truth and, to the extent that it thinks it has found the truth, 'teaches' it. Theology, on the contrary, in a certain sense already has the truth in the proclamation of the New Testament. In philosophy, science and teaching are identical, and the right philosophy itself would be right teaching. Theology, by contrast, 'teaches' what the New Testament 'teaches.' It 'teaches' what is 'right teaching,' that is, it interprets the New Testament. . . ." (NTM: 58 f., changing "what 'right teaching' is" to "what is 'right teaching'").

Unless I am mistaken, Bultmann's point is the same I am concerned to make when I say, for example, that theology is "unlike philosophy in that its origin is not simply in what I call 'original revelation,' meaning thereby the primal disclosure of reality as such received somehow [sc. authentically or inauthentically] through our common faith as selves. Theology originates, rather, in a special revelation which represents its relation to original and all other special revelations as that of *the* answer to a question" (OT: 86).

Or, again, I make the same point Bultmann makes when I distinguish "philosophical theology" as "the type of theological reflection constituted by human existence as such" from, say, "Christian theology" as a specific case of "the type of theological reflection for whose constitution human existence simply as such is insufficient," because also necessary for it is "the claim of some specific religion or other to decisive authority" (126 f.).

And there are still other ways in which I have made the same point (e.g., by distinguishing with Hartshorne between a philosophical theology developed from "the standpoint of the minimal common faith or experience of men in general" and a theology grounded in "revelation" and thus developed from "the standpoint of the faith or religious experience of a person or group" ["Theology and Philosophy: A New Phase of the Discussion": 15 f.]).

Were I to make the point now, I might very well do so in yet another way, by saying that, whereas, for religion and therefore for theology, also, there has to be some explicit primal ontic source of authority—i.e., a *historical*

as well as a *transcendental* source authorizing its claim to decisive existential authority—for philosophy, there neither is nor can be any such explicit primal ontic source, its only primal source being strictly transcendental.

Whether or not Whitehead had this difference in mind in saying that "philosophy is mystical," I have no way of knowing. But putting it so is certainly a legitimate way of making the point, provided one observes Whitehead's own qualification and adds yet another, to the effect that the "verbal characterizations" that philosophy introduces are not *so* "novel" as not to be critically based on the "evidence" always already provided by all forms of human praxis and culture, and especially by "the utterances of religious aspiration."

22 September 1999