

What Bultmann means by “radical obedience” is the kind of obedience that is compatible with, indeed, itself presupposes, moral autonomy, in the sense of doing what one knows to be right precisely because it is right and one knows it to be so—as distinct from doing it because of its being commanded by some external authority or because one desires to gain a reward or to avoid a punishment by so acting.

But if this is so, there is no necessary conflict between God’s command, with its demand for radical obedience, and a human being’s moral autonomy. God commands me to do nothing other than what I myself affirm to be right and am obliged to do precisely because it is right and I know it to be so—where “right” means that in which I realize my own authentic being.

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