

What does Bultmann mean by “fleeing from the problematic of one’s own existence into a view of the cosmic law, the cosmic harmony” (*Das Urchristentum*: 200)?

If I am right, exemplary materials for formulating an answer are to be found in such passages as *Glauben und Verstehen* 1:322-325; 2:68 f.; 109 f.

The important underlying distinction, as I understand it, is between concrete and abstract, the flight in question being precisely a flight from the first to the second. Thus one’s immediate self-understanding in the moment—in face of one’s unique encounters with others and one’s fate or destiny—is to be distinguished from whatever one understands in general about human existence. To flee from “the problematic of one’s own existence,” etc., then, is to flee into some abstract understanding of existence in general, i.e., some world view, the while ignoring the concrete gift and demand of one’s self-understanding here and now.

Significantly, Bultmann glosses “openness for the future” as “openness for the claim of God encountered ever anew for action as well as for acceptance of one’s fate or destiny” (228).

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