

It seems ever clearer to me that probably the most valuable thing about Bultmann's philosophy of religion, or philosophical theology, is his distinction between existential and existentialist understanding—together with his closely parallel analysis of the two levels of so-called objectifying thinking and speaking. By reason of this distinction, Bultmann could make clear, as Herrmann hardly could, that, while faith *is* not a world view, it nevertheless *implies* a world view. To this extent, Bultmann could come closer than anyone before him to achieving a successful synthesis of the legitimate intentions of Troeltsch with those of Herrmann. (In fact, a close reading of Bultmann confirms that there is little, if anything, in Troeltsch's historical-critical understanding of religions and his program of comparing and evaluating them philosophically that Bultmann doesn't accept as entirely valid and important.)

But if this distinction is Bultmann's greatest contribution to the philosophy of religion, or philosophical theology, his own development and deployment of it remain, in certain respects, limited. Thus, for one thing, he is much clearer and more emphatic about faith's not *being* a world view than he is about its necessarily *implying* a world view. Also, as clear as he is that faith itself *cannot be* directly validated or verified, he is at best unclear and uncertain about whether, or to what extent, the world view that faith necessarily implies *can be* critically validated, and by just what criteria and procedures. More important still, he fails to see that the existentialist analysis he allows is, in effect, but metaphysics in a broad sense and that it therefore implies the possibility and the necessity of metaphysics in the strict sense, i.e., theology, cosmology, and ontology, as well as anthropology. Accordingly, from a standpoint such as Troeltsch's, his theology is likely to appear as in important respects only slightly better than Herrmann's and so still incapable of achieving the desired synthesis.

On the other hand, because my theological position differs from Bultmann's at just these points, I trust that Sockness's assessment of it as more nearly achieving the synthesis has a point. Without (I trust!) abandoning the legitimate intentions of Herrmann as well as Bultmann, I have managed to do

even greater justice than Bultmann succeeded in doing to Troeltsch's intentions as well.

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