

Speaking of theological knowledge, Bultmann says that "it always has 'dialectical' character, in the sense that, as a knowledge that is preserved, it is always spurious, however 'right' it may be, and that it is only genuine when the act of faith is realized, when the resolve of faith is carried out, in it" (*GV* 3: 32 [*EF*: 88]).

Elsewhere, speaking more generally of world views, he says essentially the same thing. "A so-called world view is genuine only if it springs up ever anew within the changes of historical situations and encounters. It cannot become an assured possession, as can a scientific insight. But mostly it is misunderstood as a theory that solves all the riddles of life, wherewith it is cut off from the ground out of which alone it can grow, from personal life. Thus the world view serves the flight from historicity" (*History and Eschatology*: 148 f. [*Geschichte und Eschatologie*: 177]).

If I get his point, then, what Bultmann means is that theology, understood as the conceptual explication of the knowledge given in revelation, or of the self-understanding of faith, is, in its content, a world view, whose genuineness, like that of any other world view, depends upon its springing up "ever anew within the changes of historical situations and encounters," which, in the case of theology, means, upon the act of faith's being realized, or the resolve of faith's being carried out, in it. So, at any rate, must one stipulate the condition of theology's genuineness relative to the theologian. Relative to the hearer or reader of a theology, on the other hand, one must presumably say that theology's objectifying finds its point—and in *that* sense is genuine—only in sublating the objectification, which is to say, only in hearing or reading it as (indirect) address (cf. Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Frage der Entmythologisierung*: 96).

But whether either a theology or a world view is "genuine" or "spurious" is one question; whether it is "right" or "wrong," "legitimate" or "illegitimate," or even "true" or "false," is another. And Bultmann is clear about this insofar as he not only speaks to the question of the genuineness of a theology or a world view, in the way just summarized, but also explicitly asks "the question of truth" with respect to world views, or, as he reformulates it, "the question of legitimate self-understanding" (*HE*: 148 [*GE*:

177]). In this connection, he formulates what he calls "a criterion for a legitimate human self-understanding" as follows: "A 'world view,'" he says, "is the more legitimated the more it expresses the historicity of human being. A self-understanding is the more mistaken the more it fails to appreciate this historicity, the more it is a flight from our own individual history" (149 [178]).

But if theology, in its content, is a world view, the question of *its* truth or legitimacy has to be decided by the same criterion. And Bultmann's own answer to this question is clear. "There can be no doubt," he says, "that a radical understanding of historicity has broken through in the Christian faith—the way having been prepared in the Old Testament" (149 [178]). In other words, there can be no doubt that theology is true because, in its content as a world view, it expresses a radical understanding of historicity—"radical" here being, as it often is in Bultmann's writings, a synonym for "right" or "true."

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