

That and how Bultmann's theology is indeed open, as I claim it is, to recognizing deideologizing and political interpretation as necessary theological tasks is made particularly clear by the following passage, whose context is by way of answering the question, How, finally, should we define the relation between the Christian understanding of freedom and the understanding of classical antiquity?

"The question," Bultmann says, "basically has to do only with the understanding of inner freedom. The New Testament says nothing about political freedom and the freedom of the citizen in the polis; and Christian faith as such has no direct interest in them. But an indirect interest, perhaps? The grace that frees man does not call him out of the world and its history, but rather points him to the world as the one who is responsible for it. To be sure, this consequence is not drawn in the New Testament because the oldest Christian community expected the near end of the world. But this consequence follows from a correct understanding of liberating grace. For if grace makes man open for his encounters, it thereby makes him open for his concrete historical tasks. If among these tasks is ordering human community in state and economy, and if such ordering must be a matter of justice and law, then, clearly, the Greeks saw rightly when they understood the relation of freedom and law in the state to be dialectical. It cannot be otherwise in any lawful state, which is sound only if freedom in it is grounded through the law and if the law is a law that grounds freedom. This law, also, is understood by Christian faith as belonging to the law of God that serves life. And yet this freedom [*sc.* in the state] is not the freedom to which the grace of God liberates. The latter freedom is inner freedom. And it is in the idea of inner freedom that classical antiquity and Christianity both come together and at the same time pull apart. For in the case of the first, inner freedom is attained through his own power by the rational man who is in control of himself, whereas in the case of the second, inner freedom is the gift of the liberating grace of God" (*GV* 4: 50 f.).

Comparing this passage from an essay first published in 1959 with what Bultmann says in an essay published twenty-three years earlier—namely, "Die

Bergpredigt Jesu und das Recht des Staates"—reveals that both statements are grounded in one and the same basic outlook—an outlook characterized, above all, by the use of the very terms and distinctions that, in my view, have to be used if clarity is to be attained on this whole question.

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