

I fear I have not thought out as carefully as I should have Luther's notion that faith ceases with death, on the one hand, and Bultmann's notion that faith never ceases but always continues, even when that which is perfect has come (presumably after death), on the other.

Insofar as the grace by which I am saved never ceases to be an "outward" (or "alien"), as distinct from an "inward" (or "domestic") good, Bultmann clearly has a point—and, as I've long thought, an important point. But insofar as my death marks the end of my own subjectivity, and therefore the end, also, of faith as my subjective act, Luther, in his way, also makes a valid point. Faith in the sense of my own subjective act is, in his terms, a "gift," more exactly, what he distinguishes as a "spiritual gift," and, beyond that, *"the gift"* (italics added). But whereas God's grace "lasts forever," God's gifts "last for a season," and so the same is true even of the gift of faith, which lasts only until my death. And yet where Luther's view ceases to convince, or, perhaps, even to make sense, is his notion that, with my death, my faith is somehow perfected in love—as distinct from my notion that the only perfect love involved in my death is the perfect love of God into which I die, and whose character as an "outward," or "alien," love is the only ground of my consummation—this being just the point that Bultmann presumably wishes to make.

In any case, neither notion as it stands is wholly acceptable to me, since both, in their different ways, seem to presuppose my own subjective immortality alongside my objective immortality in God. But I now realize that not only Bultmann's notion but Luther's also has a valid point, even if they both still need to be "demythologized."

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