

Niebuhr's position on the whole question of scriptural authority would appear to be clearly indicated by a passage such as this: "There are . . . very good reasons for preferring some texts of Scripture to others and for judging them all from the standpoint of 'the mind of Christ.' We do that at our hazard of course; but the hazards of Biblical literalism are certainly greater."

Two pages earlier, referring to Barth's procedure, he says: "If this procedure meant that one regarded, as Luther did, the mind of Christ as the final criterion of Scripture as well as the final norm of law one would have a creative freedom over all law, including the positive law of states, the 'natural law' so dear to Catholic thought, and even Scriptural laws as concocted by Protestant literalism from various ethical injunctions embodied in the canon and representing various levels in relation to the law of love. But it does not seem to mean this" (*Essays in Applied Christianity*: 180, 178).

Significantly, Niebuhr makes essentially the same criticism of Barth's procedure as Bultmann makes—namely, that, lacking, as it does, any "principle of selection," it is "arbitrary." In Niebuhr's terms: Barth does not give a "*criterion* for determining what is time-bound and what is timeless in . . . Scriptural injunctions"; or he never makes clear "just by what *measure* you determine what is time-bound in Scripture and what is not" (179, 308; italics added).

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