

The convergence at one point of Whitehead's thought with Bultmann's (not to mention the Apostle Paul's!) is particularly striking.

I refer to what Bultmann calls "*das Geltungsbedürfnis*," and Whitehead speaks of, with an assist from Milton, as "the craving for sympathy," or "that craving to stand conspicuous in the scheme of things" [i.e., "a scheme of things," as he puts it, "with a worth beyond any single occasion"] (*AI*: 371 f.).

Both thinkers recognize that, in itself and as such, this need or craving is natural to human beings, and even necessary, "the zest of human adventure" requiring it as "the final contentment aimed at by the soul in its retreat to ego[t]ism" (372). But they both also recognize that it can be and, in fact, is perverted (Whitehead also speaks of "an inversion of the social impulse"), even if, as Whitehead stresses, "it is beyond human analysis to detect exactly where the perversion begins to taint the intuition of Peace," turning it into "the egotistic desire for fame—'that last infirmity [of noble mind,] in Milton's phrase'" (371). (Of course, Bultmann, in his way, confirms Whitehead's qualification when he insists that the existentialist's statement that "human life begins on the other side of despair" is "ambiguous and, in the nature of the case, has to be so," because it can be an expression either of ultimate hybris or of genuine openness [*GV*, 2: 290 f.] .)

Worth noting is how Whitehead represents things when he speaks of the egotistic desire for fame as a "half-way house between the extreme ecstasy of Peace and the extreme of selfish desire." I should wish to say, in much the same way, that inauthentic faith is something like a half-way house between the extremes of authentic faith and sheer egotism. Likewise, I could agree with Whitehead (as I strongly suspect Bultmann also could) that "the love of particular things," also—alongside "the craving for fame"—is a half-way house—one of the fruits of Peace being "that passion whose existence Hume denied, the love of mankind as such" (368). Incidentally, Whitehead's characterization of "the love of particular things," insofar as it becomes more than "simply a clinging to a condition for selfish happiness," and becomes "the love of self-devotion where

the potentialities of the loved object are felt passionately as a claim that it find itself in a friendly Universe," is an almost exact parallel to Santayana's unforgettable statement in "Ultimate Religion," that "the first act of true sympathy must be to move with the object of love towards its happiness."

22 April 2009