

There appears to be a problem with Gamwell's reasoning in support of his claim that Christian faith prescribes democracy. If, as he holds, Christian faith prescribes the way of reason; and if, as he also holds, the way of reason in turn implies democracy in the form of popular sovereignty, then how could Christian faith not prescribe democracy except by failing to be self-consistent? And yet Gamwell seems to assume it could.

The problem is solved, or shown to be *only* apparent, I think, by recognizing that, in his view, it is not Christianity specifically *as such* that prescribes the way of reason and, by implication, democracy, but rather Christianity *as an axial religion*. This it does in making or implying a claim to truth, and thereby promising that its claim can be critically validated by common human experience and reason. But whether or not its distinctive account of ultimate reality, not merely formally as an axial religion, but materially as specifically Christian, adequately explains how it can hold out this promise remains to be determined. In other words, the situation at this point is exactly the same as the one Gamwell envisages—at the end of the Appendix (A-8 f.) and elsewhere—when he allows that Christian faith is right at least in this, that every human being has a true belief, whether or not the Christian faith's claim to be the true account of that belief is a valid claim.

See 5-1, where it's much clearer how Gamwell means to argue—namely, that Christian faith prescribes the way of reason and, by implication, democracy, not because it is specifically Christian faith but because it is an axial, or ultimate, religion, for which *the* human problem is a problem of radical self-*mis*understanding, in the sense of understanding oneself contrary to what one originally understands ultimate reality to be.

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