

TWO CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO THEOLOGY

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Contemporary philosophy is divided into two main schools of thought, the analytic and the existentialist. Analysis could be described as a method of gaining an understanding of the ultimate structure of facts by means of a clarification of the meaning of language.¹ Existentialism, on the other hand, could be described as a method of gaining an understanding of the meaning of being by means of a clarification of the structure of human existence.² Like other philosophies these two are potential theologies and become theologies in effect when their respective methods are used to gain an understanding of faith. John Wisdom has attempted an analytic approach to the understanding of faith in his essay, "Gods,"³ and Rudolf Bultmann has proposed an existentialist approach in his essay, "New Testament and Mythology."⁴ Both ask about the difference between

¹ Because I will be concerned with John Wisdom's version of analysis, I have based the description on his essay, "Is Analysis a Useful Method in Philosophy?", to be found in his *Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis* (Oxford, 1957) pp. 16-35.

² What I have attempted to describe here is the method that Heidegger propounds in the preface to *Sein und Zeit*. It is Heidegger's philosophy and particularly this book of his that Bultmann uses to build up his theology, although Bultmann seems to concern himself only with the clarification of the structure of human existence and not with the investigation of the meaning of being.

³ The essay has been reprinted often enough to have acquired a certain notoriety. It appeared first in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 45 (1944-45) pp. 185-206. It is also to be found in Wisdom, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-68; in Jarrett and McMurrin (ed.), *Contemporary Philosophy* (New York, 1954) pp. 239-52; and in A. Flew (ed.), *Logic and Language* (First Series; Oxford, 1955) pp. 187-206. Both for convenience and precision I will cite the essay by section numbers instead of page numbers.

⁴ The essay is to be found in H. Bartsch (ed.), *Kerygma und Mythos* 1 (Hamburg-Volksdorf, 1948) pp. 15-48, followed with criticism by other Protestant theologians and replies by Bultmann. Of interest also are the criticisms by Karl Barth in 2 (1952) and by Karl Jaspers in 3 (1957). The debate between Bultmann and Jaspers has been translated under the title *Myth and Christianity* (New York, 1958). Bultmann has been criticized from a Catholic point of view by L. Malevez, *Le message chrétien et le mythe* (Brussels, 1954), by R. Marlé, *Bultmann et l'interprétation du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1956), and others. There is a special advantage, though, in considering Bultmann's position alongside that of someone like John Wisdom, as we shall do here, because the *Entmythologisierung* issue involves not only the problems that center around the notion of "existence" but also those that center around the notion of "fact" and "verification." I will cite Bultmann's

belief and unbelief, whether the believer and the unbeliever differ in attitude or whether they differ as to facts. Wisdom's question is whether they differ as to facts or whether they differ merely in attitude. Bultmann's question, one might say by way of comparison and contrast, is whether they differ in attitude or whether they differ merely as to facts. Though a Catholic will find much to criticize in either approach,⁵ it is profitable for him to engage in discussion of one and the other as a kind of dialogue with contemporary thought. In this essay, accordingly, I will attempt to surmise from an examination of Wisdom's method whether or not an analytic approach would be appropriate in theology, and from an examination of Bultmann's method whether an existentialist approach would be appropriate. My conclusion will be that neither would be appropriate without undergoing a metamorphosis: the one a metamorphosis of the notion of "fact," the other a metamorphosis of the notion of "existence."

THE ANALYTIC APPROACH OF JOHN WISDOM

It will be easier to understand John Wisdom's approach to theology if we set it off against Alfred Ayer's critique of theology in chapter 6 of *Language, Truth, and Logic*.⁶ Theological statements are meaningless, Ayer says, because to be meaningful a statement must be either tautological or empirically verifiable. He does not bother to show that theological statements are not tautological—perhaps he assumes that the invalidity of the ontological argument for God's existence has been established beyond doubt and that this shows that theological statements could not be tautological.⁷ He argues from the idea that

essay from the English translation of Bartsch's first volume by R. Fuller, *Kerygma and Myth* (London, 1957) pp. 1-44. Also I will refer to Bultmann's reply to his critics on pp. 191-211 of the same volume.

⁵ In Pope Pius XII's Encyclical, *Humani generis* (AAS 42 [1950]), existentialism is criticized on p. 563, and existentialism in theology is criticized on p. 566. The strictures expressed there would apply at least to the philosophy of Sartre, since Sartre calls his philosophy "existentialism" (most of the other "existentialists" have repudiated the title) and since Sartre describes his position in the terms used on p. 563 of the Encyclical. Cf. Sartre's famous lecture, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris, 1946).

⁶ Alfred Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London, 1938) pp. 171-83.

⁷ The ontological argument is refuted in the logico-analytic school by means of Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions expounded in Whitehead and Russell, *Principia mathematica* 1 (Cambridge, 1910) pp. 69-75. Cf. Wisdom, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 and 202.

God is supposed to transcend the world that theological statements are not empirically verifiable. Only in the more primitive religions where the gods are not transcendent can theological statements be empirically verifiable, he concludes, for there a statement like "Zeus is angry" can be equivalent to an empirically verifiable statement like "it is thundering." This requirement that a statement be either tautological or empirically verifiable if it is to be meaningful is the famous "verification principle" of the logical empiricists. In his review of the new edition of Ayer's book, Wisdom pointed out that the verification principle, designed to eliminate metaphysics, was itself a metaphysical principle and "quite incapable of eliminating metaphysics or anything else."⁸ This critical attitude towards the verification principle, it would seem, is what made it possible for him to adopt an approach to theology that was not purely destructive. His approach, nevertheless, is inferior to Ayer's in one fairly fundamental respect: he fails to distinguish between the logic of statements about God and that of statements about the gods.

Wisdom begins his essay on gods by saying that the existence of God is not an experimental issue in the way it was when Elias settled the question who was God, Yahweh or Baal, by a contest of prayer to see whose god would send down fire from heaven (1 K 18:23 ff.). One could reply, however, that the story of Elias is exceptional, that the rule was "Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the proof" (Dt 6:16), that it was exemplified in the story of Christ resisting the temptation of Satan to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple (Mt 4:5-7), that, in short, it was forbidden in the biblical religion to make an experimental issue of God. I would agree, then, with the principal part of Wisdom's statement, namely, that the existence of God is not an experimental issue. What he intends here, as he says further on, is that even though the believer and the unbeliever differ as to facts, their difference is not the gross kind that can be settled by experiment.

Unfortunately, though, he goes on to account for his statement that the existence of God is not an experimental issue in the way it was by

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 245. To judge, however, from his earlier essay, "Metaphysics and Verification," *ibid.*, pp. 51-101, Wisdom's argument is not with the principle itself but only with the way it is ordinarily presented.

adding that this is due in part, if not wholly, to our better knowledge of why things happen as they do.⁹ This is an unfortunate statement if he means that most of those who believe in God no longer believe in miracles. It is also unfortunate if he means that because of the progress of science many occurrences that would have been thought miraculous are no longer thought to be so. For this would be helpful to his statement about the existence of God being no longer an experimental issue only if miracles were supposed to be experimental proofs. They are not. They are not supposed to be proofs to which God can be put, as Wisdom thinks, by means of prayer.

Belief in gods, he adds, is not merely a matter of expectation of a world to come. The believer and the unbeliever differ as to the facts of this life, he means, not only as to the facts of a future life. In this essay he wants to consider those believers who do not believe in a future life, or to consider the differences between believers and unbelievers in so far as these differences are not a matter of belief in a future life. He does not want to consider here, he says, expectations as to what one will see and feel after death nor what sort of reasons these "logically unique" expectations could have.¹⁰ From his book, *Other Minds*, however, where he spoke less cautiously of this matter, one would gather that he does not know any sort of reasons that these logically unique expectations could have, that these expectations to him are not only logically unique but illogical.¹¹ Ayer came to this conclusion, understandably enough, from the verification principle.¹² Without undertaking to defend the verification principle, though, it would be difficult to argue such a thesis. Wisdom, therefore, wisely abstains.

What differences are there between believer and unbeliever, he asks, that are not experimental nor merely eschatological? And is it that believers are superstitious or that unbelievers are blind? The differences are as to the existence of another world, he answers, not just a world to come but a world that is now, though beyond our senses.¹³ The question is like that of the existence of other minds. We can reasonably affirm the existence of other minds, he says, because in this way we can explain for ourselves why others behave the way they do. If there are like reasons for affirming the existence of a divine

⁹ "Gods," § 1. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, § 2. ¹¹ *Other Minds* (New York, 1952) p. 41.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 177. ¹³ "Gods," § 3.

mind or of divine minds, then unbelievers are blind, but if there are not, then believers are superstitious. One can concede to Wisdom that believers do believe that God reveals Himself to us through something analogous to the words and actions by which other minds reveal themselves to us. The trouble with the analogy is that to Wisdom other minds are merely a reasonable hypothesis.

The question, "Is belief in gods reasonable?", he tells us, can be resolved into three questions. First, "Is there ever any behaviour which gives reason to believe in any sort of mind?" Second, "Are there other mind-patterns in nature beside the human and animal patterns which we can easily detect, and are these other mind-patterns super-human?" Third, "But are these things sufficiently striking to be called a mind-pattern? Can we fairly call them manifestations of a divine being?"¹⁴ Wisdom wants to take an affirmative answer to the first question for granted here, even though it would not be granted by someone like Ayer.¹⁵ This he can fairly do, since he has discussed it at length in his book, *Other Minds*. The problem, then, reduces to the other two questions, one of them requesting evidence and the other inquiring as to its sufficiency. From the phrasing of the questions one cannot tell whether the "mind-patterns" of which Wisdom speaks would be a world order such as forms the starting point of the teleological argument for the existence of God or whether they would be a providential plan of salvation manifested in history or whether they would be the sort of thing Thales had in mind when he said: "All things are full of gods." Perhaps the term is meant to cover any of these possibilities.

The third question, the question whether an alleged mind-pattern would be enough mind-like to be called "mind-proving," looks very much like a mere matter of the application of a name. So Wisdom tries to show that the line between a question of fact and a question or decision as to the application of a name is not as simple as it might seem. The line between using a name because of how we feel, he says, and because of what we have noticed is not sharp. Sometimes when there is agreement as to "the facts," he points out, there is still argument as to whether the defendant did or did not "exercise reasonable care," was or was not "negligent." Thus, he concludes, even though

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, § 4.

¹⁵ Ayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 201 ff.

the statement, "There is a God," evinces an attitude to the familiar, it also evinces some recognition of patterns in time easily missed, and therefore difference as to there being any gods is in part a difference as to what is so, a difference as to facts, though it is not an experimental issue.¹⁶

How it is that an "explanatory hypothesis" such as the existence of God may start by being experimental and gradually become something quite different, he tries to make plain by means of a parable.¹⁷ There were two people who planted a garden and left it long neglected. So when they returned they found weeds among the plants, or perhaps plants among the weeds. Seeing the plants, one said: "A gardener has done this." The other, though, seeing the weeds, said: "No, the garden has been neglected." Then they inquire diligently whether anyone has seen someone at work in their garden and find that no one has. They re-examine the garden more carefully. They inquire as to what has happened to other gardens in like circumstances. But when all is done, they still disagree. Now, says Wisdom, the gardener hypothesis is no longer experimental, the difference between one who accepts and one who rejects it is now not a matter of the one expecting something that the other does not expect. There is, to be sure, a difference in their attitudes towards the garden. But is this all? The question remains, therefore, whether there can be a difference as to the facts between the believer and the unbeliever if the issue of God is not experimental.

The statements, "There is a God" and "There is no God," could conceivably be veiled interjections evincing different attitudes towards the world. Now, asks Wisdom, can an interjection have a logic?¹⁸ An interjection is the manifestation of an attitude in the utterance of a word, in the application of a name. To have a logic would be to be possessed of a method of being decided true or false. Experiment, however, is not the only conceivable method of this kind. We can easily recollect disputes, says Wisdom, which though they cannot be settled by experiment are yet disputes in which one party may be right and the other wrong. This may happen in pure and applied mathematics and logic.¹⁹ For example, two accountants provided with

¹⁶ "Gods," § 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, § 6.1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, § 6.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, § 6.3.

the same data may reach different results, and this difference is resolved not by collecting further data but by going over the calculations again. But it will not do, he says, to describe the theistic issue as one settleable by such calculation. Dispute about God may have been carried on this way in medieval times, he is willing to concede, but today, he is convinced, it is not.²⁰

When in courts of law opposing counsel are agreed as to the facts and are not trying to settle a question of further fact but are concerned whether the defendant exercised reasonable care, whether a ledger is a document, whether a certain body was a public authority, the logic of the dispute, says Wisdom, though a priori, is not a chain of deductive reasoning as in a mathematical calculation but a matter of the cumulative effect of severally inconclusive premises. The solution of the question is a decision, a ruling by the judge, which is, Wisdom concedes, a choice of a name for the facts and an exclamation evincing an attitude, but it is an exclamation which not only has a purpose but also has a logic.²¹ That the reasons which make faith reasonable are "like the legs of a chair, not the links of a chain," may be the assumption underlying the method of multiple argument in the *Summa contra gentiles* of St. Thomas. It seems to be the point of Newman's theory of "converging probabilities."²² The perils in the idea are declared in the condemnation of the Modernist proposition, "assensus fidei ultimo innititur in congerie probabilitatum."²³ The difference between Newman and the Modernists is that Newman's probabilities "converge."²⁴ In like manner, Wisdom's probabilities have a "cumulative effect."²⁵

Another model for the differences between believer and unbeliever, Wisdom thinks, would be differences as to whether a thing is beautiful. There is a procedure for settling these differences too, he points out, and this consists not only in reasoning and redescription as in the legal case, but also in a more literal re-setting-before with re-looking

²⁰ *Ibid.*, § 6.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, § 6.5.

²² *Grammar of Assent* (London, 1891) pp. 288 ff.

²³ *DB* 2025.

²⁴ Cf. R. Aubert, *Le problème de l'acte de foi* (Louvain, 1945) pp. 371 f., and especially 382 f.

²⁵ It is doubtful, though, that Wisdom's idea is identical with Newman's, for it is doubtful that the "cumulative effect" of the probabilities is intended to be moral certitude.

or re-listening.²⁶ What he is saying here is not that differences of belief are as subjective as differences of taste, but that they are no more purely subjective than are differences as to whether a thing is beautiful, that the maxim, *De gustibus non est disputandum*, applies no more to the one than it does to the other. Thus, he concludes, if we say that when a difference as to the existence of God is not one as to future happenings, then it is not experimental and therefore not as to the facts, we must not forthwith assume that there is no right and wrong about it, no procedure which tends to settle it, nor even that this procedure is in no sense a discovery of new facts. Even scientists, he observes, argue about rival hypotheses with a vigor which is not exactly proportioned to difference in expectations of experimental results. The difference as to whether God exists, though, involves our attitudes more than scientific disputes and in this respect, he thinks, is more like a difference as to whether there is beauty in a thing.²⁷

A further procedure by which differences as to whether a thing is beautiful and the like can be settled is what he calls "the connecting technique." It is a method of convincing another of one's way of thinking in such matters by pointing out likenesses, connections, of the thing in question with something else. This is what one does, for instance, in referring to other cases in law. In using the connecting technique, he says, the critic like the scientist is concerned to show up the irrelevance of time and place.²⁸ There is also an inverse procedure, a disconnecting technique, by which one can show up misconnections in the other man's thinking, such as the Monte Carlo fallacy (a favorite example of Wisdom's) where by mismanaging the laws of chance a man passes from noticing that a certain number or color has not turned up for a long while to an improper confidence that it will soon turn up. Such misconnections, Wisdom says, come from mismanagement of the language one is using.²⁹ But usually, he believes, wrongheadedness or wrongheartedness in a situation, blindness to what is there or seeing what is not, does not arise merely from mismanagement of language but is more due to connections which are not mishandled in language, for the reason that they are not put into language at all. These he names "unspoken connections." Spoken connections are the province

²⁶ "Gods," § 6.6. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, § 6.7. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, § 7. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, § 8.

of philosophical analysis, "a process of setting out fairly what has been set out unfairly." Unspoken connections are the neighboring province of psychoanalysis, "a process of setting out fairly what has not been set out at all."³⁰

Having made all these preliminary remarks Wisdom is ready to settle the issue between the believer and the unbeliever. "Now what happens, what should happen," he asks, "when we inquire in this way into the reasonableness, the propriety of belief in gods?" His answer: "A double and opposite-phased change."³¹ The first phase of the change is to show up an unspoken connection that favors the unbeliever, but the second and opposite phase is to show up one that favors the believer. The first is to reveal the source of belief, but the second is to reveal that the source proves to be an unexpected reason for belief. The first phase is to reject God with Freud as an infantile projection of the unconscious, infantile because God is thought to be our Father. The second phase is to rediscover God with Jung (Wisdom, though, does not name Jung here), to rediscover Him as a presence in that very unconscious which is the source of such projections. Thus the believer and the unbeliever, according to Wisdom, differ as to the facts of psychoanalysis.

This, I realize, would be a difference as to facts, not simply a difference in attitude, for psychological statements are statements of fact, not mere expressions of attitude like exclamations. Also, I know that an atheist who is an atheist because he believes in the absolute autonomy of the self, like Sartre, will deny the existence of independent powers in the unconscious for the same reason that he denies the existence of God—because the existence of such powers would limit the autonomy of the self. This seems to be the origin of Sartre's opposition to psychoanalysis and his attempt to rival it with "existential psychoanalysis."³² Nonetheless, it seems to me that Wisdom would have done better to have distinguished between the logic of statements about the gods and that of statements about God and to have limited his conclusion to the former. If he had done that, the first phase would have been to criticize the stories of the gods with Plato in the *Republic*,³³

³⁰ *Ibid.*, § 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, § 10.

³² Cf. Sartre, *L'Être et le néant* (Paris, 1943) Part 4, chap. 2.

³³ Book 2 and the beginning of Book 3.

and the second and opposite phase would have been to admit with Plato in the *Laws* that every myth has its truth.³⁴

THE EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH OF RUDOLF BULTMANN

John Wisdom, we saw, maintains that the believer and the unbeliever, besides differing in their attitude towards the facts, differ as to the facts themselves, but he reaches this conclusion only by failing to distinguish between the logic of statements about God and that of statements about the gods. By making the distinction which Wisdom fails to make, Alfred Ayer, we saw, comes to the conclusion that while statements about the gods can be statements of fact, statements about God can only be expressions of attitude. Rudolf Bultmann, we shall see now, says what Ayer says the other way around, namely that statements of fact in the New Testament and the Creed, those at least which are not conceded by unbelievers, are mythological like statements about the gods, and that only "existential" statements,³⁵ expressions of attitude, can be genuine statements about God. The believer and the unbeliever, therefore, do not or should not differ as to the facts, according to Bultmann, but should differ only in their attitude towards the facts. The process by which nonexistential statements in the New Testament and the Creed are translated into existential statements he calls *Entmythologisierung*.

He begins his famous essay, "New Testament and Mythology," by branding as mythology the factual claims of believers which unbelievers reject. All three of the categories of factual claims mentioned by Wisdom are reduced to the common category of myth: the miracles which Wisdom took for experimental claims, the expectation of a world to come which he excused himself from considering, and the other world existing now and exercising an influence over our lives which was the principal object of his study. "The miracles of the New Testament," says Bultmann, "have ceased to be miraculous,"³⁶ and his reason is much the same as Wisdom's reason for saying that God is no longer an experimental issue, namely, our better knowledge of why things

³⁴ Book 10. This is an interpretation, not an indirect quotation. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* 1 (Baton Rouge, La., 1956) p. 11.

³⁵ "Existential" in the terminology of existentialism, not in the terminology of modern logic, where "existential sentences" are contrasted with "universal sentences."

³⁶ *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 5.

happen as they do. "The mythical eschatology," he says, "is untenable for the simple reason that the parousia of Christ never took place as the New Testament expected."³⁷ As for the other world, "It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of daemons and spirits."³⁸ These reasons are not Bultmann's. They are those which unbelievers allege against the factual claims of believers. Bultmann is taking advantage of them here as a convenient means of getting rid of the factual differences of the believer and the unbeliever.

After criticizing their factual differences, though, he goes on to criticize their differences in attitude. It is true that he thinks the believer should differ in attitude from the unbeliever. Yet there are some features of the believer's attitude which Bultmann finds incompatible with the fundamental attitude advocated by existentialists and, for that matter, by most philosophers under Kant's influence. This attitude, to put it in Kantian terms, is that of autonomy, or, to put it in existentialist terms and indeed Bultmann's own words, it is the resolve to "exist," the decision to assume complete responsibility for oneself.³⁹ Described as a theory rather than an attitude, it is "the modern conception of human nature as a self-subsistent unity immune from the interference of supernatural powers."⁴⁰ Such interference would be, for example, the working of the Spirit and of the sacraments as conceived in the New Testament.⁴¹ The doctrine of original sin is incompatible with such an attitude, since it implies that one is not completely responsible for oneself but that what one is can be the responsibility of Adam. With original sin goes the idea of death as a punishment for sin and also the doctrine of the atonement, which contains in addition the idea that Christ can assume one's responsibility.⁴² These features of the believer's attitude, therefore, are put into the category of mythology along with his factual claims.

The mythological conception of man, I will readily concede, is diametrically opposed to the Kantian and post-Kantian conception of man's autonomy. For example, in the *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian myth of creation, man is created to serve the gods, who are conceived

³⁷ *Loc. cit.* ³⁸ *Loc. cit.* ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 7 f.

to be the various parts of the world.⁴³ In the Bible, on the contrary, man is made to the image of God, to rule over the various parts of the world: "Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and the beasts and the whole earth and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth" (Gn 1:26). The doctrine of autonomy seems to be nothing but a corruption of the biblical doctrine that man is the image of God, for it makes man his own god. The resolve to assume complete responsibility for oneself is not unlike the resolve to become "as gods, knowing good and evil."⁴⁴ Sartre has seen clearly that such an attitude is incompatible with any belief in God at all. Bultmann, however, thinks that it is incompatible only with certain features of the traditional belief in God.

His own method of *Entmythologisierung*, nevertheless, he believes to be truer to the essential message of Christianity than any previous attempts at eliminating the mythology in the New Testament. The allegorical interpretation of the New Testament, he says, has dogged the Church throughout her history and amounts to nothing but a method of evading the critical question by spiritualizing the mythical events so that they become symbols of processes going on in the soul, thus allowing the individual believer to escape from the literal meaning into the realm of the soul.⁴⁵ His criticism of the older liberal theologians like Harnack is that their ethical interpretation of the New Testament eliminated not only the mythology but also the kerygma, the preaching of Christ and Him crucified.⁴⁶ The interpretation of Christianity as a form of mysticism by the History of Religions school was closer to the truth, Bultmann thinks, but it too was a destruction of the kerygma along with the mythology. The message of the cross, he believes, is neither an ethical nor a mystical but an eschatological doctrine.⁴⁷

⁴³ Tablet 6, lines 36 and 130, in A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago, 1951) pp. 47 and 51.

⁴⁴ "Cette connaissance, qui est ainsi interdite, est un privilège que Dieu se réserve, que l'homme n'exerçait pas avant la chute mais qu'il usurpe par le péché. Ce n'est donc ni l'omniscience, que l'homme déchu ne possède pas, ni le discernement moral, qu'avait déjà l'homme innocent et que Dieu ne peut pas refuser à sa créature raisonnable. C'est la faculté de décider soi-même ce qui est bien et mal et d'agir en conséquence, une revendication d'autonomie morale, par laquelle l'homme renie son état de créature et renverse l'ordre établi par Dieu." R. de Vaux, *La Genèse* (Paris, 1953) p. 45, note (a).

⁴⁵ *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

What he means here by "eschatological" is not what he meant earlier by "mythical eschatology," namely, the Last Things, nor yet the "ultimate history" that Karl Barth attempts to substitute for "chronologically final history,"⁴⁸ but rather what transcends the barrier between the present and the past or between the present and the future. The cross is the eschatological occurrence, because even though it is an event of the past it is present to us in the word of God and the sacraments. This "historizing of eschatology," Bultmann thinks, was already introduced by St. Paul and radically carried through by St. John in the New Testament itself.⁴⁹

Since to be always present to us, to be forever Now, to be ever a pressing issue is to have existential significance, Bultmann thinks that an existentialist interpretation is the only way to bring out the genuine meaning of Christianity in myth-free form.⁵⁰ For this he has been criticized by a number of other Protestant theologians. Their objection is that by undertaking an existentialist interpretation of Christianity Bultmann is subordinating the kerygma to philosophy. Bultmann's reply is to distinguish between an existentialist (*existential*) analysis of human existence in general and an existential (*existentiell*) understanding of the here and now. Philosophy, he says, provides us with the former, while the kerygma provides us with the latter. The philosophy of existence, specifically the philosophy of Heidegger, tells us that we ought to exist, that we ought to assume complete responsibility for ourselves. The kerygma, on the contrary, tells us how we ought to exist, that the decision in which this complete responsibility is assumed should be a decision for God, not a decision for self. To put it another way, philosophy tells us that we ought not to lose our identity by becoming immersed in the concrete world of nature but that we should commit ourselves totally to the future. The kerygma then tells us that our total commitment to the future must be a commitment to God.⁵¹ The question here, it seems to me, is whether one can commit oneself totally to God if one is resolved to assume complete responsibility for oneself.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (tr. K. Grobel) 2 (London, 1955) 38 ff.

⁵⁰ *Kerygma and Myth*, pp. 15 f.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 193 ff.

Notwithstanding this division of labor between philosophy and the kerygma, Bultmann finds in St. Paul not only a clarification of the "ontic" structure of human existence, an existential understanding of the here and now, but also a clarification of the "ontological" structure of human existence, an existentialist understanding of human existence in general. The term *sōma* or "body" in the Pauline Epistles denotes, according to Bultmann, man as a being who has a relationship to himself, who is placed at his own disposal and is responsible for his own existence. Here, in other words, Bultmann thinks that he has found a term for autonomous existence in the New Testament itself. The clarification of the ontological structure of human existence is completed by an analysis of the Pauline terms *psychē*, *pneuma*, *zōē*, *nous*, and *kardia*, which carry, according to Bultmann, the complementary idea that man's existence is never to be found in the present as a fulfilled reality, but always lies ahead of him, that his existence is always an intention and a quest, and in it he may find himself or lose his grip upon himself, gain himself or fail to do so.⁵² It is in virtue of considerations like these, I believe, that Bultmann says "Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life."⁵³

It is on the "ontic" level that the difference between the believer and the unbeliever comes to light, and, as one would expect in an existentialist interpretation of Christianity, it proves to be the difference between authentic and unauthentic existence. The life of faith is authentic existence, and human existence apart from faith is unauthentic existence.⁵⁴ Human existence apart from faith is described in the Pauline terms "flesh," "sin," and "world."⁵⁵ The life of faith is described in the terms "righteousness of God," "grace," "faith," and "freedom."⁵⁶ The cosmological dualism of light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death, characteristic of Gnostic mythology becomes in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, according to Bultmann, a dualism of decision.⁵⁷ All these pairs of opposites become pairs of

⁵² *Theology of the New Testament* 1 (London, 1952) 227.

⁵³ *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-22.

⁵⁵ *Theology of the New Testament*, §§ 21-27.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, §§ 28-40.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 2, 21.

alternatives in a choice between God and self, the "Either-Or" of Søren Kierkegaard. Unauthentic existence is an attitude of self-reliance, and authentic existence is an attitude of reliance on God. The note of autonomy, though, concealed in the notion of "existence" comes to light when Bultmann says that the predestinarian statements of St. Paul and St. John do not mean that the Spirit's "leading" or the Father's "drawing" precede the decision for God, but only that such a decision does not proceed from worldly motives.⁵⁸

After defining the difference between the life of the believer and that of the unbeliever as one of authentic and unauthentic existence, Bultmann asks himself whether we can have the Christian understanding of existence without Christ, whether authentic existence is possible in any form other than that of commitment to Christ. His answer is that it is not. The life of faith is not a pure attitude but is an attitude towards a fact, the historical fact of the death of Jesus. "Faith in the sense of obedient self-commitment and inward detachment from the world is only possible when it is faith in Jesus Christ."⁵⁹ To the unbeliever the death of Jesus is nothing but another historical fact, but to the believer it is the act of God. If there were no act of God to which it would be the response, the attitude of reliance on God or the abandonment of self-reliance would be illusory.

To say this, though, to say that authentic existence is possible only in the form of commitment to Christ, is to contradict Heidegger and all other existentialists who are not Christian. Bultmann is aware of this and he maintains that the authentic existence of which such philosophers speak is in reality a form of self-assertion and thus, on their own showing, a form of unauthentic existence. "In Heidegger's case," he says, "the perversity of such an attitude is less obvious because he does not characterize resolve as self-commitment. But it is clear that the shouldering of the accident of his destiny in the facing of death is really the same radical self-assertion on man's part."⁶⁰ Indeed it is. But this seems to be a very good reason why the term "existence" in the sense understood by Heidegger cannot be used to describe the life of faith.

Although he maintains that the life of faith is not a pure attitude

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 1, 329 f., on St. Paul; and 2, 23, on St. John.

⁵⁹ *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 22.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

but an attitude towards a certain definite fact, the historical fact of the death of Jesus, Bultmann does not for that concede that there should be any difference as to the facts between believer and unbeliever. Any difference that may exist in practice, such as a difference as to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, is to be resolved, he thinks, in favor of the unbeliever. For this reason he denies that Jesus literally rose from the dead. If the resurrection were a fact, he argues, then it could be verified by the historical method and there would be no argument against it on the part of unbelievers. If it could be verified by the historical method, moreover, it would not be a matter of faith but a matter of historical science. As it is, though, all that can be verified by the historical method, he thinks, is that the disciples of Jesus came to believe that He rose from the dead.⁶¹ The death of Jesus, on the other hand, is a different matter, for it can be established historically that there was a man named Jesus of Nazareth who was put to death under Pontius Pilate. So there is no argument between believer and unbeliever on this. Their difference is in their attitude towards it. Bultmann's difficulty in the question of the resurrection and in the general question whether there is or should be a difference as to facts between believers and unbelievers lies in the notion of "fact" and "verification." It is more difficult to deal with him on this score than it is to deal with the logical empiricists, for the simple reason that he has no explicit verification principle that can be submitted to examination and criticism.

CONCLUSIONS

The first question we proposed to answer by this examination of two contemporary approaches to theology was whether the analytic approach is appropriate in theology. The analytic problem in theology is, as we have seen, the problem whether the believer and the unbeliever differ as to the facts. The meaning of the problem is such that an affirmative solution would assert that there is a method of settling the differences, and a negative solution would assert that the differences cannot be settled. This is because the definition of "fact" in the problem is furnished by the verification principle: "the meaning of a statement of fact is its method of verification." It is clear that theological statements cannot be statements of fact in this sense unless we postu-

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

late the existence of a theological method of verification or else reduce theological statements to some other kind of statement. Alfred Ayer reduces statements about the gods like "Zeus is angry" to empirical statements like "it is thundering," but asserts that statements about a transcendent God cannot be statements of fact but only expressions of attitude. John Wisdom, by failing to distinguish between the logic of statements about God and that of statements about the gods, arrives at the conclusion that theological statements are statements of fact and that their method of verification is that of psychology, specifically that of psychoanalysis. We can conclude, it would seem, that the analytic problem is a pseudo problem in theology unless the definition of "fact" be broadened to include the method of theology as a legitimate method of verification.

The other question we proposed to answer was whether the existentialist approach is appropriate in theology. Rudolf Bultmann supposes something like a negative solution to the analytic problem, for he puts the factual claims made by believers into the category of mythology with statements about the gods. He maintains, in other words, that the believer should not differ with the unbeliever as to the facts but only in his attitude towards the facts, specifically towards the fact of the death of Jesus. The existentialist problem in theology, then, is whether the difference in attitude that subsists between believer and unbeliever after their factual differences have been removed is a difference of authentic and unauthentic existence. (Actually, the problem can still be posed even if the factual differences are not removed.) The rightness or wrongness of Bultmann's affirmative solution depends on that of the resolve to "exist," the will to assume complete responsibility for one's decision for God. This "complete responsibility," the existentialist version of the Kantian idea of autonomy, is admittedly incompatible with traditional Christian soteriological notions like original sin, the atonement, and predestination, all of which Bultmann therefore proposes to classify as mythology along with the factual claims of believers. The resolve to "exist" in this sense is incompatible, according to Sartre, with any belief in God at all. We can conclude, it would seem, that an existentialist approach is inappropriate in theology as long as the notion of "existence" is not purified of the idea of autonomy.