

Whatever differences there may be between them, there is a significant substantial continuity between Bultmann's early thought as documented by his sermon, "Concerning the Hidden and the Revealed God" and his maturest thought, as represented, say, by his comprehensive reply to his critics of 1952. Consider the following selections:

"What does 'experience' mean? [*Denn was heißt 'Erleben'?*] It means constantly to enrich oneself anew, to allow oneself to be given something anew. It means to perceive that miraculous forces [*wunderbare Kräfte*] hold sway in the world, which we cannot reckon with, cannot enlist as mere factors in our work. It means to know that over and above our knowledge, our work, yes, and even our moral duty, there is something else—a fullness of life that streams in upon us completely as a gift, completely as grace. Experience means to receive a destiny into oneself. Not simply to endure a destiny, like the grain of sand with which the wind and the waves play, or like the coin that wanders from hand to hand—both of which endure a destiny, but always without being influenced in their inmost being by any of the forces that drive them. Experience means to make your destiny your own. And this means always to be open for what is given to us, always to be ready to experience miracles [*Wunder*]. Not the miracles in which an earlier age took pleasure—miracles opposed to nature and to understanding—but rather the miracles of life, the miracles of destiny. To want to have experience means to be ready to take miracles and mystery into oneself—or, to express it somewhat differently, *it means to have reverence and humility in the presence of life*. For only when we approach life reverently and humbly can we hear God's voice in all its roar" (*Existence and Faith*: 27 f. [rev]).

"And this it is that throws across the bridge from one man to another—the acknowledgement of hiddenness and mystery, humility and reverence in the presence of the other's uniqueness, divine trust in the miracles that richly and ever more richly well up out of his inmost being, blessing and overwhelming us with grace" (28).