

Couldn't one argue that Bultmann's early sermon, "Concerning the Hidden [sc. Mysterious] and the Revealed God," exhibits some of the very confusions against which he later polemicizes?

Although this sermon already stresses the difference between the knowledge proper to faith and religion, on the one hand, and that proper to a "reckoning" science, etc., on the other, it seems clear that Bultmann still takes "mystery" in its religious sense to include matters that are, in principle, capable of being cleared up by revelation, even though one level of clarity, once challenged by new "experience," may well have to be abandoned in order to attain another, and so on—with the result that God's revelation is thought of as an infinite process instead of as occurring in the decisive moment as in Bultmann's later thought.

As Bultmann himself eventually recognizes so clearly, "faith is constantly in danger of missing its point—as an existential self-understanding—and confusing itself with the acceptance of general truths or traditional dogmas" (*NTM*: 104). But it's only "the later Bultmann," informed by the philosophical analysis that he takes to be the early Heidegger's unique contribution to theology, who seems really free of just such confusion—who, in other words, understands faith radically as precisely existential self-understanding and who, accordingly, understands "the real mystery of God" in its authentic incomprehensibility.

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