

1. Bultmann believed himself entitled to assume that the appropriate question to put to the Bible in interpreting it--at least within the church --is the existentialist question about human existence, in the sense of the question I am driven to ask at the scientific level of theological interpretation by the existential question about my own existence that I ask at the spontaneous level of my existence as such (NTMOBW: 106). Why did he believe himself to be so entitled? One reason was that this is the question that finally motivates--and quite rightly motivates--all interpretation of history and historical documents: I want to understand them so as thereby to become conscious of my own possibilities of self-understanding. But another reason--as one might add, "at least within the church"--is that the church's proclamation points me to a certain history and to certain historical documents as being of decisive significance for my existence (106).

2. Bultmann believed himself entitled to assume, in other words, that the faith for which the church's proclamation calls is an existential self-understanding and that the proclamation and scripture, therefore, speak out of existence and to existence (103). Again, he believed he had the right to assume this not only because this is the only kind of an account of faith and proclamation that is allowed for by a general philosophical account, but also because of the kind of claims made by faith and proclamation, as well as scripture, themselves.

3. Analogously, I believe myself entitled to press the question of credibility for exactly the same reasons--not only because my human integrity requires me to seek the truth and to believe nothing that is not true but also because faith, witness, and the apostolic witness all claim to disclose something decisive for my existence precisely because they claim to disclose the truth about it.