

Concerning the life-relation and preunderstanding that interpretation of scripture, like the interpretation of any other text, necessarily presupposes, Bultmann allows that "man can as little have a preunderstanding of an act of God that becomes reality in an event as he can have of any other event as event. . . . Even so, understanding reports of events as acts of God presupposes a preunderstanding of what in general can be called an act of God—as distinct from an act of man or an event in nature. And if it is objected that man cannot know who God is and therefore also cannot know what an act of God means before God has revealed himself, then it is to be replied that man can very well know who God is in the question concerning him. If man's existence were not moved (consciously or unconsciously) by the question concerning God in the sense of Augustine's '*Tu nos fecisti ad Te, et cor nostrum inquietum est, donec requiescat in Te,*' he would not be able to recognize God in any revelation. There is an existential [*existentiell*] knowledge of God at work in human existence in the question concerning 'happiness' or 'salvation,' or the meaning of the world and of history—in short, in the question concerning the authenticity of one's own existence. If the right to speak of this question as the question of God is first acquired by faith in God's revelation, the phenomenon as such constitutes a real relation to revelation" (*Glauben und Verstehen* 2:231 f.).

Obviously, one could argue just as well, on analogous grounds, that without a life-relation to and a preunderstanding of one's own existence, one could never understand any existential communication concerning it. As a matter of fact, the question of one's own authentic possibility is the question of God—and vice versa. Consequently, either both are involved or neither is. But, then, if there can and must be "a science that is nothing other than the clear and methodical explication of the understanding of existence given with existence itself," must there not also a science that is nothing other than the clear and methodical explication of the understanding of *God* that is likewise given with existence itself (*Kerygma und Mythos* 2:189)?

Clearly, any objection to the effect that "God," after all, is an ontic term can be met by arguments parallel to Heidegger's arguments for the ontological

meaning of "care." There is, or can be, a properly ontological as well as an ontic sense of the term "God."

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