

Their second error lay in the fact that they had refused to recognize that the mythical, obsolete, first-century world-view in which the gospel was couched formed no part of the gospel itself, and that therefore the message of the New Testament must be demythologized; i.e., stripped of its first-century setting, and placed in the context of the modern, scientific world-view, if it is to speak meaningfully to twentieth century man.

Their third error lay in their insistence on the objective reality of God, which ran counter to their insistence upon the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man.

Many of Barth's disciples, believing that Bultmann was applying Barthian first principles more consistently than Barth himself, defected and went over to the Bultmannian camp.

Bultmann retired as Professor of New Testament at Marburg in 1952, the acknowledged king of German theology. Yet it was not long before it was discovered that Bultmann had himself included a fatal inconsistency in his view. Bultmann insisted (contra Barth) that God has no objective reality at all; but claimed that God and revelation do have a subjective reality; i.e., a reality for faith. However, his disciples gradually came to the realization that, if God is not objectively real, but is real only for faith, then the question arises, "Is God real apart from faith, apart from any believing individual? And if not, then does He exist at all, apart from our concepts? Or is He merely a projection of our minds, or an expression of a religious frame of desire? This was viewed as a fatal inconsistency.

In 1954 Ernst Kasemann of Tübingen published a paper entitled "*Das Problem des historischen Jesus*." (*The Problem of the Historical Jesus*). According to Werner George Kummel, this paper signaled the death-knell for the Bultmannian school. During the next few years Bultmann's empire crashed to the ground. Many of his former students and disciples rejected one or more of his basic principles; and many once again began a search for the historical Jesus.

Upon his retirement in 1952, Bultmann was succeeded by Werner Georg Kummel, a foe of Bultmannism! Many of Bultmann's former associates and acquaintances were very critical of his views. Ernst Fuchs of Marburg observed, "Where Bultmann stands sometimes only God knows and not even Bultmann!" Emil Brunner said, "Bultmann is a modern Origen, an allegorist of the Alexandrine school. Bultmann has always been a student of Heidegger, who transforms the New Testament for him. Heidegger is an avowed atheist; he bows to no revelation -- understands none, needs none, allows none. He smiles at Bultmann for 'making theology out of my philosophy'." Oscar Cullman of Basel called Bultmann's view "the great heresy" of our times. Barth frequently said, "Whoever denies the resurrection of Christ is not a Christian. Bultmann denies the resurrection of Christ!" On another occasion Barth said, "Thank God, Bultmann doesn't draw the consistent consequences and demythologize God!"

Although Bultmann served as Professor of New Testament at Marburg from 1922 to 1952, upon his retirement he was appointed Emeritus Professor of Theology. He died in 1976, still believing that his former disciples were still his disciples.