

--from the History of Religions School Bultmann became increasingly convinced of what he believed was the dependence of the Biblical writers upon their surrounding culture and world view. As Heron (A Century of Protestant Theology, pp 102-103) states:

"What came to impress itself upon him was not so much the *distinctiveness* of biblical concepts as their *remoteness*, their anchorage in a wider and, to us, alien culture. In particular, he became convinced that the general view of God and his relation to the world with which the New Testament writers tended to operate was no longer viable in the twentieth century, and that what appeared to be quite central elements in the New Testament *kerygma* were expressed there in terms which were originally non-biblical--notably in those of a 'Redeemer myth' which, following Reitzenstein, he believed to be older than Christianity itself"

--from Strauss Bultmann took over the category of "myth." This term may function in various ways to designate "... a particular kind of dramatic story about the entrance into the world of a heavenly being, a prescientific cosmology, or an interpretation of God as 'a being' who exists and behaves in the same sort of fashion as other beings whom we know and of whom we have ordinary experience." (Heron, Century, p. 103) These myths are obsolete for modern man, and so Bultmann proposes a program of Demythologization. The myth must be abandoned, but this in itself is not sufficient. We must understand the function of the myth. Myth for Bultmann is the way in which faith expressed its own self-understanding as it encountered the Word of God in Jesus. The nature of this self-understanding Bultmann expresses in categories drawn heavily from the philosophy of Existentialism and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

5. Recent Developments: for fuller introductions to a number of the issues raised below, you may profitably consult I. Howard Marshall, ed., New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods (Eerdmans, 1977).

a. The New Hermeneutic

This school is in part an outgrowth and extension of ideas set in motion by Bultmann. Advocates of the New Hermeneutic (for bibliography see the notes in the article by D.A. Carson) are impressed with the problem of the circularity of the interpretive process (the hermeneutical circle). While this in itself provides a useful critique of the nineteenth century belief in the neutrality of the interpreter and a simple "objective" approach to discovering the meaning of a text, the New Hermeneutic tends toward the other extreme of making "meaning" purely a subjective issue between the text and the individual interpreter. The goal of exegesis becomes not that of discovering what the text *meant* but rather *what it means for me*, this framed normally in Existentialist categories.

Notice that here the term "hermeneutic" has undergone a significant semantic shift. If we accept a more traditional distinction between "meaning" and "significance," then hermeneutics is more concerned with discovering the (original) meaning of a text. In the New Hermeneutic, however, "hermeneutic" really encompassed both *meaning and significance* with the emphasis falling on the latter.