

I've often had occasion to note the systematic distinction Bultmann makes between two different ways of living "according to the flesh" in the Pauline sense of the words: (1) living so as to give oneself imprudently and with desire to the alluring possibilities of what is visible and can be disposed of; and (2) living so as to lead one's life self-consciously and calculatingly on the basis of one's accomplishments, i.e., "the works of the law." In other contexts, where he's thinking and speaking about modern existence, he similarly distinguishes—e.g., in his discussion with Kamlah—between (1) living by disposing of what is disposable, instead of obediently submitting; and (2) living by misunderstanding even one's own possibility of obediently submitting as something one can dispose of; or—in his reply to Barth—between (1) securing oneself by objectifying thinking; and (2) securing oneself by one's own free decision.

Unless I'm mistaken, it is substantially the same distinction that comes to expression in HRN's typology of "forms of faith," in the case of the two forms alternative to radical monotheism, i.e., (1) pluralism or polytheism; and (2) social faith or henotheism. Underlying the first, clearly, are the same selfishness and presumption, the same desires for happiness and security, usefulness and profit, that Bultmann has in mind in distinguishing the first way of living according to the flesh. But it is just as clear that what underlies the second is the striving for security by means of some collective representation that Bultmann understands to characterize the second way. This becomes particularly clear from his interpretation of the criticism of religion in the Fourth Gospel, where religion is understood as precisely what HRN means by "henotheism," with its confusion of the "objective principle [*sc.* of being], or "the objective One," with "its image in the church," or with "that which makes them [*sc.* a people of faith] one and makes them different" (*RM*: 59. 61).

5 December 2006