

In what sense, if any, can I say that my act of meeting the needs of my neighbor is done to Jesus Christ?

The larger question that this raises is how it is possible, if at all, to talk about my having personal relations with Jesus and his having them with me, so that I can do things to and for him, even as he can do things to and for me. The clue to answering this question seems to me to be given in what Bultmann says about how we are to interpret Paul's talk about the "obedience" and the "love" of Christ—namely, by taking Christ's "obedience" to be the fact of his historical person in its service to us, and his "love" as God's saving act through him.

If Jesus' love for us is, in reality, God's saving act through him, our love for him is, in reality, our faithful response to God's act, especially when this response is considered in its relatively active aspect as loyalty to God and therefore to all to whom God is loyal. By being loyal to anyone to whom God is loyal, one is loyal to God, and therefore also loyal to Jesus Christ, through whom God is decisively re-presented as the only object of ultimate loyalty. In this sense, I can say that my act of meeting my neighbor's needs is done to Jesus Christ.

n. d.; rev. 26 January 2005