

What Frei evidently means by the *sensus literalis* (or, as he can say, "the apparent literal sense of the New Testament" [63]) is that "Jesus as 'real' or 'historical' [has or] seems to have an irreducibly unique and unsurpassable place in relation to salvation."

If this means, as it might well be taken to mean, that the *sensus literalis* necessarily presupposes a constitutivist type of christology<sup>x</sup> according to which Jesus is constitutive of salvation, then, clearly, it could be said of my type of theology, even as of Kant's or Kaufman's, if not also of Tracy's, that "the literal sense is left far behind"(64). But if the *sensus literalis* as such necessarily presupposes only that, in the case of the Christian religion, its constitutive re-presentation, in the sense of its explicit primal ontic source is a historical person, and not some law or teaching or word of wisdom, then there is no reason in principle, presumably, why my theology does not, or cannot, fully allow for it, or take it to be precisely the primary sense in which, or for which, scripture is to be read. Indeed, my concern with the existential-historical Jesus—with the "real" or "historical" person (or event) of Jesus in his (or its) meaning for us—could very well be said to be nothing other or less than the concern to take the *sensus literalis* with complete seriousness.

Clearly, Frei has no intention of holding that the *sensus literalis* is the sense disclosed by properly historical-critical interpretation, for which, as he says, "the reading of the *text*" is, in reality, "the reading of a *source*" (11). Moreover, this distinction almost exactly parallels the distinction I draw (by implication) between reading a primary existential-historical *authority* and reading a primary empirical-historical *source*. It is hardly far-fetched, then, to suppose that my concept of "the existential-historical Jesus" is by way of dealing with what he speaks of as "the conceptual issue in Christology, that is, the nature of the unitary ascriptive subject [*sc.* of the descriptions or stories told about Jesus and in relation to him]," in such a way as to do what, by Frei's own admission, Barth's, if not also his own, Type 4 theology quite fails to do, namely, "specify the mode or manner in which Christological statements are 'historical,' while nonetheless asserting that they are"(6).

On the question of whether Frei tacitly assumes (or fails adequately to distinguish what he does assume from) a constitutivist type of christology,

what he says—in discussing Tracy and Bultmann—about "the 'scandal of particularity'" meaning that "salvation here and now [is] dependent on one person then and there" (62) is a pretty clear indication, or confirmation, of an affirmative answer. On my representativist type of christology, by contrast, what is dependent here and now on one person then and there is not "salvation," but Christian existence, or the specifically Christian way of actualizing salvation, which, unlike salvation itself, *is* constituted by the one "real" or "historical" person Jesus, to whom Christian existence in all its aspects is simply the response.

10 July 1992