

Bultmann's statement that "while it is true that Jesus did not demand faith in his own person, he did demand faith in his word" (EF: 195) anticipates almost exactly Marxsen's distinction between the "two separate branches of tradition" that "can be readily discerned . . . in the New Testament writings," or the "two Christian types of faith" (JC: 85). On the one hand, there is the tradition evidenced by the entire epistolary literature, Revelation and the Gospel of John, for which faith is "faith *expressis verbis* in Jesus (Christ)." On the other hand, there is the tradition to which the synoptic gospels and the traditional material preceding them all belong, for which "there is never talk of faith in Jesus (Christ)" (aside from Mt 18:6 and 27:42). "Without formulating [their having been moved by Jesus] as belief *in* him," the witnesses in this branch of tradition understand faith to be a matter of believing Jesus, of believing *him* (not *in* him, but *him*) (85, 89).

Moreover, that Bultmann, contrary to Marxsen's criticism, has not the least intention of separating Jesus' "word" from his "activity" is clear when in the very paragraph in which he speaks of Jesus' having demanded faith in his word, he says that "Jesus demands [*sic*] decision in face of his ministry [=das *Wirken*=working]" (EF: 195 f.).

← Cf. Bultmann's further reference to "Jesus' own claim that man's destiny is decided with reference to his person."

Of course, Bultmann talks typically about "Jesus," or "the historical Jesus," not about "the Jesus-kerygma," whereas Marxsen more typically talks about "the Jesus-kerygma," not about "the historical Jesus." But Bultmann is also explicit in saying that all that he, or anyone else, could possibly mean by Jesus as a historical phenomenon is the oldest layer of the synoptic tradition. Therefore, even here Bultmann, in a way, anticipates Marxsen's position, or Marxsen merely refines or nuances the position that Bultmann had already taken.

At one point, however, it seems to me that Marxsen may do more than this. I refer to the challenge he issues to the idea that, while Jesus still looked forward to the turn of the age, the earliest community looked back on it.

Thus Bultmann locates "the real difference between Paul and Jesus" in the fact that "Jesus looks to the future and points his hearers to the *coming* Reign of God, which, to be sure, is coming even now, is already breaking in,"

while "Paul, on the other hand, looks back and points to what has already occurred. For him, the turn of the age has already taken place, the day of salvation is already present" (EF: 196). True, Bultmann stresses that the Reign of God that is still coming for Jesus is coming even now, is already breaking in, presumably in and through Jesus' own word and ministry, faith in which, or decision in face of which, Jesus himself calls for. On the other hand, Bultmann also allows that "Paul is of the opinion that the consummation is yet to occur, that Jesus Christ will still return as judge and consummate the Reign of God," even though "the decisive thing God has already done, and the faithful even now have the possibility of being new creatures and belonging to the new age" (EF: 196 f.).

But Marxsen seems to me right in insisting that the distinction Bultmann thus tries to make between Jesus and Paul really won't stand up if it is taken, as Bultmann evidently takes it, to be a "real difference," as distinct from being largely verbal, or, at most, a difference of emphasis. For in one respect, Paul as much as Jesus lives in the time of expectation, while in an other respect Jesus as much as Paul lives in the time of fulfilment. "Jesus announces the present breaking in of the kingly rule of God (thought of as in principle something that is coming) (Mark 1:15). Paul says that, amidst the night that still persists, the Christians live as children of the coming day (1 Th 5:5). Thus both say that what counts is to accept God and God's salvation now, in the midst of this world that is passing away. . . . It was not Paul who first summoned people to this faith; Jesus had already done so" (JC: 51). Thus, while it is formally correct that Paul's statement in 2 Cor 5:17 about "being in Christ" is a later way of putting things, "materially, this Pauline statement holds true already of the period of the earthly Jesus." "Whoever gives oneself over to Jesus of Nazareth gives oneself along with him to the inbreaking of God's rule and then lives 'a new creation.' For this person (again and again, in each such act), the 'old' that has surrounded him or her has 'passed away.' It is no longer determinative. Therefore, the 'new' has actually come" (JC: 73).

I would prefer to say "through him!"

Even in this, of course, Marxsen is hardly doing more than saying consistently what Bultmann himself had long since said, insofar as he stressed that, already for Jesus himself, what is decisive is the "*that*" of his own proclamation or ministry, which he understands as the last

demonstration of God's grace in the last hour, etc. (EF: 195). Only by stressing this could Bultmann say that "if Paul, like the earliest community, saw in Jesus the Messiah, he did nothing other than affirm Jesus' own claim that [a person's] destiny is decided with reference to [him]" (EF: 196). But if one takes this statement seriously, one can hardly uphold the kind of difference that Bultmann still wanted to make between Jesus and Paul. If Jesus' own message implies a christology that the christology of Paul, like that of the earliest community, does nothing but make explicit, then Marxsen has to be right that Paul's statement in 2 Cor 5:17 could not fail to apply "materially," even if not "formally," to the period of Jesus' earthly life, ("explicit' being to 'implicit' as 'form' is to 'matter'").

Where Marxsen, for his part, is seriously misled, while Bultmann is perfectly clear, is in inferring that those who responded to the earthly Jesus with the faith expressed in the Jesus-kerygma did so "because they experienced how Jesus gave himself to God's inbreaking rule in their behalf" (JC: 74), because they "experienced that he himself gave himself over to his announcement concerning time. He risked living the rule of God again and again in the midst of the old aeon" (JC: 66). Bultmann insists, on the contrary—and with complete correctness—that no one can experience the obedience and love of another in the way in which Marxsen evidently assumes that one can—and that the apostles did. I can indeed experience the obedience and love of another insofar as through her or him I am myself set free for a new life of obedience and love. But this I can experience only insofar as I accept the other person as the re-presentation to me of God's liberating love; and in order to do this I in no way have to experience her or his own faith, which I could never possibly experience, anyway.

The case is similar to the two different senses in which one can talk about being crucified with Christ. Such talk can be understood in one sense as an imitation of Christ's example of self-sacrifice. But in another sense, to let oneself be crucified with Christ is, as Bultmann puts it, to accept as valid for oneself the judgment that is spoken in the cross (EF: 197). If there is any sense in which it is proper to talk about Christian faith's being a matter of believing *with* Christ, or *as* Christ (cf. JC: 37), it is in the sense of accepting as valid for oneself the possibility of faith that is decisively re-presented through Christ.

Only in *this* sense, not in the sense in which Marxsen is misled in talking about it, can Christian faith be said to be *pistis Christou*.

Once again, the significance of the distinction between sacrament and example manifests itself as absolutely fundamental. Marxsen's mistake is to confuse Jesus' being the primal sacrament of faith with his being its primary example.

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