

*Der Glaube kommt auch heute aus der Predigt und hat, wo er gewagt wird, seine Gewißheit in sich selbst und nirgendwo anders.*

—Willi Marxsen

Clearly, this statement is made over against the assumption—that Marxsen calls "the error of liberal theology"—that faith can somehow be secured or justified by historical inquiry back behind the preaching that calls for it—whether this be inquiry into the historical Jesus or into the suprahistorical event of his resurrection from the dead. But one can unhesitatingly join—as I do—in rejecting this assumption, and, in *this* sense, agree with his statement, without inferring further—as he does—that neither faith nor the assertions of faith can be justified *in any way*, because they lie beyond the scope of rational discussion.

Moreover, one can not make Marxsen's further inference without (1) ignoring the other claim just as obviously made or implied by any Christian witness to be credible or true as well as appropriate or Christian; and (2) denying any possibility of critically validating this other claim, thereby admitting that it is really only a disguised way of saying, "true *for me*," or "I believe it." But with this denial/admission, the *extra nos* of Christian faith is lost, and faith itself reduced to something merely subjective, whether an attitude, a *blik*, a "historical perspective," or an intention to behave in a certain way.

Recognizing this, one has ample grounds for asking whether Marxsen's further inference is well-warranted. The warrants he gives for it, so far as I can see, are two: (1) faith, being properly a matter of existential understanding, cannot, in the nature of the case, be rationally justified; and (2) properly empirical (including empirical-historical) argumentation exhausts the reasoning by which truth-claims other than those made or implied by the merely tautologous assertions of logic and mathematics can be critically validated.

My response to the first warrant is that faith itself is one thing, the assertions that faith necessarily implies, something else. Therefore, even if it is as true as I agree it is that faith itself cannot be directly justified by rational

arguments, it nevertheless can be justified *indirectly* by rationally justifying its necessary implications, which are in no way beyond rational justification. Then, so far as the second warrant is concerned, my response is the same as to any other version of "Hume's fork": the assumed dichotomy is nonexhaustive, because, in addition to both the tautologous assertions of logic and mathematics and properly empirical (including empirical-historical) assertions, there are also properly metaphysical and moral kinds of assertions, to both of which there are correspondingly distinguishable modes of rational argumentation capable of critically validating their claims to truth. Fundamental to such modes is analysis of the strictly necessary presuppositions of any and all existence, and thus of all thinking, speaking, and doing, and therefore the possibility of what is sometimes called "transcendental deduction." Therefore, unless and until it is not merely assumed but shown that there can be no such modes of objective argumentation, the necessary implications of faith can very well be rationally justified, provided only that they are the kinds of metaphysical and moral assertions that can be rationally argued for in these ways.

My last thought, however, is to return to Marxsen's statement: faith definitely does have its certainty in itself, and nowhere else. But, if I'm right, this is entirely compatible with holding that the necessary implications of faith can and must be rationally justified by proper modes of metaphysical and moral argumentation respectively. Indeed, as radically different as they are, faith and reason at this fundamental level require one another.

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