

How can one's fate in any way legitimately call in question one's authorization by God?--If no miracle can legitimately attest one's authorization, how can what happens to one be any reason for doubting it?

Bultmann himself is clear that the cross in no way served to call in question what Jesus said (GV, I, 205). But it's not at all clear how it could call in question the that either, especially if one keeps in mind Bultmann's own insistence that there can be no address where there is no understanding, and no understanding where there is nothing to understand (i.e., no what)(GV, I, 283).

The truth begins to dawn on me that Bultmann's distinction between "what" and "that" is confusingly and confusedly used to cover two distinctions, both of which are christologically important: (1) between existential and existentiell understanding; and (2) between an authority and the explicit ultimate ontic source of authority. If this is right, then one could say that the decision for which Jesus calls in face of his own person is a decision for him, not as one authority, not even the highest authority, among others, but as the explicit ultimate ontic source of authority; and that what he authorizes--in the sense of gives and demands--is not only, or primarily, existential understanding, but also and primarily existentiell understanding.

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