

1. The resurrection of Jesus, according to Marxsen, is "one interpretation among others" (141 *et passim*). But isn't the resurrection something real—a reality? No, Marxsen answers, the resurrection is an interpretation of a reality. He speaks of this reality variously as "one's having-been-summoned-to-faith by Jesus," or "one's own having-come-to-faith." More rarely, he speaks of *God* as the one who has summoned one to faith through Jesus (146). But it is fair to say, I think, that what he intends to refer to as the reality of which the resurrection is an interpretation is the twofold reality that I hold to be the object of the experience underlying the constitutive christological assertion. This comes out clearly enough when he makes, in his own way, the traditional distinction between *extra nos* and *pro nobis*, even while protesting against any separation of them (146). Significantly, he makes clear that the result of separating them is that what is in reality a "confession of the *extra nos*" thereby becomes merely a "report" (146).

2. But I wonder whether there isn't a still deeper reason than Marxsen gives for the widespread tendency to separate *extra nos* and *pro nobis*. It's not just the case, as Marxsen says, that the confession of faith to the *extra nos* employs some image or idea that is already available, whose contents can be regarded independently of faith (146 f.). There is also the fact, to which, so far as I know, he never gives sufficient attention, that a confession of faith necessarily implies, even if it does not itself consist in, metaphysical assertions that are and must be true independently of faith. I cannot open myself to God in this life, allow myself to be freed to love, lose myself for the sake of my neighbor, and experience this as salvation, and do so *authentically*, unless it is true *metaphysically* that there is a God to whom I can open myself, whose love for me frees me to love and lose myself in the service of my neighbor, etc. (150). True, faith as such is no more the accepting as true of such metaphysical assertions than revelation is merely the symbolic representation of timeless metaphysical truths. Faith as such is ^{obedient} trust in and loyalty to God, just as the revelation to which faith is the response is the symbolic representation of the gift and demand of God's love that alone authorizes—entitles and empowers—such trust and loyalty. Even so, if faith is the authentic self-understanding it claims, or is claimed, to be, this can only be because it is the only realistic way to understand oneself, given that reality

itself is at it is. Consequently, reality in itself ultimately has to be thus and so, and not otherwise, else the self-understanding of faith, of trust in and loyalty to God's love, could not be our authentic self-understanding as human beings.

3. The other point where I see an important difference from Marxsen is that, as free as he tries to make faith even from metaphysics, he fails to make it free enough from empirical history! When he says, for example, "what is always at stake is the faith brought by the historical Jesus" (150), or when he speaks of "the offer of Jesus, to accept God as Father, to go through life with him, freed from the sins of the past, also freed from the powers oppressing us in this world" (145), he is evidently referring to the *empirical*-historical, as distinct from the *existential*-historical, Jesus. At any rate, he nowhere makes clear that he is *not* doing this, by pointing out, e.g., that the Jesus who is, indeed, the only thing that isn't interchangeable is the Jesus who summons one to faith (150). This, in turn, is connected with the fact that he talks about the obedience of Jesus himself (148) and implies that the risk of accepting Jesus' offer is the risk of one's own way's eventually ending as his did, on the cross (145). As over against his claim that "the cause of Jesus" is "what Jesus was [*sic!*] concerned with" (150), I should want to stress that what faith means by "Jesus" is the one through whom God decisively calls one to open oneself to God's love, etc. Whatever Jesus may have been concerned with, the only Jesus with whom Christian faith is concerned is the Jesus who decisively represents the gift and demand of God's love, and hence is the explicit primal source authorizing trust in God's love and loyalty to it as authentic human existence. Thus, when one asks to whom one has really opened oneself when one accepts the call made in a Christian sermon, the answer, as Marxsen says, is indeed Jesus (see 145). But this is not because or insofar as certain empirical-historical claims concerning Jesus are true; it is because, regardless of the truth or falsity of any such claims, what is meant by "Jesus" in any appropriate Christian sermon is the one who ^{is the explicit primal authorizing source of} ~~primarily authorizes~~ the self-understanding to which every such sermon summons its hearers. ital