

There was a danger in the Jesus-kerygma that the Christ-kerygma served to obviate—namely, that, by simply presenting the Jesus occurrence as kerygma without explicit christological qualification, it would have been possible to make something like a general truth out of the experience that Jesus had made God an event. In that case, it would no longer have been said that Jesus makes God an event, but only that there is now the possibility that God will become present; Jesus referred us to this possibility, Jesus exemplified it. In this way, Jesus would have become the founder of a religion, whose religion was further practiced after his death. Thus at stake was the alternative: *either* Jesus teaches the new possibility *or* Jesus actualizes the nearness of God. Precisely because of their Easter experience, however, the early community was concerned to say the second rather than the first: Jesus not only taught a possibility, but he also actualized it. During his lifetime, this was bound up with him. But even after Easter, it remained bound up with him, precisely because of the identity of the risen one with the earthly one. In order to hold fast to this and to expressly underscore it, Jesus himself was qualified. This qualification of him, then, is finally a reflection of the Easter experience, a reflective interpretation of "he allowed himself to be seen," "he appeared," or "he lives."

What was involved [*sc.* in the experience of seeing Jesus] was the further occurring of the Jesus-kerygma, where what was new was that this further occurring occurred without the earthly Jesus himself still being visibly present. And it occurred in such a way that the old thing that Jesus had brought was also not abstracted from him himself. The witnesses did not make out of it an idea, truths, that one could dissociate from Jesus himself, an ideology, a religion; rather, the further occurring of the Jesus-kerygma remained always the further occurring of the *Jesus-kerygma*.

26 May 1997