

I argued in *Christ without Myth* that "the *conditio sine qua non* for a more adequate christology is to observe the important distinction between 'knowledge about' and 'knowledge of,' or, in Bultmann's terms, *existential* and *existentiell* understanding."

"What confronts us in Jesus," I insisted, "is not, in its first intention, a 'world-view' addressed to our intellects, but a possibility of self-understanding that requires of us a personal decision. ¶"While we may hesitate, then, to say that Jesus is mankind's 'teacher,' we may confidently affirm he is its 'preacher.' For the office of the preacher, of which his ministry is both the norm and the fulfillment, is not only to say 'what' man's existence is—although that, too, is most certainly involved—but to speak in such a way that 'what' he says becomes the occasion for an actual *existentiell* encounter with the 'that' in which the 'what' is grounded and to which it primarily refers." "Jesus is the preacher of mankind" (162 f.).

I would now want to say, of course,—following an insight I received from Marxsen—that Jesus, properly, is neither "the preacher of mankind" nor "the sermon to mankind," but rather the *text* of this sermon—its *primal* text, because it is the text, immediately or mediately, of every Christian sermon by every Christian preacher.

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