

On Jesus as a Sign

Schutz says, convincingly, that, "in interpreting a sign it is not necessary to refer to the fact that someone made the sign or that someone used it. The interpreter need only 'know the meaning' of the sign. . . . Thus when he sees a road sign, he will say to himself, 'Intersection to the left!' and not 'Look at the wooden sign!' or 'Who put that sign there?'" (120).

Obviously, the same reasoning has an application to the whole issue of the christology of the New Testament, and hence of christology *simpliciter*. For to say, as *Formgeschichte* warrants our saying—indeed, requires us to say!—that the whole Jesus tradition is more or less explicitly witness or proclamation is to say that the New Testament represents Jesus as a sign—as the decisive sign of the meaning of human existence. But, then, the proper response to its representation of him is, "The ultimate mystery of my life as of all life is love!" and not, "Look at the perfect believer in the love of God!" or "How did the witness or proclamation that the mystery of life is love come about?"—as legitimate as both responses might be, given interests other than those of the New Testament writings themselves.

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