

The relevant (or, at any rate, less misleading) distinction is not Bultmann's between the "*what*" and the "*that*" of Jesus, but rather a distinction between two different ways of distinguishing *both* the "*what*" and the "*that*." The point of my distinguishing between the "empirical-historical" and the "existential-historical" Jesus is precisely to formulate this alternative distinction. So, too, with the distinction I make by saying, not that "Jesus *meant* love," but that "Jesus *means* love."

Also, when Bultmann says, "*Als historische Gestalt ist er [sc. Jesus] das Kriterium der Verkündigung, das diese legitimiert*" (Interview in *Der Spiegel*: 44), he confuses the very things he intends to distinguish by distinguishing the "*what*" from the "*that*."

So far as I can see, the only way to avoid such confusion, the while also avoiding the difficulties of his distinction, is to recognize the systematic ambiguity of the phrase, "the historical Jesus," as well as any other synonymous phrases ("the Jesus of history," "the historical fact of Jesus," and so on). This means recognizing that, on the one hand, the phrase may be taken to mean *the actual Jesus in his being in himself then and there in the past, prior to any and all presentations of him by others*, while, on the other hand, it may be understood to mean *the actual Jesus in his meaning for us here and now in the present, as authoritatively re-presented by the earliest witness of the Christian community*. Of course, my distinction between the "empirical-historical" and the "existential-historical" Jesus is simply a shorthand way of expressing just this recognition.

30 October 2006