

THE EASTER MESSAGE TODAY

*Three Essays*

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Testament distinguishes fundamentally between the Easter appearances and the visions of Christ in the Spirit with which many were further favored (2 Cor 12.1).

29. Paul stresses (1 Cor 15.50ff), following Jesus (Mk 12.18-27 and parallels) in opposition to the apocalyptic rabbinical views of resurrection as a return to life in an improved state (Billiebeck I, 889f; III, 473ff), that it signifies an eschatological new becoming. On the other hand, Lk 24.39-47 and Jn 20.27 seem to talk about the encounter with a revived earthly body. Both evangelists wanted to stress corporeality against Docetism and the confusion with apparitions of the dead, but not a worldly ascertainability. They themselves remove their mistaken conceptualization by asserting at the same time that He came and went through closed doors (Lk 24.36; Jn 20.19, 25).

30. K. Schubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 177, n. 23, 187f.

31. L. Goppelt, *Typos: Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen*, 1959, pp. 120-127; E. Schweizer, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-32, 53-62, n. 15.

32. On the discussion, cf. L. Goppelt, *Tradition bei Pls: Kerygma und Dogma* (4th ed., 1958), pp. 213-233.

33. W. Pannenberg, *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (2d ed., 1961), pp. 108f; "Thus the early Christian mission to the pagans, with good reason, made the expectation of the end of days and the resurrection of the dead a part of its missionary message. (1 Thess 1.9f; Heb 6.2). Paul rightly saw in it the presupposition for the knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15.16)." In reality Paul, conversely, grounded the expectation of the end of days on the basis of an interpretation of the Easter kerygma (1 Cor 15.20-28).

## The Resurrection Kerygma<sup>1</sup>

by Prof. Dr. D. Helmut Thielicke, D.D.

### I. The significance of the Resurrection for the Christian faith

In the New Testament record the central significance of Christ's being raised from the dead and becoming "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15.20), is unquestionably clear. It is established as a factual event, taking place within time and space, even though inexplicable within time and space. The statement about this transubjective happening assumes the crucial position in the argumentation of 1 Cor 15, twenty-five years after Jesus' death. The emphasis of this expressly theological argumentation, however, is not upon the historical references to this happening and upon the manifold attestation of the Resurrection. These references, which, viewed exegetically, are localized as *introductory* remarks (vss. 1-8), form a first stage in the actual argumentation. Their significance is that of a prolegomenon, and it is twofold: (1) these references are supposed to appeal to and bolster the healthy historical conscience of the Church, and (2) they are supposed to maintain the transubjective nature

of the Resurrection. This they do by referring to its historical foundation, whereby they provide a prophylaxis against every tendency to spiritualize the Resurrection, against every interpretation which seeks to explain it subjectively, on the basis of psychogenetic conceptions.

However, this historical reference is not in reality a theological argument. Although the preamble of verses 1 and 2 implies the meaningfulness of this historical event (*Historie*) for the faith, the historical discussion alone does not disclose what fateful importance this event (this transubjective event!) may have for the existence of the Christian.

This crux of the argumentation begins at verse 12, and in the section that follows, Paul uses a syllogism *e contrario*. He asks in his leading question: where would we be if Christ were not raised from the dead? If He were not, everything else which evangelical and apostolic preaching embraces would be not only incomplete and fragmentary, an "i" without its dot, but it would all be totally untenable and worthless. Our preaching would be in vain—even what we might preach about the words and deeds of the historical Jesus. Your faith would collapse, even the faith that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Is 53.5). We would be unmasked as false witnesses, for even what we had preached about the death of Christ would no longer be true: we had overinterpreted this death as an atoning event and rendered it a rank and an effect which it could not have at all—if Christ were not raised from the dead. We would still be in our sins; we would still be confined to our mortality.

And even those dead who had confessed in their last hour that He was their only comfort in life and death had gambled on the wrong card and were become fools.

Paul conjures up this apocalyptic nightmare in order to show how much depends upon the fact of the Resurrection. It is not Paul's intention in this passage to assert that the Resurrection kerygma discloses the significance of the birth, life, passion, and death of Christ. He intends much more, and he goes about it partly as a schoolmaster, pedantically listing catalogues of witnesses, and partly as the conjurer of apocalyptic consequences. In both rôles he is emphatically unambiguous: the Resurrection establishes this significance, rather than disclosing it; the Resurrection effects it ontically.<sup>3</sup>

Were the Resurrection kerygma only the disclosure of this significance, then the life and death of Jesus would and could be significant without this final disclosure. Of course, I might not understand them thus, but that would be only because the noetic evidence was lacking.

Paul says the exact opposite thing. Without the Resurrection, the life and passion and death of Jesus are robbed of any redemptive meaning. Jesus must surrender His calling as Savior—he never really had received *that* calling.

The Resurrection does not "disclose" something (in any event, it is not its point to disclose something), rather it enforces, initiates, mobilizes. It does not just shower light upon an event which otherwise would remain dark, rather it makes that event what it is: redemptive history. It renders the event of the life of Christ the privilege to be more than the subject of

one biography among others. In other words, the Resurrection has ontic and not only noetic meaning.<sup>4</sup>

All references to the Resurrection's significance have then but one intention—to underline that it is an ontic event. Christ has been raised. Prior to all existentialist interpretations, which certainly have their subsequent rights as means of appropriation, there stands the ontological decree.

Just as Paul argues negatively and *e contrario*, one could proceed with positive statements, as does G. Wingren: "Let us assume that Christ is risen, resurrected with everything which this fact encompasses: exaltation, judicial authority, the power to give life, the authority to forgive sins forever. Assuming this, we would have in the fact of the Resurrection sufficient reason to preach to every race that is born and to every nation that lives on earth. The often unmentioned presupposition of every attack upon Christianity is the persuasion, frequently regarded as a truism, that Christ never did rise from the dead. . . ." <sup>5</sup>

## II. *The problem of facticity*

With that we have come to the problem of the facticity of the Easter event, the *quaestio facti*. That kerygmatic theology tends to ignore this side of the problem, and why it does so, can be readily explained. We will penetrate to the real problem of facticity only when we have broken through the blockade of the kerygmatic school's argumentation.

Why, then, does the problem of facticity recede in keryg-

matic theology? If I judge correctly, there are three reasons for this:

A. *The facticity of the event is replaced by the question about its significance.* In the face of this question, the ontological query about the essence and character of the event itself recedes. This consideration has in turn its own reasons, found in the basic approach of Bulmannian thinking, which might be summarized as follows:

For reasons which are well known, and which may therefore be passed over, the deeds of God cannot appear or be discovered in tangible forms (*Vorfindlichkeit*). Such appearances are much more the hallmarks of myth, which, as one form of expression, is to be taken seriously and certainly not dismissed. However, the true message, the real contents of such a mythological statement, can only be grasped through interpretation, that is, by penetrating through the mythological form of expression to the core. When the question is raised, "What is the mythical form of expression itself trying to convey?"—then only one answer can be given: such texts are seeking to alter my own interpretation of myself. This transformation would be achieved if, for example, I could be brought to become contemporary with myself, that is, if I no longer am bound to my past or, through worry, cast into the future, but win the present for myself.<sup>6</sup> Only by interpreting such texts in view of my "understanding of my own being" or self-interpretation (*Selbstverständnis*) can these two desired results be accomplished: (1) I can distill the kerygma out of

its bonds of time, from its disguise in a certain world-view ("the earth is flat"). Thus I learn that the system of cosmological coordinates, in the midst of which the kerygmatic statement appears, is not an article of faith. These enigmas within the statements of the faith do not form the legitimate object of my faith. I am not obliged to believe in concepts current in another age; I may believe as a modern man. (2) Following this sifting out of the merely and temporally historical element, the positive realization and application of this message can be made as I interpret the kerygma towards and in light of my self-interpretation, as I interpret it *ad hominem*. Such an interpretation is possible when I learn that this kerygma does genuinely concern me, because it deals with the themes of existential knowledge which I had already been conscious of and which already had been of genuine concern to me. It is such issues that are the real content of the kerygma, questions like righteousness, or the problem of guilt. The dim awareness of such questions, what is called a "pre-understanding" (*Vorverständnis*), is remolded by the kerygma into a new understanding.

According to Bultmann, an historic and revelational event in time can therefore no longer be accepted as a fact which penetrated reality, even reality external to man, and altered it (i.e., a miracle!)—that would be tantamount to a mythological understanding! Bultmann can only acknowledge a revelational event which succeeds in bringing about this new self-interpretation, such as man alone would never have been capable of producing. No extra-human reality is at work here: a change

in the subjective consciousness of man takes place. The Johannine predicate, "The Word became flesh," does not signify the historical event in the stable at Bethlehem, but the transformation of my self-interpretation, which originates in that historical event. This is, in our opinion, a legitimate interpretation of Bultmann. To put it succinctly, what is reported as history in the New Testament is not itself an event, but only the prelude to an event: namely, the event of the transformation of my human self-consciousness.

Therefore, when Bultmann, in contrast to the liberal theologians, seems to emphasize the event-character of the kerygma very strongly, we should not deceive ourselves about the real status of this event. We have the impression, and we hope to substantiate it more exactly in that which follows, that the event has, so to speak, the rank of a "postulate," that is, an *a posteriori* conclusion based on the Christian's self-consciousness or his existential understanding of human life.

We mean by this: the new understanding of existence spoken of is made possible only through the deed, the Christ-event, which stands in the background. However, it is definitely in the background and steps no more into the foreground than the postulated God does in Kant. It seems to us that, according to Bultmann, both the New Testament men and we are sitting in the famous Platonic cave and see only a shadow of our consciousness, which leads us to the inductive conclusion about the reality causing the shadow. Where Bultmann wants to say something supra-mythological about this core-event, which is the background of Christian self-interpretation,

tation, he must say something negative: "Our interest in the events of His life, and above all in the Cross, is more than an academic concern with the history of the past. We can see meaning in them only when we ask what God is trying to say to each one of us through them. Again, the figure of Jesus cannot be understood simply from His context in human evolution or history. In mythological language, this means that he stems from eternity, his origin transcends both history and nature."<sup>7</sup> Eternity is simply another way of saying that the logos which has projected itself into *sarx* involves an understanding of human life which cannot be discovered in the objective and tangible world around us. The verse in question would, in Bultmann's sense, be better stated, *logos ouk ex sarkos egeneto* (John 1.14).

We said earlier, "a change in the subjective consciousness of man" is the crucial event. We must now add that this human consciousness does not develop from itself, autogenetically, through personal genius, or Socratically. It requires an event to release it—we might say that it needs to be deistically ignited. This is the basically negative indirect statement about the event underlying the New Testament kerygma and about the understanding of human life mediated by it, which we believe we may deduce from Bultmann's thinking.

As far as the Resurrection is concerned, its facticity is no longer of interest to me. What is important is the way in which the statement *about* the Resurrection (regardless of what stands behind it ontically) yields something towards my understanding of Christ. In this context Bultmann asserts: "Can the

resurrection narrative (1) be anything else than the expression (1) of the significance of the Cross?"<sup>8</sup> We emphasize the terms "narrative" and "expression." If only the transformation of my self-interpretation is the issue at stake, I need not reflect about an event. This self-interpretation can be influenced by any assortment of words, messages, and philosophical dicta—perhaps by Goethe's Faust-kerygma.

The discussion of the Resurrection is only important to me in so far as I experience through it how the first Church interpreted the Cross, as "the judgment of the world, the judgment and the deliverance of man."<sup>9</sup> Thus the death of Jesus is regarded as something more and different than a martyr's death. It is laden with a significance which no one noted at the moment of its happening, but which first became clear to the disciples as they reflected on it, under the influence of visionary impulses.

Bultmann's interpretation has removed the stumbling block caused by assuming the facticity of the Resurrection. Such an assumption has thrown every historical way of thinking into confusion, the confusion rendered by conceiving something as "happened" which fell outside the framework of normal historical events, like birth, pain, and death, which was non-verifiable in principle. Apparently he has killed two birds with one stone: (1) the time-bound categories (magic, myth, worldview) have been removed as hindrances to faith, because they no longer are essential to faith; (2) what "once happened" becomes contemporary as it leads to the transformation of the understanding of my own being.

B. This intellectual approach leads to fundamental consequences for theological epistemology in general. The most important of these consequences I would label the *Abrogation of the Subject-Object Correlation*. Wherever the existentialist interpretation is applied, the emphasis shifts from the "once happened" to the "what is happening to me now," which is the transformation of my self-interpretation, in other words, the event of faith.

What is happening *now* is what has true redemptive-historical significance: our dying with and rising with Christ (Paul). The "once happened," which is reported in the New Testament about death and resurrection, is not a chain of events which can be loosed from these "now events." Those historical happenings are not the prerequisites for this dying with and rising with Christ. It could take place simply on the basis of "talking about . . ." the Resurrection (for instance, "talking about . . ." it in the form of a parable). This dying and rising with Christ could be carried out by "talking about . . ." it in the sense of *Stirb und Werde* (die and become). The kerygmatic report about what once happened and the kerygmatic promise about what can now happen are inextricably intertwined. What once happened can only be understood by the man who has experienced the redemption of this "Die and Become." The significance of what once happened does not rest in the possibility that it could actually have taken place; it is meaningful only if it succeeds in releasing and transforming the here and now. And this release can be effected by the kerygma, by "talk about" something, by the

mere report of what took place. What is reported about, proclaimed, or talked about, can easily remain an X in the ontological sense. What now happens assumes an equal if not superior position to that which we usually call redemptive history, in other words, what actually took place in the years one to thirty.<sup>10</sup>

The result: what we believe in, whether it is a past event or is reported to be such, cannot be divorced from the present realization of faith. This is what is meant by the Abrogation of the Subject-Object Correlation.

C. The third major consideration in the discussion of the kerygmatic school's approach to facticity is the *interrelationship of faith and historical knowledge*.

When the kerygmatic school carries out the abrogation discussed above, it does so on the basis of some other reasons which we must examine and critically illuminate. They have already been intimated in the Tübingen quotation (see note 10).

The abrogation of the subject-object correlation is based upon the serious concern that preservation of the correlation could lead to the following epistemological situation:

The attempt might be made to establish *extra fidem* (perhaps through philological or historical analyses) a certain occurrence (in this case, the Resurrection) as an objective, factual event—that is, a miracle which has happened. By doing this, the possibility of believing in this historically mediated miracle would be provided. Such faith would then be the subsequent subjective agreement to something already objectively

apprehended. And this would certainly be an impossible arrangement. Yet we must ask whether this undesirable arrangement can be avoided only by abrogating the subject-object correlation itself and then logically reducing the ontic character of the Easter event to irrelevance. We certainly agree with Bulmann and his students (especially Ebeling) in their emphasis that historical apprehension and faith cannot be isolated from one another in the way we have described, for they are part and parcel of each other. Faith is no subsequent agreement to something already established *extra fidei*. The act of understanding Easter is an act involved in faith itself. This is so because our act of apprehension, as far as it is directed to things and events which concern our existence, is an *opus* which is predetermined by the condition of the acting and apprehending person. *Hinc fit, quod . . . velut, cupiat faciat, taliter, qualis ipse est.*<sup>11</sup> He who is bound to finiteness and to the tangible reality around us, and who is qualified by both these factors in his *ipse-being*, cannot comprehend what transcends both finiteness and tangible reality. Only the man whose very existence has been taken up into the death and Resurrection of the Lord and transformed is put into the analogous situation through which the Resurrection can become a possible object of knowing and apprehending. The knowledge we mean can only be one through which faith is related to its object. The believer alone can apprehend this event. He who is in the truth, who exists in a believing reconsummation of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, hears the voice of the

empty grave—but only he. Apart from this situation of faith, Easter is indeed unverifiable.<sup>12</sup>

D. This is especially true of the Easter event; we could speak of the *ontological distinctiveness of the Easter event*, for it, as well as the virgin birth and the ascension, cannot be aligned ontologically with "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," which are objectifiable events of history. However, the non-objectifiable nature of the Resurrection is to be strictly divorced from the question whether it is objective,<sup>13</sup> that is, whether it really happened or should better be ascribed to the subjective visionary experiences of the disciples. This kind of objectivity implies the ontic character of a real event which happens in the real world outside of consciousness, ecstatic experience, and visions. And this kind of objectivity ("it really happened") is claimed *strictissime* by the New Testament with all available arguments. The question of "objectifiability," on the other hand, deals with the noetic problem: how far is it possible to substantiate the Resurrection event *extra fidei*: neutrally, "for the record." This possibility of objectifiability is denied by the New Testament as unequivocally as the question of the objectivity (transubjectivity) of the factual is affirmed by the New Testament. We see this emphasized in the fact that no one substantiated the Resurrection who was not in communication with Jesus Christ. No heathen and no Jew is quoted as witness. Yet in order to make the testimony more impressive and to preclude the objection that it was the bias of the believers, there would



have been considerable interest in such neutral witnesses *extra fidem*—if such objectifiability had been held possible. The disciples were already well enough schooled by Him who had walked upon earth to know that the miracle is fundamentally non-objectifiable, although it is possible to perceive it even with the senses (as in the feeding of the multitudes and the healing of the sick). It is characteristic that the miracle remains basically ambiguous: a miracle is supposed to have a message (that is basic to its nature as a *semeion*), but in doing so it does not dispense with faith in favor of unambiguous sight—it challenges faith and refuses to provide objectifiable knowledge.

The New Testament reserve towards possible objectifiability of the Easter miracle is also expressed in that the categorical testimony to the fact of the Resurrection almost completely suppresses the question about how it happened (this is particularly noticeable in contrast to the apocryphal reports). Where we do find traces of an attempt to objectify the event (the guards at the grave, the stories about the angels), the influence of legend-forming fantasy is undeniable (for when men are totally grasped by something, their fantasies also want to testify to it). It is at this point that we find the contradictions in the accounts. I find these contradictions quite edifying, because they show how in the smallest attempts (and they are really small attempts) to objectify the miracle our categories become confused. A good example of this is the story of Paul's conversion, where audition and vision are confused, and the functions of the eye and ear can no longer be distinguished. For another illustration we might turn to physi-

ology, where we could find an analogy in Johannes Miller's "doctrine of specific sense energies." A man who receives a blow on his head will often hear a buzzing in his ears and see spots before his eyes. Although the stimulus was neither optical nor acoustical in nature, it produces these sense impressions—the senses react as though they had been simultaneously stimulated. They in turn produce other reactions, but not independently, rather, still in reaction to its original outside stimulus—we might say that the stimulus is "witnessed to" by these reactions. However, the eye really saw nothing, and the ear really heard nothing, because the effect of a stimulus not perceivable by these sensory organs is transferred to them. So, such indirect reactions to the one stimulus (the blow) can be contradictory: one person hears a buzzing, another hears bells ringing, a third sees dancing rays of light, and someone else sees a rainbow. Here is an analogy to the attempt to transpose the "supra-sensual" Resurrection event into the dimension of the senses. The love of truth of the New Testament witnesses, who avoided harmonizing these transcending sections of the reports, and who instead let them stand in their contradictions, practically provides us an illustration of non-objectifiability. Although the New Testament reporters could not have described this noetic situation in epistemological language, they have acknowledged it through their maintenances of these contradictions with the instinct of the children of God, unknowingly and against their wills.

This we may consider certain: the non-objectifiability of the Resurrection is to be strictly divorced from its ontic char-

acter as a transsubjective event. This non-objectifiability is expressed in the New Testament through the extensive rejection of statements about "how it happened." The transsubjectivity is expressed in the New Testament through the strictest attestation of the fact that it happened.

When Ebeling confirms the invisibility of the knowledge of the Resurrection from faith in the Resurrected One, he appeals with right to Luther.<sup>14</sup> However he appeals to Luther incorrectly in as far as he considers faith the arena where redemptive events take place, and what once happened—the Christological event—basically a function of the "now" of faith. Another way to illuminate the epistemological problem would be to consider Kantian transcendentalism to which Bulmann is rather directly related through his teacher Hermann, even though he is probably not fully aware of it. Here, what is actually real is the world of my experience. The *Ding an sich*, as an ontic X in the background of my world of experience, affects my forms of perception and my categories, and constitutes in "collaboration" with them this my world of experience. The original ontic X cannot be conceived of itself, and that which really happens is to be found in the "now," the *Jetzt* of my experiential act. It is then a simple step to replace this experiential act with the act of faith and to replace the *Ding an sich* with the events of the years 1 to 30, in order to have the correct analogy. If I may put it in an over-simplified way, all the objects of religious faith could not exist for one second without me, without my structure of consciousness, without my appropriation, without the transformation of my self-interpretation.

For they only "exist" in their significance. But their significance is evoked by my recognition, by my interpretation, which re-works the "objects" in the process. Self-consciousness affected by an ontic X constitutes the experiential world of faith. This results in that mystical position, expressed in the words of Angelus Silesius, that God could not live a moment without me. The christological events could not live a moment without me, without my faith, because they are dependent upon this faith, they exist only in relation to it, and thereby they lose their ontic uniqueness and even their ontic character.

Wobbermin was thinking along similar lines when he repeated Luther's sentence over and over again: Glaube und Gott gehören zu Hauf (faith and God belong together). Luther meant, of course, that no statements about God can be made outside of faith. But Wobbermin drew the false conclusion that faith constitutes God in His Being (*Sein*) as it confronts me. And this is completely contrary to Luther. For Luther's ontology of the Word of God, it is decisive that this Word is a real, transsubjective event, an event which also takes place even when man does not perceive it at all or misunderstands it if he does perceive it.<sup>15</sup>

One observation in confirmation of my argument may be made in passing: the rejection of the ontic event-character of what once happened, as an event independent of faith, also has its effect on eschatology. For now the term "eschatological" must refer to the mere "aspect" under which I view the facts and reports from once upon a time, namely, that I do not consider them important historically, in their place in the chrono-

logical roll of time, but that I consider them meaningful for *every* possible understanding of human life. Eschatology has nothing to do then with the doctrine of things to come and events whose actual commencement I am awaiting, such as the parousia. No, eschatology simply paraphrases the meaningfulness of messages whose ontic backgrounds have shifted out of the field of vision. "If faith does not rest fundamentally upon events, then fundamentally it can be no expectation of events."<sup>16</sup> The expected second Advent is replaced by the eschatological *nunc aeternum*, the Kierkegaardian moment. And so the Christ who once appeared is the end of history,<sup>17</sup> and we need no longer wait for this end to come. From this perspective we see again how history is curiously deprived of its reality.<sup>18</sup>

### III. *How do we arrive at a legitimate confirmation of facticity?*

A first step to a confirmation of facticity is made with the help of history (*Historie*): the analysis of texts. The goal of our query, under which the texts are to be examined, is first of all the question: how far do these texts seek to establish a trans-subjective event which takes place in time and space? Secondly we ask: do they place a theological value on this transsubjective element, and if so, how great a value? To draw conclusions about these questions is the duty of New Testament science. We may content ourselves here with the conclusions that both questions, independent of all differences in detail, are to be

answered positively. The systematic theologian has another duty here than the New Testament expert. He has to say something about the fundamental importance of such text analyses in cases where we are dealing with the question whether and to what extent they can aid faith to an assurance about the facticity of its object. This particular question is very important methodologically.

What we have already said implies that it would be false if the text analyses were required to provide faith with indubitable historical data and thereby enable it to have objective historical certainty about the fact of the Resurrection rather than a certainty based on faith itself. Such false arguments like to assert that "we are dealing here with the best-attested fact in the world's history." I have already mentioned that the New Testament does not speak of a neutral, noncommittal confirmation of the Resurrection event for a very good reason. He who has no relationship to the Resurrected One—and that can only be a relationship of faith—can never grasp the Resurrection. The Resurrected One is not only Lord over death but also over the Resurrection itself.

That historical proofs do not serve the faith by making it credible or by preceding it as its condition is made exemplarily clear in the rôle of the empty grave. Even if one agrees with Hans von Campenhausen<sup>19</sup> that the unprejudiced analysis of the historian leads to the conclusion that the grave with great probability was empty, this confirmation cannot establish a "faith-easing" or "faith-enabling" miracle. There are three reasons for this:

1. The theological reason: a faith thus bound to miraculous preconditions would be no faith at all, for it would have been surpassed by sight and thereby dispensed with (Jesus refers to this confusion when he reproaches those who "lust for signs").

2. The empirical reason: there are other interpretations of the fact that Jesus' body disappeared. This disappearance is subject to ambiguity. That is not only an empirical conclusion but also contains a theological evaluation of that "other" which penetrates the empirical: it confirms the ambiguity of every miracle and the fact that faith must not be dispensed with by objective sight.

3. The ontological reason: the Resurrection stories refer indeed to the identity of the Resurrected One and the One who walked on earth. They do this, for example, when they refer to the wounds of the Crucified One, which the Resurrected One also bears (Jn 20.25ff). But they refer at the same time to the discontinuity of the physical existence (1 Cor 15.35ff). He who walked on earth is distinguished from the Resurrected One by a different quality of body, which is analogous to the different types of being of the first Adam (*psyché zōsa*) and the second Adam (*pneuma zoopoion*) (1 Cor 15.45). Consequently, Resurrection faith is not bound to the fact of the empty grave, for this fact can, at most (and then only with ambiguity), express something about the fate of the "old body," but nothing about the diversity of the body before and after the Resurrection, which is an essential part of the Resurrection message.

Therefore, the empty grave is not that which makes faith

possible. Precisely the opposite: it can call forth the reaction, "They have taken away the Lord—not that too!" It is only in connection with the Resurrection appearances that the subsequent question about the empty grave is taken as a confirmation for the faith, already present, in the Resurrected One, and that it now (but not until now) is understood as a testimony to the factual background, a testimony to the nonsubjective reality of the confrontation with the Resurrected One.

#### IV. *The importance of the search for historical truth*

Since, then, what we historically can substantiate cannot consequently be used to provide a basis for faith, we might ask if the search for historical truth is at all important. Is it not sufficient when one takes note of the kerygma as it stands in the Gospel, without initiating an historical-critical probe? If that is not sufficient, if the Resurrection kerygma is to be subjected to the search for historical truth, for facticity, then this endeavor must be based upon other reasons than the presumed provableness or even supportability of faith. The never-ending task and simultaneously the theological importance of historical-critical work upon the contents of faith is to be based, in my opinion, upon the following arguments:

A. *Historical reason may not be suppressed.* For that would mean that faith does not take possession of the whole man, but that certain sectors of the ego remain fenced off. Faith would then be confined to a partial religious province. Psychologically, this degeneration of faith would mean that the believer

would have to suppress certain sides of the truth question (here, the historical side). But the believer is just as indivisible as the truth itself—he cannot be separated into a religious and a rational ego. Similarly, a conflict could never develop between the truths of faith and reason, between truths of redemption and of history. The various searches for truth must go on side by side. That is the *one* reason for the search for the historical facticity of the content of the faith.

B. Furthermore, it is only in pressing the historical search for objectivity that *the boundary becomes clear which divides this search from faith's unique relationship to its historical content*. While point A demonstrated how much historical work serves the faith (in that it emphasizes its indivisibility), we feel that point B, conversely, shows how crucial faith itself is to the self-knowledge of the one who is seeking historical truth. To demonstrate this, I refer to the statement in 1 Cor 15.17<sup>20</sup>: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."

This verse expresses two thoughts:

1. If Christ remained dead and possesses therefore no death-conquering presence, then He can not forgive sins.

2. (This is the decisive point.) If and as long as you are still in your sins, as long as you have not died to sin and are therefore still imprisoned by it, then you can neither accept nor understand the news of the Resurrection. For as long as this is so, it must remain your primary interest to maintain your independence and to insure that Christ will not become Lord over you. Whoever wants to be lord over himself cannot tolerate

another Lord's domination. He cannot even accept the news that such a Lord exists by authority of his Resurrection. Wingren says: "Included in the facticity about which we are speaking is the facticity of our own imprisonment."<sup>21</sup>

Here is what takes place: the historian's attention is not drawn to the epistemological difficulty which arises when he is supposed to verify an acausal, nonanalogous event, not qualified by immanence, such as the Resurrection. The historian already knows this difficulty well. It is his responsibility to raise it. It belongs to the realm of philosophical epistemology.

The historian here is confronted with a completely different difficulty, one which he cannot explain away or resolve, for it is essential to the faith itself. This difficulty arises out of the fact that without Christ we are imprisoned, we are *mente capti*, who for existential reasons—our self-assertiveness, our anthropocentrism, and our supposed autonomy—are hindered from recognizing realities as they emerge in history, realities which threaten this our basic existentialist posture. Paul alludes here to the relationship of knowledge and sin, as he does in Rom 1.18ff. Knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) is by far not just an issue of reason and its critique (as Kant thought), but it is also an issue of existence, whose hopes and fears condition reason. To put it Thomistically, the issue is not simply the *natura* of reason, but also its existential *conditio*.<sup>22</sup>

The factual situation we have here can only be described dialectically:

First thesis: only the fact that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead makes it possible for me to die with him (i.e., to

die to sin and escape its slavery) and simultaneously to rise with him in order to "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6.4), and to be "of the truth" (Jn 18.37).

Second thesis: only when I am in the truth do I hear His voice; only when I die and rise again with Christ can I perceive *His* death and *His* resurrection.

Conclusion: faith must acknowledge the historical research of its contents, in order to reveal to the historian his limits and his possibilities: his limits insofar as he could be "enslaved" and therefore also biased, and that also hindrances could be awaiting him about which he would know nothing without the faith; his possibilities insofar as he, as a believer, can penetrate through to certainty; he is even able legitimately to inquire after the facticity of that which has established his new being, although this facticity cannot be nailed down with the immanent criteria of historical science.

C. The decisive reason for the necessity of historical research in our context is, however, the irrevocability of *anti-criticism*.<sup>2a</sup> Even if historical research cannot be considered the critical surveyal of a territory upon which faith could settle down, it does have the task of determining whether the results of historical criticism contradict the Easter faith or whether they do not. Naturally, nothing can be the object of our faith which stands in evident contradiction to the factual. In such a case the postulate developed in point A, that the truth is indivisible, would be violated. The Easter faith would then be possible only by means of a schizophrenia of our human consciousness—which would be unbearable and unallowable. The

task of historical research of the Easter faith is not critical preparation leading up to a decision, but *anti-criticism*, in other words, the intellectual encounter with those historical-critical considerations whose results could deprive the Easter faith of its historical foundations. To be sure, this encounter will have to deal incidentally with detailed analyses, but above all it must deal with the question whether or not errors in epistemological approach may be found in the presuppositions of such historical-critical considerations—errors like that which we called the bias of "imprisonment," which then are condensed into definite methodological axioms, as in Troeltsch's criteria for historical verifiability.

*The task of anti-criticism includes therefore the stipulation that exactly determinable facts may not contradict the Easter faith.* Were an unambiguous psychological explanation of the Resurrection experiences possible, then the disciples would be unmasked as deceivers. If everything in the Resurrection accounts could be consistently proven to be legendary, then the Easter faith would be untenable. Nothing less than this is the scope of my thesis. At most there would remain a certain respect for the profound interpretation which later generations had blown into this legendary balloon.

This anti-critical task of history is crucial to other New Testament themes—the search for the historical Jesus, for example. Since Martin Kähler it has been clear to us that and why the historical Jesus, as investigated by secular and unprejudiced science, cannot be the object of faith, when he is already a "given" before the faith. I need not go into this issue

here. In spite of that, the task of objectivizing science and consequently the question of the historical Jesus has been by no means answered. The same is true here in principle as was true of historical research and the Easter theme: such research, when conducted by theologians, is obliged to practice anti-criticism. In this sense Ebeling has correctly remarked, "For Christology [i.e., for statements about who Jesus Christ is] the reference to [the historical] Jesus is constitutive . . . therefore Jesus is the criterion of Christology. Were it to be proven that Christology had no basis in the historical Jesus, or even was a misinterpretation of Jesus, then Christology would be finished."<sup>24</sup>

More has been tackled here, however, than the mere task of providing a healthy historical conscience for faith in Christ. In this case we see a break-through, which incidentally can be observed otherwise in the Bulmann school, which penetrates through the mere Christ-kerygma, through the mere "tidings of . . .," to the attested reality itself. The first approaches may be seen of a movement which is working against the whole process which deprived history of its reality and displaced it into the sole sphere of human consciousness. The query about ontic events is sounding here, particularly *the* ontic event which summons us at the turning point of aeons to a new being—not just to a new human consciousness.

#### V. *Anti-criticism and the vision hypothesis*

Anti-criticism faces only one issue with which it must seri-

ously grapple: the vision hypotheses, which historians tend to posit within the framework of the Resurrection theme. This hypothesis, which often has already been elevated to a "thesis," maintains that the kerygma of the Resurrection is adequately explained by subjective experiences of the disciples. Reference to actual confrontations in the real world are not necessary for this explanation. Now, it is true that this hypothesis cannot be refuted frontally. For if it could be, then the refutation itself would approximate a proof of the Resurrection, as it would exclude all other possible explanations and only permit the one conclusion, that a supernatural event took place here. Aside from the epistemological problems of such a negative proof, it must be emphasized that this proof is theologically untenable. For it seeks to objectify the miracle and thereby accomplish something which contradicts the nature of the miracle as attested in the New Testament: it would deprive the miracle of its ambiguity—be it the "epistemological" ambiguity that it could always be explained with the help of natural causality (trance in resurrection miracles, psychosomatic factors in miraculous healings, etc.), or be it the "theological" ambiguity that the devil could be cast out by the power of Beelzebub rather than by the Spirit of God (Mt 9.34).

Because of this essential characteristic of ambiguity, historical anti-criticism cannot be obliged to prove the unequivocal factuality of a supernatural incident on the third day simply by excluding all other explanations, the vision hypothesis among them. Anti-criticism has the one and only task, in the name of its theological awareness of ambiguity of demolishing the ille-

gitimate *unambiguity* which a secular historian will ascribe to his vision thesis. For this historical-critical *unambiguity* is just as incorrect as the pseudo-theological *unambiguity* with which a certain orthodox theology attempts to prove the fact of the Resurrection positively or *e contrario*.

Anti-criticism, consequently, does not have the task of refuting the vision hypothesis as such (which it cannot do), but it does have the task of refuting a certain rank which this hypothesis claims for itself, namely, the rank of *unambiguity*: the thesis which can be precisely documented.

What does this anti-criticism look like? As a systematician, my responsibility is more to define and limit the scope of the task, while the actual resolution of this question falls in the realm of my colleagues in New Testament studies.

To do my part, a preliminary question must be asked: how did the vision hypothesis develop in the first place? Then I should like to list a few of the forms which this hypothesis has taken.

How did it come to be?

Even the most extreme of critics cannot dispute the fact that between the crucifixion of Christ and the faith of the first Church in the Resurrected One something had to have taken place. For Golgotha left Jesus' followers in despair and resignedly abandoned. They had scattered to the four winds. That they then, in a span of time so short that a psychological explanation of their regeneration is impossible, should come together again and worship this bankrupt figure, who had been

executed on the gallows, as the Lord, implies some significant occurrence during the interval.

Since the historian, in the name of his constraining categories, not only must speak of the non-objectifiability of a supernatural fact, but also must dispute such a fact in principle, there remains little left for him than to assign this "interim event" to the subjective experience of the disciples and to talk about visions. The explanation looks then something like this, as D. F. Strauss developed it: the effect of Jesus of Nazareth upon his disciples was so lasting and persistent that they could not conceive of Him being destroyed by death, so they began to believe in his afterlife. This psychogenetic belief was then projected into objective forms and molds which led to the visionary impression that the Resurrected One had actually met them. Thus the Resurrection story has been radically deprived of all reality and reduced to the level of inner psychic experiences.

Bultmann's vision hypothesis does not go quite so far. In it the margin of reality can be discerned which he *always* strives to maintain and which is supposed to sustain the correspondence between human consciousness and history (*Geschichte*), even when the historical counterpart remains the non-objectifiable X about which we spoke. In any event, he wants to keep it from becoming a mere prisoner of human consciousness. For this reason he opposes a purely psychogenetic-imaginary understanding of the Easter faith. "A vision is never purely subjective. It always has an objective basis. In the vision



the encounter which precedes it attains fruition, so that the vision itself becomes a further encounter. . . . Similarly, in a dream our eyes are opened upon ourselves, and our sleeping conscience awakened. It is foolish to regard dreams and visions merely as subjective experiences. They are in a real sense objective encounters. What the disciples saw was the product of imagination in the sense that they projected what they saw into the world of space and sense. But that does not make what they saw imaginary. The faith evoked by the preaching of the gospel is no more subjective than a man's love for his friend. It is directed towards an object which is not purely external to him, but which operates as a reality within him."<sup>25</sup>

In Bultmann's own words we see our thesis confirmed—Bultmann is desperately striving to avoid the dead end of an immanentist philosophy of human consciousness. He seriously wants to maintain the historic character of the kerygma.

And we also observe the impossibility of guaranteeing this historic foundation on the basis of an approach like Bultmann's. Faith is no longer dependent upon the fact of the Resurrection. Now the Resurrection is dependent upon the faith which results from an encounter with Christ, with the Jesus of Nazareth who walked on earth. But then the Resurrection is nothing more than the pictorial symbol of an encounter, but never an event itself.

It is clear that a certain credulity in science, expressed in the belief that a supernatural event must be not only non-objectifiable but also non-existent, has won out over the frame of reference which the New Testament authors had. Thereby,

essential sections of the Resurrection kerygma have been lost—not only the facticity in space and time, but also further intentions of the New Testament message. Bultmann only accepts (and *can* only accept) an action of Jesus Christ upon His disciples, and that an indirect action in the form of an aftereffect over and beyond his death. But he cannot accept an action of God upon Jesus Christ which takes place independent of our perceiving subjectivity: the deed of Resurrection, the miracle of the third day, the acknowledgment of His Son. All that Bultmann can still accept are the postulates which the person who had been together with Him who walked on earth would feel constrained to posit after His death. Such a postulate would state that Jesus of Nazareth could not remain dead. This perhaps subconsciously existing postulate (for good reasons we must express ourselves psychoanalytically!) filters into the productive imagination, then manifests itself as visions, and then, as in Paul, ascends into the sphere of theological reflection.

The New Testament witnesses, however, want to have the event on the third day understood as an action wrought by God. They do not establish God's deed by simply stating that it happened. They put it in a much more impressive and more indirect way: they refer to the doubt and despair of the disciples who were left behind at Golgotha, which is as much as saying there was neither spiritual nor psychic potential present which would have been capable of formulating such postulates. The encounter with the Resurrected One takes place in spite of all postulates, it occurs as the shock of something absolutely

unexpected, something not to be believed. It is this situation above all which testifies to the action of God in and through His Son. For God's deed never rests upon the level of our postulates; but in spite of them and against them, it emerges as the astonishing expression of His will and of His higher thoughts, which cut across our thoughts.

VI. *The vision hypothesis recognizes only the relationship between Christ and man, but not the relationship between God and Christ*

The vision hypothesis disputes this essential theologoumenon: the significance of the Easter story rests in God's action in and through His Son. Such action cannot even occur on the horizon of the vision hypothesis. It is necessary to see this in order to understand the other major shortcoming: this hypothesis disputes the facticity of the Resurrection, its character as an event in space and time. This hypothesis is based upon the thesis that what is not objectifiable cannot exist objectively and ontically. Both these rejected points are mutually dependent: the action of God in and through His Son can only be expressed when it implies the effect of Resurrection, when it therefore incorporates the facticity of this event.

But as we said, historical-critical research cannot discuss such things. Only as anti-criticism is it fruitful. First of all, it can refute the attempt to understand the vision hypothesis as an adequate explanation for the "interim event" after the death of Jesus. This explanation's unambiguity (and its claim

to be so is the issue here!) is put in question because it does not supply all the answers—for instance, the answer to the question how the sudden transformation from deepest despair to the joy of Easter faith came to be. Secondly, anti-criticism can show that the vision hypothesis has to leave whole areas of the Easter faith completely out of the picture, above all the belief that God, quite beyond our capabilities of experience, has acted in and through Jesus Christ himself. Faith has to do not only with the relationship of Jesus Christ with us, but also with the relationship of God the Father to God the Son. In dogmatic terms, the faith has an inner-trinitarian dimension.

This argument has decisive anti-critical significance. For it is totally impossible to postulate that the event between God and his Son, if assumed, would lead to the conclusion, "therefore" God must have raised Him. It is clear that the thrust of the *conclusio* must be the reverse: the overwhelming encounter with the Resurrected One is what first led to the theological thesis that now (but only now, not earlier!) God must be praised for His marvelous deeds, because He has accomplished such a deed as this.

VII. *The foundation which produces faith, and the reflection which faith produces*

We have now arrived at a position in our argument where it is possible to judge adequately why the Biblical witnesses emphasize so strongly and in so many different forms of expression the event-character of the Resurrection happening.

The forms of expression, as varied and contradictory as they may be in detail, acknowledge with different tongues one thing and reflect about this one thing in its fundamental significance.

And therewith I have taken a position in regard to a controversial point which occupied theology at the turn of the century, particularly that of Wilhelm Herrmann.<sup>26</sup> I am speaking of the differentiation between two things: (1) the foundation which produces faith, and (2) the reflection which faith produces, the development of dogmas expounding it and illustrating it. (I shall refer to these basic points as the "foundation" and the "reflection," from now on in this essay.) The latter element is subsequent to the former: "reflection" follows the "foundation." This distinction gains heightened significance in Christology and is a crucial issue in the Resurrection *keyrgma*.<sup>27</sup>

The hermeneutical problems which occupy the existentialist interpreters today were to a certain extent anticipated by Herrmann when he distinguished between the "foundation" and the "reflection." (This line between Herrmann and his student, Bulmann, can also be traced historically and biographically.) The "foundation" is that which produces the certainty of faith, its indestructible basis; it is a reality which cannot be questioned nor undermined by intellectual reflection. The "reflection," on the other hand, comprises the conceptions and thoughts with which the believer personally expounds this "foundation," with the help of the intellectual inventory available to him. The "reflections" are therefore not only

secondary to the "foundation," but they are also and above all variable. For this inventory of conceptions and thoughts is of course subject to historical change. It can, for example—to refer to the analogy with Bulmann—be the inventory of myth, logos, and certain world-view conceptions. Such "reflections" are obviously relative, while the "foundation" is evidentially absolute.

The distinction between the "foundation" and "reflection" leads to the task of examining every paragraph of Christian dogmatics in order to determine to which side of this distinction it should be assigned. For example, is the Resurrection part of the foundation which produces faith? Or is it only a subsequent form of reflection or visual conception produced by faith's *real* basis? Herrmann's answer is along the lines of the latter choice. We must briefly examine how he comes to this conclusion.

Like the representatives of existentialist exegesis, Herrmann suffers under the problem that the content of our proclamation is not verifiable, because it transcends the objective reaches of our experience. Kant's epistemological limits to possible human experience—it must be objectifiable, generally valid, and verifiable—remain insuperable. Yet this is a very depressing problem, because the faith is continually referring to non-verifiable facts of this sort. Faith stands in danger of suppressing the concept of truth which Kant imposed upon our intellectual frame of reference—by doing that, faith would surrender its intellectual integrity.

This attempt to base faith on objective and tangible facts

is questionable not only from the perspective of epistemology. Hermann is also conscious of the expanding reach of historical criticism (practiced in the name of this epistemology), which threatens to undermine even more seriously every historical assurance about the facts which base the faith. His query: where is the *rocher de bronze* of evidence which cannot be undermined nor questioned any more?

As Kant's disciple, Hermann can only conclude that this evidence cannot be found in objective reality, but only in the realm which Kant relegates to the competence of practical reason. This realm comprises the experience of personal, human reality, or as we would put it today: the experience of human existence. Christian dogmatics must be interpreted in terms of this experience—it must be interpreted “existentially.”

And where do I find this realm in the world of the New Testament and in its message? I find it in the encounter with the person, Jesus. All attention is drawn to what Hermann terms the “inner life of Jesus.” When I encounter this inner life, I experience a spiritual-ethical power through whose touch I am exalted to a unique, true, and inwardly self-reliant life.<sup>28</sup> This experience of my own personal resurrection is the criterion for my having reached that *rocher de bronze* of the irreproachable. It is the only place of possible certainty. The experience of the power of salvation is mine here. In the *Dogmatik* (§45) he states in this connection: “That Jesus Christ has the power to save us can only mean that the reality of His person experienced by us now persuades us as nothing else can that God does take an interest in us.” To interpret

this sentence, it is important to note that the degree of Jesus' personal reality—that which can legitimately become this foundation which produces faith—is determined by its capacity to become contemporary with me, to come into direct relationship to my experience here and now. Jesus' relationship to God is the example for my own relationship to God. It can be reproduced. I “experience” it as I am led through the encounter with Jesus Christ to my own encounter with God.<sup>29</sup> In that Jesus Christ is the living security, the representation of the love of God, He cannot be merely something in the past, rather He is the revelation of this love which is revealing itself to me. That is why the inner life of Jesus, which is in perfect harmony with the Father, is a *praesens* and no *praeteritum*; that is why it is not just any kind of revelation, rather it is the revelation.

I have attempted to sketch briefly what, for Hermann, is the foundation which produces a personally valid faith. The reflection which this faith produces can only be expanded upon this “foundation.” Whoever wants to have the “reflection” first, without having the “foundation,” is beginning at the wrong end. He wants the conclusion before he has the premises at his disposal. So, for example, whoever has not yet had this personal, ultimate experience with the inner life of Jesus and still wants to work with the terms “Son of God” or “substitutionary suffering” is out of turn and susceptible to the temptation to work with his own speculative ideas.<sup>30</sup> He must pass through this ultimate experience and come into possession of the “foundation,” before he can discover the

lines which lead to the "reflection"! Of course, once he is this far, he may then formulate his "reflections" differently than tradition has done: Herrmann himself modified traditional dogmatics considerably.

This is especially important and relevant for the Resurrection faith. It cannot, as stated, be the "foundation," because it is not verifiable due to its supernatural event-character. Besides, from a study of the historical situation and facts surrounding this event, it is no longer ascertainable from the Bible what actually happened at Easter. Not that this is tragic. For the person who has experienced the inner life of Jesus has received the certainty that Jesus Christ is alive, that He is present. "The disciples must have said to themselves afterwards that even without the appearances, they would have acquired the certainty based on what they had earlier received (through the encounter with Jesus and His inner life) that for Jesus, death was the perfection, not the destruction, of His obedience."<sup>31</sup> It is manifestly clear that here "reflection" is only the consequence of the "foundation," that one can develop such "reflection" by one's self, and that merely historical confirmations—like the Easter miracle—are not required at all. On the basis of personal experience, faith finds itself driven to the persuasion that Jesus did not remain dead.

Of course, in spite of its "foundation," faith is continually threatened. It almost succumbs in face of the consequences which it must draw, and the "reflection" does not keep up, so to speak. So Herrmann finds the appearances of the Resurrected One a kind of special aid in drawing these conse-

quences.<sup>32</sup> Just as the disciples, we need this special aid. What the appearances meant to the disciples is for us the assurance that it is in these experiences of the Exalted and Contemporary Lord that the Christian Church is founded. It is a kind of divine special aid which we share when we reflect about the same faith. However, in spite of this divine *cooperatio*, the subordination of the "reflection" to the "foundation" remains, the subordination of the Resurrection kerygma to the first experiences of the Church remains, for it is this experience, which results from the encounter with the inner life of Jesus, which mediates the evidence of faith and its later reflective form.

This may seem to be a highly attractive conception. Here faith is freed from its conflict with epistemology and thereby from its conflict with theoretical reason and historical experience. Here an apparently unobstructed pathway to the verifiability of faith's "foundation" is marked out, in which the "foundation" is no longer a supernatural "outsider" within the objective world of mere history, but a dimension, the "existence" of Jesus, which can be personally experienced. Everything else is relegated to the level of "reflection," which can then be relativized and demythicized.

The obvious question now: is this construction tenable, which distinguishes between the "foundation" which produces faith and the "reflection" which faith produces, and then subsequently relates them again?

It is manifestly clear that were one to confront the New Testament witnesses with the alternative "foundation" and

"reflection," they would doubtless place the Resurrection event on the side of the ontic "foundation" which produces faith. After all, *their* encounter with the "inner life of Jesus" (if we may permit—a little guiltily—these modern and psychological terms), even their encounter with his *exousia*, which permitted him to enact *terata* and *semeia*, ended abruptly in the darkness of Golgotha's despair. The history of Jesus with His disciples ceased here in its strictest sense. It was only continued as the history between God and His Son continued. The Resurrection was the light which broke into this darkness, against all postulates and every possible consequence which had been drawn. The Resurrection was certainly not understood as a divine "special aid" in the drawing of these consequences—assuming always that the first Christian witnesses could be interviewed with the help of the alternatives under discussion. For the disciples did not experience the Resurrection event as a clarification of what had been previously unclear, nor as the completion of what had been previously fragmentary and unsettled in their minds. It was a shock which cut across all their psychic dispositions. But what is more important: they did not experience the event of the third day as a noetic event which helped them to interpret in its complete clarity what had been earlier suspected. On the contrary, for them it was an ontic event which objectively—and not just subjectively, in the sense of an illumination of understanding—made both the "outer" and "inner" life of Jesus meaningful. To put it in Kant's style (and with deference to Hermann) one could formulate: for the dis-

ciples the sentence "Jesus lives" was no analytical judgment, no tautology of a higher order, which only confirmed what the encounter with Him who walked on earth had expressed anyway, or at least had implied and potentially expressed. No, it was a synthetic judgment, which incorporated the new factor—the Easter event—and which drew the conclusion from *both* the encounter with Him who walked on earth (for only those who had had this experience were witnesses of the Resurrection!) *and* the Easter event itself. Even if we accept Hermann's thought that the new, true, and inwardly self-reliant life we feel is a guarantee that Jesus has the spiritual authority to effect this life, then we must add: the actual criterion which the believer has for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the experience of dying and rising again with him. But that is qualitatively more than what Hermann means by the experience of inner self-reliance and new personal existence.

Does then the relation between "foundation" and "reflection" have to be discarded? In spite of everything, I would not assert this so radically. It is too complicated to permit a simple "yes" or "no." But perhaps this much can be said:

The relation is false when it is construed as in Hermann: when the "reflection," to which the Resurrection kerygma belongs, emerges only in an analytical judgment. For it then deprives the Resurrection of its facticity, which for the New Testament witnesses is of supreme importance—and with good reason.

On the other hand, there is some validity here (you see, I

express myself very carefully!) when this relation is used to describe the noetic process which leads to the assurance of the Resurrection event. For this process begins at a level which leads through the encounter with the life, suffering, and death of Christ, which even leads through the encounter with the so-called "inner life of Jesus." All the witnesses of the Resurrection had begun with this encounter. No one set out on his way in faith to Christ with the Easter experience. That is their unanimous testimony. Therefore we must designate this pathway leading through the life of Jesus as prototypical.

We mean by that: also we, as late-born witnesses to the resurrected Kyrios, are in a situation where our way of faith does not begin with the Resurrection kerygma, but with the One who walked on earth, with His birth, His teaching, His deeds, His ministry, and finally His suffering and death.

In the language of preaching this means that faith always begins with that which happens on earth, simply because the Word became flesh and should be sought for in the flesh. As Luther said, we "cannot pull God deep enough into our flesh." Yet it is essential that the story of Him who walked on earth is already seen and described in the light of the Resurrection, that it is conceived with this end in view—this perspective too is basic to the development of our faith.

Then our faith must develop in analogy to the prototypical faith of the disciples.<sup>33</sup> The Resurrection kerygma must also shock the one who contemplates the suffering and death of Him who walked on earth, even if we cannot understand it psychologically and certainly cannot compare it psychologically

with the shock of the disciples. Aside from all other reasons, this is not possible, because we live in the context of our Christian heritage and know the Resurrection kerygma from childhood on, and because the light of the Resurrection, in whose radiance the story of Jesus' life is seen and described, provides a certain preparation for the event of the third day.

Yet even within the context of such a tradition there comes the moment (I trust that this will not be understood chronologically, nor that attempts to fix the moment be made!) in which the break between the earthly story of Jesus and His Easter exaltation must grasp us, when the Easter proclamation confronts us with the unavoidable question: are we to worship Him, or are we to reject Him, either by denying the report ("that can't be true") or by reinterpreting it to make it verifiable—as with the vision hypothesis.

The mere query whether the Easter gospel is "true" or not is a symptom of this existential shock, because this question indicates a growing perception of the break between the life of Him who walked on earth and the status of the Exalted One. And this shock of having to ask one's self takes place on the very basis of the contact with the Jesus of the Gospels. It is the Jesus of the Gospels who necessitates the question whether this Jesus, walking through the countryside, working deeds of power, preaching, and finally perishing on the cross, could be identical with the figure of the Exalted One who emerges in the Easter accounts.

At this point the analogy between then and now holds true: those late-born who have not encountered Him who walked

on earth cannot experience this shock. For them, the assertion that the cultic hero of the Christians came back to life is either a legend not worthy of discussion, or the mythical masquerade of a profound idea in D. F. Strauss's sense. Neither one is shocking, because reason is not affected by a legend unworthy of discussion, and the profound idea expressed here could also be produced rationally and therefore cannot be a contradiction shocking to reason. This is a confirmation of the statement that the disciples' faith, beginning with the earthly Jesus, is also a prototype for our faith: we too can react to the discontinuity between Christ's earthly life and the exaltation (even if only with the doubting question whether the Resurrection *kerygma* is "true"), if we have begun with the earthly Jesus.

Everything depends upon seeing this discontinuity, upon being subjected to this shock. Whoever passes it over and does not experience this subjective shock during his faith's growth, this shock that corresponds to the ontic discontinuity just mentioned, has never been confronted with the facticity of the Resurrection. To be more exact: he has never faced God's "action" in and through His Son, which as God's action, as history effected by Him, always possesses the signature of contingency and thereby confounds us as it cuts across our expectations, our programs, and our postulates.

Cutting across in this fashion is part of the "style" of divine action. Where man, like the false prophets, figures on salvation, judgment consumes him. Where man, like Job, reckons with the foreseeable balance between guilt and punishment,

service and reward, God does the unforeseeable thing and casts such pseudo-faith into extreme ordeals. Where man, like Israel, counts on a Messiah who as king will revolutionize the world order, God sends Him who was humiliated and shamed, and is *sub contrario absconditus*. The consequence to be drawn is brutally clear: so long as we do not suffer the shock of astonishment, we have not faced the contingent deed of God, the *brutum factum* of His decisions, and therewith the facticity of His action. As long as we think our belief is so unbroken, we are really moving on the level of our own postulates.

This holds true, I believe, of the pure and manageable "existentialist interpretation." As long as Easter is only a commentary on Golgotha for me, there are no breaks, as certainly as a good commentary relates to its text in an uninterrupted consensus. So it is highly characteristic that this school can only speak of an Easter *kerygma* but not of the facticity of an actual occurrence.

The same is true of the vision hypothesis. Visions can only be the confirmation of something already experienced. What is dreamed in a vision is related in unbroken continuity to what has been experienced earlier, which I recapitulate only in the dream and which is taken up here into my subconsciously productive fantasy. Visions are the punctual continuations of lines upon which I have moved in the real encounters of daytime consciousness. But in the Resurrection event we are not dealing with confirming visions but with contradictions of the postulates of human reason. These postu-



lates seek the living among the dead. And that is where He was sought. The women at the grave are postulating people who suffer this shock (Lk 24.1-5).

However, we are not dealing here with a pure, abstractly understood discontinuity. In my opinion the situation is more like this: our preformed conceptions, which are adapted to objective reality, are not adequate to comprehend the experience of this kind of reality. What we have long recognized about the subject-object relationship—that it is not adequate to explain redemptive-historical facts—should now also be recognized regarding the terms “continuity” and “discontinuity.” They cannot be used in a vacuum. Even Herrmann is in error—along with the Bulmann school—when he assumes a continuity between Him who walked on earth and the Exalted One, in the sense of an unbroken connection between the foundation which produces faith and the reflection which faith produces. But P. Althaus’ formulation is also dubious when he speaks here of a complete discontinuity. Both concepts are closely involved in each other.

The form of this involvement is exemplarily illuminated in the relationship of prophecy and fulfillment, and it seems to me that in this relationship an exact blueprint for the Connection and Division, for the Continuity and Discontinuity between the earthly and exalted Christ may be present. All fulfillments of prophecy are different from the prophecy itself—they transcend them. In the so-called Christ prophecies of the Old Testament, as they are cited in our Advent and Christmas pericopes, we have a prime example: Christmas

itself brings something new, something surpassing and also modifying. I need not delineate this in detail. We all know it. It is also true of the prophetic references to the Suffering Servant (Is 53). The normal Christian without theological training does not notice this, because he unknowingly does what the church does knowingly by placing these citations in the church calendar: he reads the Bible backwards, he reads the Old Testament as illuminated by the New. And a seamless continuity seems to result. But the theologian—who should be synonymous with the spiritually mature church—suffers the shock of astonishment when he sees the new element in this fulfillment, the surpassing and the modifying element. Putting it abstractly, he can be subject to the impression of complete discontinuity, exploding the scheme. On the other hand, the fact that the Old Testament can be read through the New Testament at all, that the possibility of such a naïve understanding of a continual and unbroken redemptive history is even conceivable—even in the form of an unallowable simplification—indicates that in retrospect the line of prophecy does point in the direction of its fulfillment.

Of course, our geometric picture, too, is immediately exploded. For whoever moved only along the prophetic line would arrive neither at the stable at Bethlehem nor at the empty grave. We see this illustrated in the Jewish exegeses of the Old Testament, for instance, in Martin Buber. Only the man who starts on this line and who is then confronted with the *new* events and with the *new events*, only he strides into a new *history* and then realizes in retrospect that this his-

tory had a prehistory, that the fulfillment had a prophecy. The New is not just new; the Otherness of fulfillment is not completely Other. But he who stands in the light of fulfillment knows more than the Prophet, whose only knowledge of the fulfillment is limited by His prophecy.

Everything depends upon where one stands within redemptive history, if we wish to test the validity of the prophecy-fulfillment scheme. The element of continuity which is present can only be recognized in retrospect. This is similarly true of eschatology: just as a man's biography—I think it was August Winnig who put it this way—can only be written from the point of his death, from the end of his life, and not from his birth, so can the biography of the world only be written from its end, from its eschaton. Looking back from the Day of Judgment we shall see continuities which are now invisible to our eyes. Then the road from the Fall to Judgment will appear as a straight line, while now we see the abrupt turns and detours of senselessness, or better, what appears to be senseless. One of the decisive differences between believing and seeing is that faith believes in spite of these detours and holds fast to the consistency of God, which cannot be objectified, whereas seeing will behold the continuity of the faithfulness of God in the continuity of events, the events of history which will be visible from the heights of the Day of Judgment.

The fulfillment of and in the Resurrection is something other than the prophetic life of Jesus, who walked on earth. This event is a *novum*, a surpassing experience, which shifts

His life on earth into another light and in this sense also provides a new commentary. Therewith the element of discontinuity has been expressed.

At the same time the disciples recognize in the light of the Resurrection the validity of the prophecy: the identity of the earthly and exalted Christ is made clear to them. The *ontic* background of this continuity is expressed in that the Resurrected One bears the nail wounds (Jn 20.20) and in that he recapitulates the Last Supper with His own (Lk 24.30). The *noetic* background is illuminated in that the Resurrected One opens the *nous* of the disciples and lets them recognize that there is a consensus between this event and the *graphai*, the Scriptures, and that this fulfillment does not fall outside the context of prophecy (Lk 24.25, 45).

The model for this dialectic of continuity and discontinuity, between prophecy and fulfillment, is located in the New Testament in the pericope about the conversation of the Resurrected One with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24.13-35). Both are here: first of all the experience of discontinuity—their eyes are closed, they do not recognize Him (v. 16). And they do not recognize (that is, they cannot “identify” the Resurrected One) because they are thinking along the line of their hope and the postulates which it has suggested to them: “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (he was *ho mellon lystrousthai ton Israel*, v. 21). The Exalted One refers them to the continuity with Scripture: *edei pathlein*—“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer . . . ?” (v. 26). But this “necessity” is not ex-

pressed in the form of a postulate which could have been foreseen, rather it is made subsequently clear in that they encounter the One who went through suffering unto His exaltation. It becomes clear only through the self-revelation of the Resurrected One.

In this light, it is clear that the Last Supper was not a farewell meal, but that it was saturated with prophetic significance and that it pointed towards the coming communion with the Exalted One. This continuity too first "appears" as the Exalted One breaks the bread.

There is in this pericope even a psychological intimation about how the relationship of continuity and discontinuity is aligned in experience: after the encounter with the Resurrected One the disciples say to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us . . . ?" (v. 32). This reference to the *kardia kaiomenē* expresses then that the confrontation with the Resurrected One was not in its first stage just a negation of our hopes. It did not fall completely outside the coordinate network of our thinking, feeling, and willing, as the "completely other." It thrust itself *into* this network. He did not just cut across the line of our expectations, rather He returned again to this line. But our systems and schemes, which are aligned to the normal history and psychology we know, were not adequate to localize Him and to identify Him. We only noticed that our hearts burned. And that was an indication that something was thrusting itself into our soul with its hopes and fears. This indication of burning, this light deflection of our "geiger counter," was not enough to determine where its

stimulus came from. We heard bells ringing, but we did not know where they were. Our confrontation with the prophecy of Scripture and also with the prophesying life of Christ could not enable us to foresee their fulfillment. The colon after the prophecy left us helplessly behind. We could not construct the text of fulfilled reality, and where we did try to do so (by forming certain concrete ideas and hopes on the basis of this prophecy) we were led astray into a blind alley. Only when the Resurrected One revealed himself as the text of this fulfillment and personally put the period at the end could we grasp the context and, to a point, the continuity of the whole sentence, and begin to comprehend that the colon in the middle had both dividing and binding significance.

I think that it has been adequately illustrated why I feel it is so important that the Resurrection kerygma not be simply regarded as reflection which faith produces, resulting from the actual foundation which produces faith—where the encounter with the earthly Jesus is the "foundation." In such a case, the Resurrection kerygma stands in perfect continuity to this "foundation." We note even more clearly under the aspect of prophecy and fulfillment in which sense and to what degree the Resurrection of Christ is an experienced *novum*. Only in its happening, in its "entrance" (just as the Resurrected One "entered" the chambers of his disciples), is the old element in the prophecy surpassed and simultaneously illuminated, is it contrasted and at the same time absorbed.

Whoever lets his "history of faith" begin with the earthly Jesus, with the *logos en sarkos*, will find his heart burning.

This is not to be understood sentimentally. I mean this: when he really takes the "being-in-the-flesh" of Jesus Christ seriously, he will read the life of Jesus like a biography, or to be more precise, like a biography "among others." At most he may be biased enough to think that he has here a superlative example of *homo sapiens* before his eyes, a figure which only a few atheists, anti-Christians, and assorted other types have attacked, regardless of how much they may have berated the Church and Christians. Even Alfred Rosenberg, that confused and wild assailant of the cloth, said once in a sober moment that no one could ever prove that he had once attacked the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. As much as the bias for Jesus may be built up through such experiences, it cannot keep the reader of Jesus' life story from comparing this hero to other men. He will endeavor to understand Jesus' inner life and he will relate the love He practiced to that which he himself has experienced of love and has given of love. He will, in addition, probably examine this figure in the light of psychology.

In that he does this and crosses out everything supernatural, from the virgin birth to the ascension, he lets Jesus be a complete, whole human. And therefore he should be allowed to continue in this fashion. As pastoral counselor I have often recommended this method to those who could not resolve their problems with dogma, and for intellectual reasons wanted to accept only those parts which they could touch and think and understand according to the laws of analogy. But precisely when they do this—and as I say they ought to do it!—they will

run face on into the nonunderstandable in that which falls outside every analogy.

Perhaps this experience is similar to the one which Albert Schweitzer reports in his research of the life of Jesus and its study: the *Leben Jesu* school sought the historical Jesus by stripping away all the dogmatic accretions, in order to penetrate to the real, historical core. But what they found then was not a man like us but an apocalyptic ghost, strange and estranging, incapable of binding our faith to itself.

Yet when we do have the experience of this analogy-lessness, we have reached the "real thing," we are as close as we can be to this prophetic life which found its fulfillment on the third day.

In this knowing-unknown encounter with the ultimate truth, our hearts may burn. And that is exactly what happened with the disciples in Emmaus. The burning heart is no torch that shows us the way from prophecy to its fulfillment. If the Resurrected One had not kindled His light in Emmaus, then this torch of the heart would have only illumined the ruins of buried hopes, and He who had walked on earth would, in retrospect, have assumed phantom-like features. The burning of the heart, the deflection of the "geiger counter," which simply indicates the presence of other and even more unknown radiations, is not enough for orientation. We see that Albert Schweitzer, with the help of this burning, has not arrived at the empty grave, but that he has sought in other ways to resolve his problems with the estranging effect of this ghostly historical Jesus.

The prophecy, which I share in the experience of the analogy-lessness of Jesus, remains dumb if it is not given speech by the Resurrected One and if it does not appear in retrospect as one stage upon the way of this life. Prophecy taken alone is a dead-end street and a hopeless affair. Only when I am on the other side of the chasm do I recognize in looking back that I was drawn over a bridge, over the bridge of prophecy. Although I could not have foreseen that He would be standing on the other side, nor that He would have arrived there on the third day, still I would not have been drawn over the chasm if He were not really there.

## Notes

1. This monograph was delivered as the Edwin T. Dahlberg Lectures at Colgate Rochester Divinity School in October, 1963.
2. Translator's note: Most of the familiar stumbling blocks in translating German kerygmatic theology's terms have been treated in accordance with R. H. Fuller's translation of *Kerygma und Mythos* (H. W. Bartsch, ed.), which appeared in English in 1953 (London: S.P.C.K.); see especially pp. xi-xii in the English edition. Where possible, the somewhat artificial difference between historical (*historisch*) and historic (*geschichtlich*) has been clarified by the terms "mere history" and "significant history," in accordance with Bishop Stephen Neill's excellent suggestion. *Selbstverständnis* we have preferred to render "understanding of my own being," or self-interpretation. Further translation problems are noted in direct reference to the passages concerned.
3. Perhaps I should explain my differentiation between ontic and ontological: "ontic" means the reality of a thing or an event; "ontological" refers to the doctrine or discussion about this reality. The ontic question would be: What is reality? The ontological question would be: How do we recognize it?
4. Cf. the critical section on Karl Barth in my *Theologische Ethik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1951), I, §596a ff.
5. G. Wingren, *Die Predigt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), p. 156.
6. Cf., for example, Gerhard Ebeling, *Theologie und Verkündigung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1962), §162, p. 88.
7. Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in H. W. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, trans. R. H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), p. 35.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 44 German edition, p. 38 English edition. [This quotation is translated directly from the German—Trans.]

9. *Ibid.*, p. 37 English edition.

10. The equal positioning of the redemptive-historic "once-happened" and the redemptive-historic "now happening" in faith is expressed most clearly in the treatise of the Tübingen Faculty of Protestant Theology, *Für und Wider die Theologie Bulmanns* (2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1952), p. 32: "We are accustomed to distinguishing between the objectively given content of faith and the subjective act of faith. However, the more this distinction is considered the only relevant one, the greater the danger of basically mistaking what the Bible and the Reformation mean by faith. For this distinction gives rise to the impression that God's redemptive action, which is represented in our faith's content, stands over against the action of man, who in the act of faith subjectively appropriates this divine objective. Thereby, however, the very essence of faith would be reversed. For faith, in the New Testament, is the work of God in which God permits that which he did once and for all in Jesus Christ to become an event in and for me, here and now. As truly as the believer says, 'I believe,' he simultaneously confesses, 'I live, and yet not I, it is Christ who liveth in me.' This is a basic insight of the Reformation: faith is the deed of God in and for me now, the same deed wrought once and for all for me in Christ. Only in this most emphatic unity of faith and redemptive event is it possible to say that the justification of the sinner takes place through faith alone. 'Justification through Christ alone' means the same thing, because God's work in Christ cannot be separated from faith as the present enactment and actualization of this work, and vice versa, faith can just as little be separated from that unique deed of God in Christ."

11. Luther, WA 18,709-CI 3,204,30.

12. See my exegesis of Rom 1.18ff, developed from this point of view, in *Theologie der Anfechtung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1949), particularly the chapter, "Kritik der natürlichen Theologie." The position here presented would also provide the first premises for the debate with the theological epistemology of W. Pannenberg, "Dogmatische

*Thesen zur Lehre von der Offenbarung*, in W. Pannenberg, ed., *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961).

13. The word "objectivity" is a charged term for many because of its use in the tradition of epistemology, where it is often understood to mean the condition of possible objectifiability. Whoever is disturbed by the term may replace it with the alternative, "transubjectivity." In any event, "objectivity" is used here in this latter sense.

14. Exposition of the Second Article of Luther's Small Catechism, "... be my Lord."

15. Cf. the Lutheran doctrine of the *manducatio inipiorum*.

16. Wingren, *Predigt*, p. 168.

17. Ernst Fuchs.

18. A significant break-through in the non-futuric eschatology of the Bulmann school seems to have been made by E. Käsemann. See his essay, "Zum Thema der unchristlichen Apokalyptik," ZThK, 1962, No. 3, pp. 257ff.

19. Hans von Campenhausen, *Der Ablauf der Osterereignisse und das leere Grab* (Heidelberg: 1952).

20. Wingren, *Predigt*, p. 159.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Cf. Jacques Maritain, *Von der christlichen Philosophie* (1935), above all, pp. 80ff. Cf. also my discussion of the "Theologische Kritik der Vernunft," in my *Theologische Ethik*, vol. II, 1 §1321ff.

23. Cf. P. Althaus, *Die christliche Wahrheit* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann), II, 269.

24. Gerhard Ebeling, *Wort und Glaube* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1962), pp. 300ff.

25. Bulmann, as quoted in the "Memorandum of the Confessing Church of Hesse" (HBK), quoted by me in *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 152.

26. On this particular question, Schleiermacher also developed a similar conception.

27. In Schleiermacher, cf. especially *Glaubenslehre*, §§99 and 100, 1. "The facts of the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ . . .

cannot be posited as essential [!] components of the doctrine of His person."

28. Wilhelm Herrmann: *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923), pp. 325, 318ff; *Dogmatik* (Gotha-Stuttgart: Perthes, 1925), p. 83, *passim*; *Ethik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1921), §20, *passim*.

29. Herrmann, *Dogmatik*, p. 84.

30. Herrmann: *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, p. 293; *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Cotta, 1908), p. 11.

31. G. Koch, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959), p. 95.

32. One might think of Lessing here with his somewhat related position in the *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes*: reason (with Lessing, it is not faith!) would have arrived on its own at the truths mediated by revelation, but revelation has served this developing knowledge of reason as an (accelerating) pace setter. Cf. my book, *Offenbarung, Vernunft und Existenz: Studien zur Religionsphilosophie Lessings* (3d ed.; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1957).

33. In this context it may be noted that faith itself has a multi-dimensional development: (1) Luther speaks of the growth of faith and the righteousness of faith appropriate to it (cf. the chapter, "Das Zugleich als Kampf und Fortschritt des neuen Lebens," in R. Herrmann, *Luthers These "Gerecht und Sünder zugleich"* [1930], pp. 234ff) and can speak of a *magis et magis iustus fieri*; (2) the New Testament also contains such references, e.g., 2 Cor 9.10; Eph 4.15; Col 1.11; 2 Peter 3.18; 1 Cor 15.58; 2 Thess 1.3; and others; (3) the growing quality of faith is also demonstrated in that we learn gradually to apply the faith to all areas of our life, that it, so to speak, radiates out from the heart in circulation to all the extremities. This is why the basic commandment of love is always divided into the plurality of individual commandments, especially in the framework of parables.

## The Easter Sermon

by Hans-Rudolf Müller-Schwefe

It is said that just a few weeks before his death Hans Iwand was discussing the Resurrection with his faculty colleagues. When the New Testament scholars referred especially to the difficulties bound up with the texts concerning the Resurrection, he allegedly rose to his feet and indignantly exclaimed: "How dare you say anything of the kind in my presence? I have looked into the light of the Resurrection; I know what I believe."

No doubt the Gordian knot can be cut with such an understandable outbreak adduced as evidence. But this does not resolve the problem; rather the problem is for the first time made visible. How do the uncertainty of an exegetic fact and the certainty of preaching the Gospel relate to each other?

This question arises not only in connection with the Resurrection of the Lord. Every fragment of the life of Jesus must first of all be investigated in relation to the historical facts of the case. Here there exists only an historical certainty, which always means a relative certainty.<sup>1</sup> This still decides nothing. Why and to what extent is that which is stressed—for example, Jesus' partaking of a meal with the publican Matthew (Mt