

Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University
Dallas 5, Texas
June 19, 1960

Prof. D. Rudolf Bultmann
Calvinstrasse 14
Marburg, a.d. Lahn
Hessen, W. Germany

Dear Prof. Bultmann,

I have no doubt that it is somewhat boring for you constantly to receive plaudits from persons you have never known and will never know. Nevertheless I feel constrained to speak a word of gratitude for your work as a theologian and exegete.

The New Testament did not come alive for me until I read your Theology of the New Testament. Professor Edward Hobbs, now in Berkeley, California, introduced me to your work. I continued my studies at Yale, where I just recently finished a Ph.D. thesis in which I examined your understanding of Christian obedience. My dissertation was entitled "The Idea of Obedience in Contemporary Protestant Ethics". I attempted to compare your ethics with Barth's ethics. This work was done under Prof. H. Richard Niebuhr. I argue that the implications of your work for theological ethics are as great as they are for systematic theology. Yet very few of your interpreters have been interested in your ethics. I extend to you a word of thanksgiving for the help you have been to me as a theologian and ethicist. Schubert Ogden is one of my colleagues here. He had been very helpful to me in my attempt to understand your theological program. Be assured that, because of your work, many theologians in American have gained a new understanding of their task.

If you would care at all to look over my discussion of your ethics, I would be glad either to send you a copy of my dissertation for your personal library, or I would be glad to send you that portion of it in which I attempt to scrutinize your conception of obedience (some 160 pages). It would please me very much to have your comment on the adequacy of my analysis and constructive thesis.

After July 15, my address will be Phillips Graduate Seminary, Enid, Oklahoma. If you would write me either here or there, it would please me very much to provide you with a copy of my inquiry into your ethics, if you would wish to see it. With all good wishes, I am

Yours with gratitude and respect,

Thomas C. Oden

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