

Dec. 30, 1963

Dr. Albert C. Outler
Perkins School of Theology
Dallas, Texas

Dear Albert,

You may recall that in our last correspondence I was struggling with an Introduction to the book on Bultmann's ethics. I want to report to you how the scene has changed since then.

Like Hans Frei, I just couldn't stop writing, and the Introduction turned out to be a third as long as the book! It sought to do three things: (1) set forth the unfinished agenda in current Protestant ethics, and attempt to show how Bultmann's work is relevant to the next steps; (2) place my discussion in the context of the on-going Bultmann debate; and (3) frame the problem of Bultmann's ethics by contrasting the Biblical and Kantian patterns as prototypical notions of obedience.

As expected, the editors at Westminster felt compelled to whittle someplace. They decided to include the first section, but suggested that I rework the other two for publication in a journal, indicating that I had pitched these portions (especially 2) toward a colleague audience whereas the body of the book itself is pitched toward a more generalized audience. I have done nothing with section 3, but I have managed to revise section 2, dividing it in two essays, one entitled "Bultmann as Lutheran Existentialist", indicating some remarkable similarities in some of Bultmann's most varied critics, and the other entitled "The Alleged Structural Inconsistency in Bultmann", dealing more elaborately with Schubert's contribution.

I am sending you the first essay on "Bultmann as Lutheran Existentialist", hoping that, should you have any real strong opinion about its adequacy, you would share it with me. The other essay, which deals in more detail with Schubert's proposals, is not available at present, but should you be interested in seeing it also, I would be glad to send you a photocopy. I am at the point now where I think I would benefit very much from your appraisal of my thinking, should you be so disposed and able to do it.

Our faculty is shaping up beautifully this year, after a rather rough year of recovery last year, with Glenn Rose (OT, Yale), Don Browning (Pastoral Care, Chicago) and Howard Huff (Missions, Union and Japan) now on board.

Edrita, now the busy mother of three (Laura Elise came August 1, only seven days before we bought a new house), sends you her good wishes.

As ever,

Thomas C. Oden