



BUTLER UNIVERSITY

INDIANAPOLIS 7, INDIANA

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

October 17 1959

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry
Christianity Today.

Dear Carl,

Settle down for a long letter, on several items. First, the article on GOD, and Zylstra's comments.

P. 1,2. on Elohim. First, are any of my statements untrue? I am not a Hebrew expert, but I have tried to determine the facts. If what I said is true, it must be acknowledged. If I have made a mistake, as I might have done, I am willing to correct it.

My argument is: a plural noun cannot prove polytheism if there was no singular noun to use. How can this be turned against me? That there was no singular noun may possibly show that the language at that time was under the influence of polytheism. It does not show that Moses intended polytheism.

I cannot quite tell what Zylstra wants. I might add at the end of the paragraph: "Since there was no other word to use, obviously the use of this word cannot prove a polytheistic meaning." But really I have already said as much; and you do not want to lengthen the article. Then too, I am talking about the word itself; I am not discussing the general question of polytheism. However, if you will indicate precisely what you want, I'll try to fit it in.

Next paragraph on the Trinity: I think Zylstra's point can be taken care of by adding to the beginning of the second sentence, "This may possibly be true; but, again, without . . ."

Zylstra thinks my argumentation is weak. Some people believe that understatement is less vulnerable than overstatement. At any rate, if Elohim was the only word that could have been used, it would be hard to prove that the Trinity was intended.

Next, after saying that my remarks are too weak, he says that the term "Destructive criticism" is too strong. Why he should be afraid of alienating the destructive critics, I cannot say. My remarks are not flippant. Nor do they imply that all criticism is destructive. In fact, I said "destructive criticism" simply because not all criticism is destructive. The implication

he mentions is utterly fallacious. Finally, I do not know of any other term which distinguishes between the two types of criticism; but if you can think of a satisfactory term, well and good.

Nor do I see why "it is absurd" is out of place. There are other books where the same person is called by two names or titles and no one suggests that this indicates two authors. Would it be better to say, "This is irrational"? Perhaps I should here make an understatement and say, This is not so brilliant as one might wish.

Creation ex nihilo: is the objection to the effect that my wording prevents people from thinking that generations of whales descend from parents? That I imply that each individual whale is a special creation? Or, does he want some phrase that would permit evolution after an initial creation? You might wish to insert after the first sentence this: "Physical and biological processes altered the form ~~of~~ created existence had at its first moment, but what is commonly called the material of the universe has not always existed." No, this does not fit the paragraph. It seems to me that the second sentence ~~so~~ it actually stands define the ex nihilo of the first sentence. I just can't appreciate the force of the objection.

The personality of idols: I think it is Vos who insists that the idols must be regarded as personal if the Psalmist's sarcasm is to be applicable. I have trouble ~~in~~ in assuring myself that the heathen actually thought what Vos says they thought. So, I tried to assign the idols a minimal personality, as the limits of psychological possibility. Recast the sentence thus: "If and when this identification was made, the Psalmist's sarcasm would be exceptionally biting when he says"

Miracles: the subject is omnipotence, not miracles in other connections. The argument is, miracles are evidences of omnipotence, and ~~Hume et al~~ Hume et al when they say miracles cannot have happened, are in effect denying omnipotence. I am not talking about some argument that holds that God though omnipotent has done nothing miraculous. This is beside the point. Incidentally, I suspect that such an argument would also involve a denial of omnipotence, but there is no space to argue so here.

What the criticism of page 14 is, I cannot make out. Of course the previous pages on creation is indicative of sovereignty; I expressly say so in the first sentence. But the sinful, rebellious mind is more willing to admit omnipotence than to admit sovereignty. This is inconsistent; but it happens. You have often heard people say that God has no right to condemn anyone to hell, has no right to do this or that to human beings. Therefore sovereignty seems more obvious in matters of redemption than in

creation. I quite agree with what Zykstra says; but I do not see what he is objecting to.

Fatherhood of God: Unfortunately I do not have Cameron's article on this; at least I do not know in what work it occurs. Nor do I know of any clear passage of Scripture that says that God is the Father of all people or that all people are his children. Men simply are not children by reason of creation. If that were so, there would be no need of adoption.

"This cosmological argument" refers to the immediately preceding paragraph. It is more briefly described in the last sentence of the previous paragraph: a syllogistic process that starts with the observation of nature. Then its more specific form is referred to as the Thomistic argument. There is no particular distinction between these two antecedents. Hume's and Kant's objections apply in any case.

St. Anselm: I believe that Zykstra has tired and is no longer reading carefully. The sentence, As a man, comes immediately after a short description of Anselm's argument, i.e. it is an analysis of the idea of God. The sentence itself speaks of the analysis of the idea of triangle. And the following sentence contains some of Anselm's own wording, and ends with the notion of self-contradiction. How could anyone fail to see that the whole is a description of Anselm's argument?

Either: Kant on a preceding page did not like the cosmological argument. He did not like the ontological argument either. The either is attached to the argument, not to Kant.

Mystical: We would not have to agree with them; and they gain no point.

He next says that pages 21-23 are disproportionately long. To discuss the proofs of the existence of God and the possibility of the knowledge of God in eight pages seems to me to err on the side of brevity.

Then he says that my paragraph on Science is too short. But this is short because Dr. Harrison asked me to shorten what I had previously written. I have on my desk an article on the philosophy of science now, which is longer than this article on God; and I have another piece still longer. But here I was limited to 7500 words. And it irritates me a little, after correcting the stuff to suit one editor to have another editor ask for the opposite treatment. I did all this in good time. I was more than prompt. I held up no deadlines. And the editor accepted my piece. Now I am busy on other things, and I don't like coming back to what I thought was finished months ago.

Butler University
INDIANAPOLIS 7, INDIANA

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

December 7 1957

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry
Christianity Today.

Dear Carl,

Your work as editor of Revelation and the Bible will get you into a jam as the deadline approaches. Because of this, and also because I have now accepted Dr. Harrison's invitation to write 7500 words on GOD for his Dictionary of Theology, I have been anxious to finish your job. I am still willing to make a third draft, if you think it necessary.

The second draft, which I here return to you, is, I believe a distinct improvement over the first, thanks to your fine criticisms. Most of your pencilled corrections, I have adopted. But why not let the word pejorative stand; I like to show that I know the word. It also embellishes the importance of language. But seriously, you have clarified a number of sentences.

That Thomism occupies a fifth of the space results from its inherent importance - importance intellectually and ecclesiastically. I have tried to cut it some, but without much success. The account is pretty condensed, dense, as you see. But the lengthening of the MS in other places serves to reduce the proportion a bit.

These increases in length are mainly in the form of clearer connections. This is one point you indicated, and I have given it special attention. In fact, these changes are the greatest of all. If you still get lost in the woods, send it back, and I will expand again.

I have also tried to set forth the Reformation point of view in a more unified way. Incidentally, where you wonder if my reference to Calvinism would discourage Arminians with the book as a whole, I might reply, first, that there will probably be enough Arminianism in the other chapters; and second, I am defending the Reformation viewpoint, and there ~~was~~ were no Arminians then. They first appeared about 75 years later, and were condemned by the Synod of Dort. In England they were the mainstay of the corrupt section of the established church in trying to restore Romanism. I stick with the Reformation.

You further suggested that I add something on psychology. This does not seem to me to fit too well with the title of the chapter. I conceive the aim to be to defend the Bible as rational. No doubt, if I could have two or three times the space, I could work some of this in. But the needed connectives to insert it, and to get out of it, with the exposition in between, would be too lengthy for this chapter, I believe.

modernism is not speaks not acts. f. p. 166 ; vague formulas of authors.
new catholic. S. acts > does) check
∴ espousers of liberalism (?)
& vilified.
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Christianity Today

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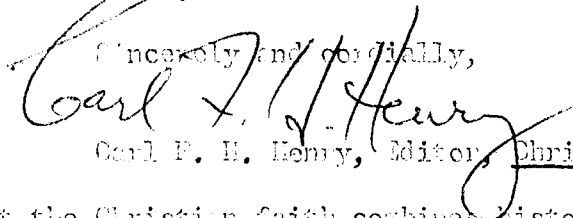
Dear Christian Colleague,

This letter is being addressed to twenty evangelical theologians and New Testament scholars (list enclosed) and carries an invitation to contribute an essay of about 4000 words to a volume on Jesus of Nazareth: Saviour and Lord.

The book is to appear as the fourth volume in the Contemporary Evangelical Thought series (Contemporary Evangelical Thought, 1956, Revelation and the Bible, 1959, Christian Faith and Modern Theology, 1964). Contributors will be paid \$50 for their essays (due May 1, 1965) and will receive two copies of the book on publication. I shall assume the responsibility of raising the \$7000 for this reimbursement, of supervising the related editorial correspondence, of editing the manuscripts to general stylistic conformity, and of securing a respectable publisher.

The rationale of the volume is indicated on the enclosed sheet (suggested reading: Braaten and Harrisville's collection of essays on The Historical Jesus and the Perypatetic Christ, Abingden Press, 1964). I have just spent a number of weeks in Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia interviewing leading theologians and New Testament scholars for a survey of contemporary European theology to appear in Christianity Today later this year. For the third time in our century European theology is passing through a major period of confusion and transition, and I am convinced that evangelical Christianity has a strategic opportunity to join the dialogue on this issue. *

Sincerely and cordially,



Carl F. H. Henry, Editor, Christianity Today.

*Evangelical scholars recognize that the Christian faith combines historical knowledge and faith. In the present theological crisis the strength of evangelical Christianity lies in its unhesitating appeal to historical-critical method and logical reflection, on the confident ground that the Holy Spirit uses truth as the means of persuasion. Since the correlation of history and revelation is one of the pressing problems of contemporary theology, evangelical scholars now have a dramatic opportunity to enter the dialogue through the effective and relevant presentation of their point of view.

continued.....

B. BACKGROUND.

Rationalistic theology had so pervaded the whole field of Christian doctrine in the classic liberal era that no aspect of Christian thought was exempt from its debilitating influence. The exposition of revelation and history excluded transcendent divine revelation, miraculous salvation history, and the special illumination of the Holy Spirit; if such emphases were retained, they were reduced to special instances of what occurs in universal experience and history.

Hence a corrective was desperately needed. It became easy, in this climate, to view the neo-orthodox theology simply as a necessary corrective.

But the reactionary character of dialectical theology is increasingly evident. It involved the disjunction of revelation and history.

Contemporary theologians are seeking to overcome this disjunction. In doing so, they are eager to avoid the old errors of liberal historicism for obvious reasons. But there is also the danger of retreating so timidly from the errors of existential and dialectical theology that contemporary theology may succeed only in modifying rather than in overcoming these views.

For Bultmann the kerygma presupposes but mythologizes the historical Jesus, and Christian faith can be indifferent to any historical facet beyond the mere U 'that of Jesus' life and crucifixion.

For post-Bultmannians the kerygma (as including the name of Jesus) would be self-refuting if the historical Jesus were a matter of irrelevance or contradicted the kerygma. Yet, as with Bultmann, the kerygma is said not to be legitimated by historical considerations.

The mediating Heilsgeschichte school seeks a new correction of revelation and history. It advances beyond existential and dialectical positions by stressing historical revelation (the divine saving acts) but it compromises the classic evangelical view by its advocacy of a modernist definition of revelation. For it, the meaning of revelation is not objectively given but is grasped only in subjective response or by an act of faith.

The evangelical or traditional conservative forces protest this abandonment of historical investigation and of logical reasoning in determining the content of the Christian revelation. They insist that whatever is not accessible to historical inquiry nor known through the instrumentality of reason lacks objective character and universal validity. The attempt to maintain the objectivity of "revelation as deed" alongside the subjectivity of "revelation as truth" is a half-way house which may promote a fuller connection of revelation with history but nonetheless so one-sidedly suspends the intelligibility or meaning of that revelation upon psychological factors that it provides no adequate alternative to other theories.

Yet evangelical scholars are eager not to react to contemporary errors by returning to 19th century liberal historicism: 'Life of Jesus' research based on spurious presuppositions; neglect of the Holy Spirit's illuminating and regenerating role in the appropriation of Christian truth; etc.

1. Dr. Paul Althaus, Professor (emeritus) of Systematic Theology, Erlangen University.
2. Dr. F. F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism & Exegesis, Manchester University.
3. Dr. Gordon H. Clark, Professor of Philosophy, Butler University.
4. Dr. Michael Green, Tutor in New Testament, London College of Divinity.
5. Dr. Birger Gerhardsson, Professor of New Testament, Uppsala University.
6. Dr. Everett Harrison, Professor of New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary.
7. Dr. Philip E. Hughes, Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary.
8. Dr. A. M. Hunter, Professor of New Testament, Christ's College, University of Aberdeen.
9. Dr. Joachim Jeremias, Professor of New Testament, Göttingen University.
10. Dr. Kenneth Kantzer, Dean, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.
11. Dr. Adolf Köberle, Professor of Systematic Theology, Tübingen University.
12. Dr. I. Howard Marshall, Assistant in New Testament, Christ's College, University of Aberdeen.
13. Dr. Ralph Philip Martin, Lecturer in Theology, London Bible College.
14. Dr. Otto Michel, Professor of New Testament, Tübingen University.
15. Dr. Leon Morris, Principal, Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia.
16. Dr. Clark Pinnock, Assistant in New Testament, Manchester University.
17. Dr. Karl Heinrich Rengsdorf, Professor of New Testament, Münster University.
18. Dr. Merrill C. Tenney, Professor of New Testament, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.
19. Dr. Bastian Van Elderen, Professor of New Testament, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U. S. A.
20. Dr. David Wallace, Professor of New Testament, Southern California, Baptist Seminary.

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Reply to:
 Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, Editor,
Christianity Today, 1014, Washington Building, Washington D.C. 20005. U. S. A.

() I accept the invitation to contribute to the volume JESUS OF NAZARETH: SAVIOUR AND LORD, I am particularly interested in the following aspect of the problem of the correlation of revelation and history:

Name (as you prefer to see it in print) : _____

Title _____ Degrees _____

Church Affiliation _____ Address _____

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

WASHINGTON BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005 • PHONE DISTRICT 7-1753

Protestantism's
fortnightly magazine
of evangelical conviction

CARL F. H. HENRY
EDITOR

September 14, 1964

Dr. Gordon H. Clark
345 Buckingham Drive
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Gordon:

Thank you for your letter of September 3.

I asked Harold Lindsell to give you his topic and to write you about Carnell. The information I have is that he stands true on Scripture. If so, his essay will have historical significance in the Fuller context. He may not want to write on the theme. In any event, I'll indicate what we want when and if we invite him.

In view of your comments I've inserted the appended paragraphs into the essay on Revelation in History. Please let me have any suggested changes.

If your chapter for the symposium were to expound a Christian historiography by developing the third paragraph of your letter it would provide an ideal closing chapter for the symposium. You could even use the same material (if you wish) for your E.T.S. address in December, 1965, since the symposium will not yet be out at that time. However, you may have something else in mind for the presidential address.

For the comments at Nyack, give me a title like: "Reflections on the Crisis in Contemporary Theology."

Appreciatively,



CFHH:ip
encl.

P.S. Perhaps by this time you have caught up with the memo I sent you about the Institute for Humane Studies. The president of its board of directors is a surgeon from Anderson, Indiana: Dr. James L. Doenges. He is very much interested in the whole cause of freedom and free enterprise. As I mentioned, the Institute is still waiting for federal action on its application for tax exemption which was made December 27, 1962. After that, it will be in a position to make research grants.

CFHH

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Protestantism's
fortnightly magazine
of evangelical conviction

WASHINGTON BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005 • PHONE DISTRICT 7-1753

CARL F. H. HENRY
EDITOR

September 22, 1964

Dr. Gordon H. Clark
345 Buckingham Drive
Indianapolis 8, Indiana

Dear Gordon:

Last night I took home your Karl Barth's Theological Method and dipped into it again. It's really a fine contribution, and I hope the publisher has the distribution contacts to get it into the libraries of denominational seminaries. I'll try to use an excerpt from it (with credit) in our next issue.

Actually I brought the book home hoping it would quote a passage from Church Dogmatics for which I've searched in vain in which Barth denies that divine revelation conveys information. But instead you quote (on page 149) the passage from II/1, p. 210 where he says revelation is information. I've spent many hours trying unsuccessfully to locate the other side of Barth's mouth.

It's strange that your chapter on Bultmann and my comments (along with a word about The Institute of Humane Studies, (about which we can chat at Nyack) never reached you, nor was it returned to the office. Usually I have the secretary type (and keep a carbon of) all correspondence but she was so deluged that I told her just to hurry this along in the rough. If you have an extra carbon I'll give it another round. If you could define historiography, show in a paragraph or two how one's aprioris are decisive, introduce Bultmann as an example, criticize him, and then come down the line for an evangelical alternative you would have a great chapter for the symposium.

Carnell's psychoanalysis has cost him a fortune. Perhaps that is why he couldn't afford E.T.S.

Cordially,



CFHH:ip