



KING COLLEGE
BRISTOL, TENNESSEE 37620

August 21, 1972

Dr. Powell A. Fraser, President
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Dear Dr. Fraser:

It occurs to me that you should know now that the College Bookstore has received a shipment of some dozens of copies of THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS by Edward W. Bauman, a book fundamentally at variance with historic Christianity. Since I no longer have responsibility for the Bible Department, I thought it not appropriate to inquire as to whose texts or parallel books these are; I send this memorandum for your information.

To be specific, pages 46 and 48 contain a number of slurring remarks questioning the historicity of the Virgin Birth of Christ: "If Joseph was not his (Christ's) real father, then the family trees are invalid....the tables (genealogies in Matthew and Luke) are of much greater symbolical than historical value....Every student of the life of Jesus must decide how much of these infancy stories is fact and how much is legend....a good deal of the Christmas story is legend." It is true that Bauman concedes that "there is always a kernel of historical fact at the heart of a legend," but on page 51 he says: "Matthew and Luke refute their own statements by including geneological tables that trace the descent of Jesus through Joseph." This tired bit of unbelief has long since been answered, and should have been put to rest with the doctrine of the flat earth.

Worse still, the sentence on page 53 ("The supernatural quality implied in a virgin birth, for example, makes the agony of the temptation and Gethsemane quite meaningless") involves a frank questioning, if not an outright denial, of the deity of Christ.

The sentences on pages 67 and 70 ("Jesus condemned in no uncertain terms any faith that rested on miracles," and "He never claimed the healing power for himself") should be compared with such Scriptures as John 5:36: "the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me," with John 14:11: "or

else believe me for the very works' sake," and with Matthew 9:6 and parallel passages: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith he to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

Moreover, the following sentences on page 71 come close to an outright denial of the miracles of Christ: "The difficulty comes when we try to separate fact from legend....there is a good deal of evidence in the wording and context of the "storm at sea" narrative to lead us to believe that the real heart of the story is the quieting of the storm of fear in the hearts of the disciples. In another famous incident there is some reason to believe that Jesus may have been walking by the sea rather than upon the sea." Similarly, a sentence on page 72 casts doubt upon the raising of Jairus' daughter and of the son of the Widow of Nain: "Scarcely a year goes by without many reported cases of persons who have been pronounced dead suddenly regaining consciousness."

Most objectionable are the various passages redefining and questioning the reality of the atonement, as on page 106: "How can anyone assume the guilt of another person? Suffering, it is true, can be borne by others, but not guilt." (Ital. mine). This, of course, is gross heresy, as all orthodox theologians would agree. If Christ did not take our guilt upon Himself, then we still bear it and are without forgiveness or hope and properly have all the despair that Martin Luther endured before he understood the gospel.

On page 201, Bauman comments on the statement, "Jesus is God," by saying flatly: "this statement is nowhere made by Jesus or by any writer in the New Testament." One assumes that in a serious book he does not mean that the English statement does not occur--of course it does not, but the affirmation occurs in John 1:1 and in Colossians 2:9: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. If possible, the Greek text is more specific than the English.

There is no need here to mention Bauman's denial of the uniqueness of Christianity and of the necessity of coming to God only through Christ for salvation, or his questioning of the reality of the resurrection of our Lord or his Schleiermacherian epistemology which was long ago tried in the balances and found wanting because of its irrationality--if experience is substituted for the Bible as the final source of truth and authority, then all experiences are equally valid and all religious systems are equally true--which, of course, means that none are.

Dr. Powell A. Fraser, page 3

With appreciation for the time it takes you to care for
this matter, and with all good wishes; I am

Sincerely yours,

George A. Anderson
George A. Anderson

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