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Christ and the Newly Matured World

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CHRIST AND THE NEWLY MATURED WORLD

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by

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INTRODUCTION

From his cell in the military section of Tegel Prison in Berlin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer described man's learning to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as having nurtured a "world come of age." The expression has become a household word in many theological circles. It has also created a furor on the popular scene among Christians. The impact in this country is evident in the coverage accorded the "God-is-dead" movement by the press.[1]

As Bonhoeffer analysed the historical development of the "world come of age," he determined that the crucial issue was Christ and the newly matured world.[2] One need not concern himself with defending the secondary doctrines of Christianity, for the head cornerstone is the target of the wrecker's steel ball. As one concerned about the centrality of Christ in the Christian confession encounters the statements of contemproary theologians, he will always have in the back of his mind the question, "What think ye of Christ?" As shall be demonstrated, the person of Christ is the hub of the theologies discussed in the following pages. Even the hardest of "hard" radicals, William Hamilton, is aware that "some means must be found to stake out our claim to be Christians."[3] It is through his attention to Jesus that Hamilton is able to make this claim for himself.

The quest of the present paper, therefore, is a dissection of the statements about Christ which are made by those for whom

the world has come of age. How does one address himself to an audience which may have jettisoned the trappings of transcendentalism? Is there another means of expressing the message, or must the message itself be changed?

The investigation will begin with Bonhoeffer, for he has coined the phrase, "the world come of age," and he has raised the questions for which others are attempting to provide the answers. The theology of Bishop John A. T. Robinson has created a stir in England which is similar to the one caused by "God-is-dead" theology in America,[4] and his attempts to redefine "God" and "Jesus" will be taken into consideration. Paul M. van Buren explicitly acknowledges a similarity between his main work and Robinson's Honest to God.[5] This factor, plus his being associated with the "God-is-dead" movement by critics[6] support his being included in the present consideration. Finally, William Hamilton, a "hard" radical[7] of the "God-is-dead" school, will be included.

The selection of authors thus yields a sampling of continental European, English, and American contemporary theology. It is hoped that sufficient similarities between the men selected will be present so that adequate comparisons may be made.

II

THE WORLD COME OF AGE

Dietrich Bonhoeffer described the maturation of the world as a movement which began about the thirteenth century, although he did not want to become engaged in a dispute over the exact date.[8] The maturation of man is another way of speaking of the autonomy of man, and it includes the discovery of laws by which the world lives and operates. Bonhoeffer regarded this process as

having reached a certain stage of completion.

> Man has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis. . . . it is becoming evident that everything gets along without "God," and just as well as before. As in the scientific field, so in human affairs generally, what we call "God" is being more and more edged out of life, losing more and more ground.[9]

The mature world of which Bonhoeffer speaks rejects the tact religious people often take when they speak of God only in those areas of life where human capability has reached its tether. For such religious people God functions as a deus ex machina upon whom they call when human resources fail. This "God" is used to solve those insoluble problems which lie on the borders of human existence.[10]

Bonhoeffer fears the day will come when these borders are pushed so far back that there are no longer any "ultimate" problems. If the Christian approach consists of efforts to prove to a self-assured, mature world that it "cannot live without the tutelage of 'God,'"[11] then it is doomed to fail when the ultimate questions no longer plague mankind. In order to avert this failure, religious people must eliminate the concept of God as a deus ex machina.

Such an elimination does not remove belief in transcendence, however. Bonhoeffer observed three notions that were commonly held by his fellow prisoners: 1) Crossing one's fingers apparently made one sure of an invisible presence; 2) touching wood was supposed to render the fates favorable to the "worshipper" and was used in hopes of stemming off future air raids; 3) "You cannot run away from fate," also belies an undercurrent of belief in

transcendent reality.[12] Transcendent reality still exists, in Bonhoeffer's thinking. The maturation of the world has rendered God useless as a problem-solver, even of the so-called "ultimate" questions, but God is still present as a transcendental being. Bonhoeffer cites his own experience in support of his contention that God is no longer called upon in the hour of need.

It was during air raids that Bonhoeffer realized God was not a deus ex machina. Prayer during these times of stress became a source of confusion for him. On the one hand he felt the scriptural command to "call upon me in the time of trouble" (Psalm 50), but on the other hand his personal experiences during the bombing raids led him into despair. The raids evoked prayers, but they were accompanied by guilt feelings, for he had been unable to give a Christian witness to his cellmates.[13] Ironically, a "mature" man who denied recourse to God as a deus ex machina was unable to replace Him with anything else when the situation demanded it.

Bonhoeffer's world come of age, then, is one which does not rely upon God for solutions to his problems. Bonhoeffer echoes Paul Tillich in this regard, although he acknowledges no dependence upon Tillich. The influence of Tillich on Bonhoeffer, however, as well as on the other men whose theology will be studied, will be readily apparent to one versed in Tillich's philosophical approach to theology.[14] Tillich views the loss of an awareness of the transcendent (or the "dimension of depth" as he would prefer to call it)[15] as a result of man's concentrating his activities upon the "methodical investigation and technical transformation of his world, including himself. . . ."

> Reality has lost its inner transcendence or, in another metaphor, its transparency for the eternal. The system of finite inter-relations which we call the universe has become self-sufficient. It is calculable and manageable and can be improved from the point of view of man's needs and desires. . . . God has been removed from the power field of man's activities. He has been put alongside the world without permission to interfere with it . . . . The result is that God has become superfluous and the universe left to man as its master.[16]

Since God has been replaced, man takes upon himself the attributes which were formerly given to God, and so he becomes creative; he loses the tension resulting from conflict over what he is <u>in essentia</u> and what he is <u>in realitas</u>; he has no room for death or guilt (Bonhoeffer's "ultimate" questions); the bondage of the will is broken, and the demonic powers of the New Testament which give rise to destruction in personal and communal life are brushed aside glibly. The outcome of this charade is that man's ontological state is not seen because of his pragmatic state, and the future looks bright because of his supposed ability to gradually fulfill his potential.

The universe has replaced God; man, being in the center of the universe, has replaced Christ, and so one does not anticipate the Kingdom of God. The focus is on this world with a desire for peace and justice among men. The demise of the dimension of depth in man's life kills the eschatological hope and replaces it with a realizing eschatology.

The roots of Bishop John A. T. Robinson's theology are exposed at the surface against this background. Robinson describes the mature world as man's discarding of the thought that God is literally or physically "up there." The Copernican revolution and its offspring the space age, according to Robinson, make it

impossible to locate God "mentally in some terra incognita."[17] The coming of the space age has destroyed the possibility of crudely projecting God "out there," even if it be beyond the horizon of visibility and exploration, i.e., into some "gap" that science cannot fill. One should be grateful to the space age for having demonstrated the ineptness of this manner of describing God, "for if God is 'beyond', he is not literally beyond anything."[18]

Paul M. van Buren uses the methodology of the world come of age. In his inquiry into the secular meaning of the Gospel, he employs a modified verification principle that the meaning of a word is its use in the language. The words which describe the metaphysical and transcendent do not support any "empirical linguistic anchorage,"[19] and so one's interpretation of the Gospel flirts with a reduction of theology to ethics. Van Buren argues that if theology is reduced to ethics, then it is characteristic of a reduction made by modern culture in a wide range of disciplines. The reduction principle is the empirical method, and, since the Renaissance, almost every field of human learning has waved good-bye to the metaphysical or cosmological aspect and limited itself to "the human, the historical, the empirical."[20]

William Hamilton is allied with Bonhoeffer on his characterization of man in a world come of age. It will be remembered that Bonhoeffer recommended abandoning the concept of God as a deus ex machina. For Hamilton to say that man has come of age is not to say that man can solve all his problems, but that "he no longer expects God to intervene miraculously to deliver him from the difficult situation."[21] Instead of seeking solutions

in religious acts and ceremonies, one should exercise intelligent application of human effort. This simply means that God has disappeared as a need-fulfiller or problem-solver.

Langdon Gilkey[22] carries this same line of thought one step further. If Bonhoeffer and Hamilton detect an absence of calling upon God for help in problems, Gilkey characterizes the mature world as one in which all decisions are made on the basis of the mores and modi operandi of the natural and social milieu. As one carries out his everyday existence he does not experience God, and he does not hear God's word, and he does not look for a command of God to receive and obey. Gilkey is convinced that many people consider the existence or experience of the supernatural as unintelligible or meaningless.

But he is not content to leave his analysis resting over the heads of the "world-out-there," for Christians also, including the clergy, lack the element of transcendence, for they live their daily lives with its decisions and judgments in tune with the society around them.

> We derive our joys from the natural environment and from the human relations among which we live here and now; and we surely plan our careers and our homes in the normally accepted terms of patriotic and professional existence in our communities.[23]

Bonhoeffer has served as the mid-wife for the idea conceived by Tillich of the world that has come of age and put aside the childish thoughts of a transcendent being which interferes with the created order. A multiple birth has made Robinson, van Buren, Hamilton, and Gilkey heirs apparent to the opportunities of a world thus come of age. One further facet of this mature world

remains to be unveiled.

The Anfectung with which Luther wrestled, "Wie koenne ich ein gnaedig Gott finden?" is no longer a live option for the mature world. For a world that does not look to God for solutions to its problems there is little concern for one's relationship to that God. There are simply more important things to think about (at least so the world thinks) than individual salvation. As Bonhoeffer gave this additional classification to his species of the mature world, he felt that even to utter such a thought was monstrous,[24] and yet, he thought that it was biblical.

> Is there any concern in the Old Testament about saving one's soul at all? Is not righteousness and the kingdom of God on earth the focus of everything, and is not Romans 3.14ff., too, the culmination of the view that in God alone is righteousness, and not in an individualistic doctrine of salvation. It is not with the next world that we are concerned, but with this world as created and preserved and set subject to laws and atoned for and made new. What is above the world is, in the Gospel, intended to exist for this world--I mean that not in the anthropocentric sense of liberal, pietistic, ethical theology, but in the Bible sense of the creation and incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[25]

In conclusion, a description of the world come of age may be given. To state this description as expeditiously as possible one might say that it is a world which does not need God to solve its problems or to forgive its sins. It is the newly matured world which says, "Please, God, I'd rather do it myself!"

The maturation of the world has not taken place without observation, however. Bonhoeffer contended that Roman Catholic and Protestant historians alike interpret the maturation of the world as the great defection from God and Christ.[26] Bonhoeffer suggests there have been diverse plans of opposition to the self-

assurance of the matured world. One tact is the effort to convince the world that it is not as mature as it thinks.

It seemed to Bonhoeffer that this Christian apologetic surrenders the secular problems, but clings to the so-called "ultimate" questions (death, guilt, etc.) and claims that God is the only source of aid when these questions arise. For this reason the ministry and the Church are needed. This is the same approach, Bonhoeffer continues, which is followed by existentialist philosophers and psychotherapists, whose efforts are directed at demonstrating that secure, contented, happy mankind is not as secure as it believes, but that it is really unhappy and desperate.

> Wherever there is health, strength, security, simplicity, they spy luscious fruit to gnaw at or to lay their pernicious eggs in. They make it their object first of all to drive men to inward despair, and then it is all theirs.[27]

But, Bonhoeffer argues, only a few intellectuals, some degenerates, and people who are so ego-centric that they think themselves worth looking after are reached by such an approach. The ordinary man is too busy with secular life to worry about these ultimate things.

This approach fails in Bonhoeffer's opinion for three basic reasons: it is a pointless approach, it is ignoble, and it is unChristian. It is pointless because it tries to put an adult back into adolescence; it is ignoble because it exploits "the weakness of man for purposes alien to him and not freely subscribed to by him."[28] It is not Christian because a human law is substituted for Christ himself.

> When Jesus blessed sinners, they were real sinners, but Jesus did not make every man a sinner first. He called them out of their sin, not into their sin. . . . Of course Jesus took to himself the dregs of human society, harlots, and publicans, but never them alone, for he sought to take to himself man as such. Never did Jesus throw any doubt on a man's health, vigour or fortune, regarded in themselves, or look upon them as evil fruits. Else why did he heal the sick and restore strength to the weak? Jesus claims for himself and the kingdom of God the whole of human life in all its manifestations.[29]

Bonhoeffer objected to this approach on two theological principles also. The first dealt with the line of thinking that a man's weaknesses and meannesses must be spied out before he can be addressed as a sinner. The second renounced placing the domain of God in man's "interior life" where his essential nature was thought to lie.[30] Man may be a sinner, according to Bonhoeffer, but he is not "mean" or "common." Sins of strength are at stake (unfortunately Bonhoeffer gives no definition for "sins of strength"), not sins of weakness. One need not spy out a man's sins, for the Bible does not use this approach. Nor need one center on the "interior life," for this is not characteristic of the Bible either. The Bible is concerned with the anthropos teleios (the whole man), not with good intention, but with whole good. One's total relationship to God is the concern of the Bible.

II

THE CHRISTIAN TASK IN A WORLD COME OF AGE

Since the approach primarily followed by the Christian apologetic in the past has failed, in Bonhoeffer's judgment, he submits a different emphasis for one's confession of God to a

world come of age.

Rather than utilizing God as a deus ex machina who is called in on the borders of human existence, Bonhoeffer prefers to speak of God at the center of life rather than at its periphery. He does not look for God in those areas where man feels incompetent to handle his problems, but in the areas in which he is most comfortable, where he feels his strengths lie. "God is the 'beyond' in the midst of our life. The Church stands not where human powers give out, on the borders, but in the centre of the village."[31]

For Bonhoeffer it is wrong to use God as a "stop-gap" for the incompleteness of man's knowledge, for as the frontiers of that knowledge are pushed further and further back, there will be no room left for God. "We should find God in what we do know, not in what we don't; not in outstanding problems, but in those we have already solved."[32] This includes even the so-called "ultimate" questions of life and death, for Bonhoeffer is not willing to say that Christianity has all the answers. It is wrong to use God as a stop-gap because Christ is the center of life. He did not come to solve man's unknown problems. "From the centre of life certain questions are seen to be wholly irrelevant, and so are the answers commonly given to them. . . . In Christ there are no Christian problems."[33]

The approach which Bonhoeffer argued against tried to put man back into his adolescence. He argues further that this is wrong, for the Church "should frankly recognize that the world and men have come of age,"[34] and so the Church must meet man with God not on his weak points, but at his strongest. There is only

one way back to adolescence that is honest, and that is through repentance, which is ultimate honesty. For Bonhoeffer there was only one way that man could be honest, and that was to recognize that he lived in the world etsi deus non daretur. This is precisely what one sees when he gains a true insight into his relationship coram deo. The lesson God has for a world come of age is that it must learn to live as though it could get along well without him. The Christian's God in a mature world is the God who forsakes his own (cf. Mark 15:34, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? - Goodspeed).

> The God who makes us live in this world without using him as a working hypothesis is the God before whom we are ever standing. Before God and with him we live without God. God allows himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross. God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way, in which he can be with us and help us. Matthew 8.17 makes it crystal clear that it is not by his omnipotence that Christ helps us, but by his weakness and suffering.[35]

This acknowledgement of the weakness of God is the crucial difference between Christianity and other religions according to Bonhoeffer. One's religious propensity makes him look to God in times of trouble; the Bible directs him to the powerlessness and suffering of God.

To this extent Bonhoeffer's description of the process by which the world came of age shows an abandonment of a false conception of God, and a clearing of the decks for the God of the Bible, who conquers power and space in the world by his weakness. It is at this point that one must begin any "worldly" or "secular" interpretation.

Having described the confession one makes of God to a world

come of age, Bonhoeffer also defines the sort of response a Christian makes to a God that conquers by his weakness. In the first place, the Christian must be willing to sacrifice his reason, principles, conscience, freedom, and virtue when called to be obedient and responsible in action to faith and exclusive allegiance to God.

> . . . God requires that we should love him eternally with our whole hearts, yet not so as to compromise or diminish our earthly affections, but as a kind of cantus firmus to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint. . . . Where the ground bass is firm and clear, there is nothing to stop the counterpoint from being developed to the utmost of its limits. . . . nothing can go wrong so long as the cantus firmus is kept going.[36]

Secondly, one is called to participate in the suffering of God in the life of the world. This is what constitutes true repentance (metanoia) in Bonhoeffer's thinking. One does not place his own concerns first, but he allows himself to be caught up in the way of Christ. One is not speaking of religious asceticism, for that is partial. Faith is whole, and it is an act which involves the whole life. Jesus does not call men into a new kind of religion, but into a new life. One must place himself into the arms of God by abandoning any attempt to make something of himself. He must take life in his stride with all it entails, duties and problems, successes and failures, experiences and helplessness. In this way one releases himself to God, participates in his sufferings in the world, and watches with Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Such an abandonment of oneself is what constitutes faith; it is the true meaning of repentance; and it is what makes one a man and a Christian.[37]

Paul M. van Buren's concept of the Christian task in a

world come of age is involved with his very definition of "secular." "Secular" refers to inter-personal relationships. One's concern for one's fellowman, after the fashion of Martin Buber's "I - Thou" distinction should be prime in one's considerations. The emphasis on human relationships is more important to a mature world than former distinctions between time and eternity, between finitude and the infinite, and many other similar distinctions that occupied Christians in an earlier age. It is precisely the difference between contemporary Christians and their elders which van Buren has in mind when he refers to "secular Christianity."[38]

This definition of van Buren's position places him squarely behind the statements of Bonhoeffer, and, as shall be demonstrated, of Hamilton also. The main task for a Christian in a mature world is concern for his neighbor. Whereas in former years, however, one expressed this concern through prayer, today different action is necessary. The Christian will be doing essentially the same thing, that is, he will consider his neighbor's predicament in the light of the Gospel. But then he will take a slightly different path. He will begin to consider the situation in light of his understanding of life. Since this involves his self-understanding as one set free from self-concern, he will set about doing that which he feels is the most effective thing he can do to relieve his neighbor's distress. For his forefathers it was prayer; but for him it means discussing the situation with his neighbor in order to see what can be done to solve the problem. If there is no apparent solution available, then, having done all, he will stand with his neighbor and help him through the hard times which may ensue. Prayer is meaningless to empirical thought

unless it directs the one who prays into a course of action.[39]

Harvey Cox, whose sociological analyses do not fall under the immediate aegis of this paper, stipulates the Christian task in a way which serves as a good introduction to a second aspect of van Buren's thinking which is an advance beyond Bonhoeffer's presentation. "The Church is called to proclaim the word of God in, with, and under the thought forms and symbol patterns of its day."[40] One is not expected to take over in toto a new understanding anymore than earlier theologians did the thought patterns of their day. But one is to transform his culture by plunging fearlessly into the thought processes and modes of expression.

One key factor differentiates the task of a Christian today with that of his elders, however, and that is the secular nature of today's culture as opposed to the sacral culture of the past. By this Cox means that today's culture turns its attention away from the transcendental and toward this world and time. The Christian's motivation for this humanistic orientation is God's activity in Christ, and the Christian turns toward the world for the same reason Christ did, to love it and give himself for it.[41]

Van Buren's affinity to Cox's thinking occurs in his opinion that the crucial issue is a decision between defining a "Christian" either as one who thinks in a certain obsolete way, or as one who thinks in a modern way but with a different content. He conducts his study of the "secular meaning of the Gospel" on the basis that "being a Christian does not deny one's involvement in the secular world and its way of thinking." One must repeat the Christian confessions with regard to intention, not the form, of the message.[42]

Van Buren's picture is of a Christian man involved in spiri-

tual schizophrenia: The traditional terminology of his faith contradicts his ordinary ways of thinking. He may either discard one or the other way of thinking or he may resolve the traditional terminology in terms of his secular way of thinking.[43]

> . . . what is orthodoxy in this era when many sincere Christians do not know what to do with the word "God" or can use it only in a way entirely different from the "orthodox" way of the early centuries of Christianity? Today, we cannot even understand the Nietzschian cry that "God is dead!" For if that were so, how could we know? No, the problem now is that the word "God" is dead.[44]

This second aspect of van Buren's thinking paves the way for a consideration of Bishop Robinson's understanding of the Christian task in a world come of age. He sees the issue also as whether or not Christians are to be relegated solely to a mythological, supranaturalist, or transcendental view of the universe.[45] The mythological understanding is outmoded, and Robinson's concern is "in no way to change the Christian doctrine of God but precisely to see that it does not disappear with this outmoded view."[46]

William Hamilton harks back to the humanitarian interest of Bonhoeffer, but he prefers labelling the "sharing of God's sufferings in the world" as a movement "from church to world."[47] This movement involves a participation by Christians in the struggles for human dignity and justice for all mankind in this world, and it includes an awareness of the centrality of Jesus as the criterion for defining the nature and basis of the role the Christian plays in these struggles. It is a movement begun by the Reformation in its shift from the cloister to the world. Today it involves a movement out of the churches as well as from

the church. Hamilton is disinterested in the church and its survival. His focus is on such things as the civil rights movement and the war on poverty.[48]

The Christian enters the realm of human events with an optimism which gives attention to what man can and must do for the realization of a better and more just social order without disregarding the sinfulness of man or his need for forgiveness. Further, he embraces the technology of modern society, for it can contribute to the broadening and deepening of genuinely human values.[49]

Hamilton's Protestant has no God, nor does he have any faith in God. In fact, he affirms the death of God as well as the death of all forms of theism. As a result, his confession will not speak of God. His task, however, consists of unmasking Jesus and becoming Jesus in and to the world.[50] Since this task involves a definition of Hamilton's Christology, it will be reserved for a later section. Suffice it to say at this point that "becoming Jesus" for the world means accepting the world for ourselves. Included in this embracing of the world is an identification with one's neighbor in his struggles and suffering.[51]

III

CHRISTOLOGICAL FORMULATIONS

The preceding discussion of the maturation of the world and the nature of the Christian confession to that world sets the stage for a consideration of the Christological statements formulated by the four theologians mentioned in the introduction.

The order of presentation will follow the order in which these men were introduced (vid. supra., p. 2).

Before scrutinizing the Christology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it is necessary to pronounce a word of caution. The letters which Bonhoeffer wrote from prison contain his reflections on the world come of age. These thoughts dominate Bonhoeffer's writings from his cell, and the collection is negative in the sense that it defines the problem but does little to solve it. The final question is Christ and the newly matured world (vid. supra., p. 1), but little is said in the different letters about Christology. Whatever Christology is gleaned from the letters that emanated from prison in the last two years of Bonhoeffer's life will necessarily have to be evaluated in the light of his earlier Christology. Unfortunately, the only work that treats Christology in detail is a book which was reconstructed post mortem from a series of lectures delivered in the summer of 1933, entitled Christ the Center. The secondary nature of this work is thus to be noted, plus the fact that penetrating changes may occur in a man's thinking in twelve years, especially when that man is very young. Added to these debits is the difficulty of constructing a Christology that Bonhoeffer would have written had he lived to fulfil the desire to write a book he outlined in one of his letters.[52]

With these factors borne in mind, the present author will present an analysis of Christ the Center as background for Bonhoeffer's later Christology. In the light of this background the attempt will be made next to determine from the prison letters what Bonhoeffer meant when he spoke of Christ the center.

Bonhoeffer was not concerned with the "how" of Christology. He was interested, however, with the "what" and the "where." When asked "what" Jesus is, he said that he is Word, Sacrament, and Church. As the Word (Logos) of God, Christ has a special status in the being of God. This status can be either passive or dormant, but the Word is also God's speech to man, and as such it is discerned only in a relationship with a hearer. The status is timeless, but the speech takes place in time and history. One must respond to a speech, although he can merely assent to a status. The Christ who is the Word of God is also the Christ of the real presence in the Sacrament. He is present not only in the word spoken by the Church, but also as the word of the Church. This proclamation of the Church illustrates the relation of the divine and human in Christ, for Christ is not half God and half man. The proclamation of the Church is not a mixture of half-and-half, either, for one must be able to point to it and say, "This is the Word of God."[53]

Secondly, Christ is the Sacrament. He is present in the Sacrament in his entire person, including his exaltation and humiliation. There is not a special sacramental being. To say that Christ is represented in the Sacrament is to miss the point, for only someone who is absent needs to be present, and Christ is present already. His real presence in the Sacrament cannot be separated from his real presence in the Church. They are related as reality (presence in the Church) is related to form (the Sacrament). "The Church between ascension and second coming is his form, and the only one at that."[54] Christ is the Church because he is Word and Sacrament. This is Bonhoeffer's third answer to

"what" Christ is.

Christ creates the form of the Church as Word, and the Church, then, both receives the revelation and is a revelation as well as a Word of God. Christ assumes bodily form to be present as Sacrament, and the bodily form he assumes is the Church.[55]

Having given this answer to the question of "what" Christ is, Bonhoeffer turns to the question of "where" Christ is. "Where does Christ stand?" one might ask. He stands pro me, Bonhoeffer replies. He stands in my place, where I should stand and cannot. "He stands on the boundary of my existence, beyond my existence, but still for me."[56] Bonhoeffer's conclusion is that he is separated from what he should be, and he stands in judgment because of this separation. Christ serves as the rediscovery of his authentic existence and the border of that existence, for it is a border which can be known only from beyond.

> The nature of the person of Christ is to be temporally and spatially in the centre. The one who is present in Word, Sacrament and community is in the centre of human existence, history and nature. It is part of the structure of his person that he stands in the centre. . . . Christ is the mediator as the one who is there pro me.[57]

"Where" is Christ? He is at the center of human existence; he is at the center of history; and he is at the center of nature. He is at the center as the center. "In him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

In his later writings, Bonhoeffer spoke of an encounter with Christ as the content of what one means by God.[58] This encounter involves a complete alignment of human existence in accord with the experience of Jesus as one whose only concern is for others.

"This concern of Jesus for others (is) the experience of transcendence."[59] One's relation to God is not based on an ascetic manner of life, but consists in a new life for others, "through participation in the being of God."

Christ is the cantus firmus. (Vid. supra., p. 13) If the cantus firmus is played loud and clear, the remaining parts will be harmonious. "If Jesus had not lived, then our life, in spite of all the other people we know and honour and love, would be without meaning."[60]

Allusion has been made to Bishop John A. T. Robinson's affinity to and dependence upon the theology of Paul Tillich. A further demonstration lies in the following quotation which also identifies him with Bonhoeffer.

> What Tillich is meaning by God is the exact opposite of any deus ex machina, a supernatural Being to whom one can turn away from the world and who can be relied upon to intervene from without. God is not "out there". He is in Bonhoeffer's words "the 'beyond' in the midst of our life", a depth of reality reached "not on the borders of our life, but at its centre", not by any flight of the alone to the alone, but . . . by "a deeper immersion in existence." For the word " God" denotes the ultimate depth of all our being, the creative ground and meaning of all our existence.[61]

Robinson has adopted the theology of Tillich in speaking of God (In fact, the de deo sections of Honest to God read very much like a term paper which consists of extensive quotations from Tillich's writings interspersed with connecting material from Robinson.). Anything theological, or pertaining to "God" is that which is concerned with ultimate reality. Theology treats the question of God. That question is, "Is the depth of being a reality or an illusion?" As one poses this question

he is not concerned with whether A Being exists somewhere in the expanse of the universe. His concentration is upon that which he takes seriously without reservation, for it is ultimate reality for him, and God is ultimate reality.

The problems of transcendence, which Robinson regards as dead issues for a world come of age, are solved handily by Tillich. Tillich says that to speak transcendentally is to realize the unconditional in the midst of the conditioned relationships of life and to respond to it in unconditional personal relationship.[62] This interpretation of transcendence is Tillich's great contribution to theology, in Robinson's opinion, for it presents transcendence "in a way which preserves its reality while detaching it from the projection of supranaturalism."[63] Since God is unconditional, he is found "in, with, and under" man's conditioned relationships in daily life, for, as ultimate reality, he gives depth to horizontal relationships and provides them with ultimate significance.

In addressing a world come of age, Robinson strives to avoid speaking in supranatural thought patterns, for the supranatural world view of the Bible is rapidly disappearing, and if the message of the Gospel is hidden beneath the veneer of mythology, then it will become increasingly unacceptable for a large number of people. The unfortunate thing is that the supranaturalistic estimate of Christ perverts the Biblical truth, Robinson states. Basing their statements on this Weltbild, current preachers and teachers present a picture of Christ which cannot be substantiated from the New Testament. For it is often said that Jesus WAS God, "in such a way that the terms 'Christ' and 'God' are interchange-

able."[64] The New Testament does not speak in such a manner, according to Robinson. It says that Jesus was the Word of God, and it speaks of God's being in Christ, and it even says Jesus was the Son of God, "but it does not say that Jesus was God, simply like that."[65]

What the Bible says is succinctly stated by John's gospel: "And the word was God." (John 1:1) The Greek of this passage is kai theos en ho logos. The two nouns are not interchangeable because one is anarthrous, Robinson argues. Nor is the sense, "The word was divine" for that would be theios. Robinson accepts the New English Bible's translation as being the best interpretation: "And what God was, the Word was." This means that if one looked at Jesus, he saw God, for "he who has seen me, has seen the Father." (John 14:9) Jesus was the complete expression, the Word of God. God spoke and acted through him as through no one else. Whoever encountered Jesus encountered God both in judgment and salvation. The Apostles' testimony was that in Jesus, in his life, death, and resurrection, they had experienced the mighty acts of God. Within the limitations of their language they confessed that Jesus was the Son of God. "Here was more than just a man: here was a window into God at work."[66]

Robinson maintains that it is very difficult to substantiate the assertion that Jesus claimed to be God, or that the disciples proclaimed that he was God. Their confession was that "God has made him both Christ and Lord, this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36) It was the resurrection which was God's vindication and seal upon the man through whom he had spoken and acted in a final and decisive way.[67] Throughout the Gospel tradition,

Robinson continues, the emphasis is on the fact that Jesus made no claims for himself (cf. Mark 10:18; John 12:44), but that he did make extravagant claims for what God was doing through him in a unique way. "Men's response to him is men's response to God: men's rejection of him is men's rejection of God."[68] Jesus never claimed to be God, personally, but he always claimed to bring God, completely.

Jesus' completion of the revelation of God comes on the cross, for only one who is united with the ground of his being without separation or disruption can surrender himself, "even unto death on a cross." It is in Christ's ultimate surrender of self that he shows his union with the ground of his being and is enabled to say, "I and the Father are one. . . . The Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:30,38) It is only in Jesus, the one who emptied himself (Phil. 2:6-11), that one can see the ultimate, unconditional love of God. It is not his omnipotence, omniscience, etc., which he empties, but himself. He pours out any craving to be "on an equality with God." (Phil. 2:6)

> For it is in making himself nothing, in his utter self-surrender to others in love, that he discloses and lays bare the Ground of man's being as Love.[69]

The history of the Church has seen the ebb and flow of the doctrine of the Atonement. It is Robinson's observation that the Atonement is the supranatural dogma which repulses mature mankind the most. The imagery of a divine being becoming man and doing what we could not do is beyond the imagination of a sophisticated world. But when one talks of being separated from authentic existence and sees in Jesus the complete union with the

ground of his being which enables him to surrender himself, then he is heard by a world come of age.

> It is this union-in-estrangement with the Ground of our being . . . that we mean by hell. But equally it is the union-in-love with the Ground of our being, such as we see in Jesus Christ, that is the meaning of heaven. And it is the offer of that life, in all its divine depth, to overcome the estrangement and alienation of existence as we know it that the New Testament speaks of as the "new creation." This new reality is transcendent, it is "beyond" us, in the sense that it is not ours to command. . . . it is a coming home, or rather a being received home, to everything we are created to be. It is what the New Testament can only call grace.[70]

Grace for Robinson is the grace described by Tillich. When one stumbles through the darkness of a meaningless and empty life he may be enlightened by grace. The prostitution of another's life results in estrangement. Frequently it results in disgust for one's self with all its indifference, weakness, hostility, and lack of direction or composure. When these demons become intolerable grace strikes. Sometimes in a moment of despair a ray of light slices through the darkness and one almost hears a voice say, "You are accepted. YOU ARE ACCEPTED. You are accepted by something greater than yourself." One may not be able to identify the voice, but he need not fear, for it will come later. He need not respond with fruits of thanksgiving. He must simply accept the fact that he is accepted.[71]

Building upon this interpretation of grace, Robinson is prepared to explain the new creation or the new man in Christ of which Saint Paul speaks. It is the life of the man who lived for others. It is a life of love by which one is united wholly with the Ground of his being. The life of love one lives then

makes itself manifest in the unreconciled relationships of his daily existence. This life of love was given supreme manifestation on the cross, and it is encountered whenever Christ is demonstrated and acknowledged as one who lived in relationship with others like no other has ever done. Whenever Christ is demonstrated in this fashion, no matter how "secular" the form, then the atonement is effected and the resurrection occurs. The Christian community, then, has as its function the embodiment of this new life of love. "And that means, to return in closing to Bonhoeffer, 'participation in the powerlessness of God in the world."[72]

Paul M. van Buren's The Secular Meaning of the Gospel presents the most comprehensive statement of Christology of the four theologians under consideration in this paper. A large segment of his book is an evaluation of orthodox Christology and its historical formulation. This paper will focus on van Buren's own system as he builds on the empirical basis of the verification principle of linguistic analysis.

A few words about the nature of this methodology are in order. The question which plagues van Buren is, "How may a Christian who is himself a secular man understand the Gospel in a secular way?" This question will be seen to coincide with van Buren's interpretation of the Christian's task in a world come of age. (vid. supra., p. 15f.) In attempting to answer the question, which was also the question of Bonhoeffer, van Buren proposes to analyze what a man means when he speaks the language of faith, that is, when he repeats the confession, "Jesus

is Lord."[73] He is not addressing himself to an outsider in the hopes of making the Gospel palatable to modern, scientific man, but he is thinking of the " modern man" who is inside the Church, and who wonders what he is doing there.[74]

Van Buren's question arises from a consideration of the logic of the apparently meaningless language of the Gospel, and he expects linguistic analysis to be the channel of discovery for solving the problem. The heart of this method is the verification principle, that is, the meaning of a word is the way it is used in its context. "The meaning of a statement is to be found in and is identical with, the function of that statement."[75] A statement must have a function which may be verified or falsified, or else it is meaningless, "and unless or until a theological statement can be submitted in some way to verification, it cannot be said to have a meaning in our language-game."[76]

A second major aspect of van Buren's methodology is his usage of the concept of "blik." A "blik" is a fundamental attitude about life which is not based upon empirical inquiry, and which is not verifiable. Above all, it should not be regarded as an explanation.[77] It is a way in which one "sees" history. It points to a person's having looked at his own life and all other history on the basis of his discernment of a locus in history and his committment to that locus.[78] This second part of van Buren's methodology complements the first. One may say something, but it has meaning only if he bases his "blik" upon it and orients his life accordingly.

The Christian is one who has seen in Jesus of Nazareth a man of remarkable freedom, van Buren says, and Jesus' freedom

has become contagious for him. Jesus' history and the Easter event have become a situation of discernment. They serve as the basis for the Christian's "blik," and it is around this "blik" that he reorients his perspective of the world. The empirical meaning of the Gospel will be its use by the Christian who proclaims it. If the Christian "witnesses for Christ" he is only expressing, defining, or commending his historical perspective, "for this is the secular meaning of that Gospel."[79]

Employing this methodology, van Buren determines that the New Testament portrays Jesus as being "free." Free in the sense that he had authority. Free in that he was open to friend or foe. Free in that although he was a faithful son of his parents, he was also free from familial claims. Free in that he could disregard religious rites and obligations if he felt it necessary. Free in that he was mythologically portrayed as being exempt from the limitations of natural forces. Free in that he did not need to rest his teaching on the authority of tradition. He was free also in the sense that he made no claims for himself. "He seems to have been so free of any need for status that he was able to resist all attempts by others to convey status on him."[80] His freedom was positive in that he had no anxiety and the need to establish his identity. The chief characteristic which can be described as "free" was his being free for his neighbor; Jesus had no need to pursue his own interests because of his personal wholeness, and so he was able to release his energies on behalf of his fellowman. (This characteristic of being an exceptionally free person could be said of other men.)[81]

John 1:1 looms large for van Buren's interpretation as it did for Bishop Robinson. The Logos, in van Buren's construction, was the plan of Yahweh. This plan, this purpose, was "incarnated" in the man Jesus. "What Yahweh had to say to man, what he had in mind for men, was to be heard and seen in the form of this man, who was, therefore, the very word of Yahweh."[82] This word, or plan must not be thought of as a Platonic idea, but as an action which demands a response. When seen in this way it involves no pagan idea of a transmutation of the divine into the physical. God's intention became an action in the Jesus of history; God's plan for the world was enacted in his Son. "Whatever men were looking for in looking for 'God' is to be found by finding Jesus of Nazareth."[83]

Van Buren's treatment of John 1:1 introduces his discussion of the two natures of Christ as spoken of in traditional, orthodox Christology. The uniqueness of Christ's birth ("incarnation") lies not in its meaning that he was something other than a man, but in its being the birth of the man who fulfilled Israel's role, i.e., his uniqueness "consisted in his being the man who bore a particular calling from Yahweh, to which he responded in his own particular history,"[84] and that particular history involved his being obedient even to the death on a cross.

To say that Jesus was "divine" is to say that one has been grasped by Jesus and his history in spite of himself. He has been "called."[85] Jesus determines the Christian's "blik," and so the use of praise and adoration is in order. The Nicene terminology fits well, "God of God, light of light, very God of very God," (but one must remember the Nicene Creed is a symbol) as well as that of the Apocalypse "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to

receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12)

And so van Buren has described Jesus as "true God." To say that he was true man is to say that he defines what it means to be a man, what man was made to be. He is also the "new man," in that he shows the goal of human life, i.e., the freedom for others which was Jesus' own. "Human being is being free for one's neighbor."[86] The doctrine of the human "nature" of Christ is thus placed by van Buren in the context of language appropriate to the history of a free man. The doctrine of the divine "nature," on the other hand, he placed in the context of language appropriate to a freedom which has been contagious, and to the historical perspective which arises from a discernment situation.

To speak of Jesus as true God, or to speak of the Lordship of Jesus is to replace oneself as the center of one's picture of the universe with freedom for his neighbor. The language of Christology functions empirically by defining the Christian's historical perspective and by indicating its roots in the Jesus of history and in the proclamation of the Good News of the Easter event. The Easter event was the discernment situation for the disciples. From that point on they were "called" by Jesus and saw the world in a new light. From that point on he served as the historical locus of their "blik." The disciples saw that Jesus' death was for them, and that constitutes the Atonement.

Jesus death was for us in that his life was one of freedom for men, and so his death is the plumb-line of that freedom. The man for whom Jesus' history and freedom have become a discernment situation and who considers this a matter of prime importance will

say, "He died for me, for my forgiveness and freedom." When the New Testament says that Jesus died also for the sins of the whole world, it means that Jesus was free for every man, and it is saying that it sees all men as being involved in this understanding of history. It is the articulation of the New Testament's "blik."[87]

The believer's confession that he has been saved by grace through faith is meaningless empirically, for then it would resort to mythological imagery. Rather, it is seen as the believer's statement of his "blik." When understood in this way, it is a testimony to his freedom, a freedom which allows him to feel he need not "prove" himself to himself or to anyone else.

> He is free to accept himself convinced that he is acceptable, for he has been set free by Jesus of Nazareth. His acceptance is simply his trust in the declaration, "Neither do I condemn you," and he acknowledges this word and its speaker, not his own history, as the basis of his perspective.[88]

What is seen anew is not the self (as in an existentialist interpretation), but Jesus of Nazareth. "There is no empirical ground, however, for the Christian's saying that something of this sort could not happen to a disciple of Socrates."[89] Van Buren is able to say this because he sees Jesus' Lordship as not being limited to the Church. "Any man who is free has caught his freedom from the same source as the Christian."[90] The Christian has not chosen Jesus rather than, for example, Socrates, but he has been chosen because of the "divinity" of Jesus. To one who argues that he chose Socrates as the basis of his own "blik," the Christian can only respond, "I did not choose; I was chosen."[91]

The peculiarities of William Hamilton's style will present

a serious hurdle for a simplified statement of his Christology. His style consists of thinking in fragments. The fragments are collected and treated without a systematic schema or order, and the relation of each to the other is imprecise. Hamilton is not attempting to make a formulation that is comprehensive or carefully reasoned out. He has chosen those parts of the Christian confession of faith which are apparently clear. He does not claim liability for whatever remains outside this designation.[92] This approach is a form of reductionism which aims for a core of Christian truth upon which further clarification can be made and additional statements added to the core of truth. One may desire more truth and light, but he must be patient and use what is available to "get on with" the task at hand.

The shape of Hamilton's approach is gleaned from The New Essence of Christianity, which was written in 1961. In Hamilton's autobiographical article on how his mind has changed[93] he pointed to his fortieth birthday in 1964 as one of three critical factors in his turning to radical theology from the comforts of neo-orthodoxy. The writings he has done since that birthday indicate that the method of fragmentation has continued to hold sway, although the conclusions to which he now comes are different from those of his earlier works. The current study will be confined to the later writings.

Because of Hamilton's fragmentary theology, it would be good to place him (as he places himself) in the context of his peers. Hamilton willingly associates himself with the "God-is-dead" movement in American theology. He characterizes the theology of this development with three motifs: The first is the "death of

God" which Hamilton uses more as a metaphor that describes what "a particular group of modern Western Christians" are experiencing than as an event.[94] A second motif is the "recognition of the centrality of the person of Christ in theological reflection."

Hamilton admits, however, that not all of the radical theologians relish Jesus and Christology, but all are aware that some way must be found to base their claim to be Christians. Hamilton's own Christology is a godless one. The time of the "death of God" is a time for obedience to his son Jesus. A figure of sufficient clarity can be known from the New Testament, Hamilton argues, and this figure serves as the basis for obedience, for a center of Christian faith and life. "The Christian is defined . . . as the man bound to Jesus, obedient to him and obedient as he was obedient."[95]

One can imagine easily that a godless Christology stirs up a large number of problems. The most difficult one for the radical to answer is the question, "Why have you chosen Jesus as the object of your obedience?" The answer cannot come on the basis of revelation, because Hamilton has rejected revelation.[96] Nor can the answer come from a vocational reason, as it does for van Buren, I was "called."

> No, this says too little, just as the doctrine of revelation says too much. Jesus is the one to whom I repair, the one before whom I stand, the one whose way with others is also to be my way because there is something there, in his words, his life, his way with others, his death, that I do not find elsewhere. I am drawn, and I have given my allegiance. There may be powerful teachings elsewhere, more impressive and moving deaths. Yet I have chosen him and my choice is not arbitrary nor is it anxiously made to avert the atheist label. It is a free choice, freely made.[97]

The third motif has been referred to in connection with Hamilton's concept of the Christian task in a world come of age. It is the feeling of hope and optimism which pervades the "God-is-dead" theology. This optimism does not ignore sin, suffering and tragedy, and it does not expect inevitable progress. It is a conviction that "substantive changes in the lives of men can and will be made."[98]

Hamilton further aligns himself with the so-called "hard" radicals. Soft radicals are concerned with the way in which the message is expressed, but not with changing the message. They are interested in the institution, communication, interpretation of Scripture, the maturing world, and modern man. "They have the Gospel, but they don't like the old words. They have God, but sometimes for strategic reasons they may decide not to talk about him."[99] The hard radicals have trouble with the message itself.

> The hard radicals, however varied may be their language, share first of all a common loss. It is not a loss of the idols, or of the God of theism. It is a real loss of real transcendence. It is a loss of God.[100]

Three critical events brought Hamilton to the threshold of allegiance with the hard radicals as he has defined them. The first was an encounter with selections from Bonhoeffer's prison letters. He discussed these letters with others who had read them, and he found an agreement that Bonhoeffer's writing "held a sort of desperate importance" for them.[101] The second event was his participation on a T. V. panel show in which he was to present the "Christian" answer to a problem which had been

discussed by a psychiatrist and a personnel man for a large company. Hamilton saw the situation as placing him in an embarrasing position. He mouthed a few pious phrases and was disillusioned with himself and the adequacy of the theology he espoused. The third event was his turning forty, to which attention has been drawn.

Hamilton's Christology is seen best in the light of his speaking of the Christian's task in a mature world as moving from Church to world. This way to the neighbor, this "ethical existence" is mapped out by Christ, and it is not only a way of waiting for God, but it is also an "actual Christology."[102] For the Christian to be in the world is for him to be obedient to both the Reformation formula (Church to world) and Jesus himself. Jesus is being disclosed in the world in the Christian's work. For Jesus is in the world "as masked," and the Christians' task is to "strip off the masks of the world to find him, and finding him, to stay with him and to do his work."[103] As the Christian moves into the world, he discovers himself as masks are torn off.

> Life is a masked ball, a Halloween party, and the Christian life, ethics, love, is that disruptive task of tearing off the masks of the guests to discover the true princess.[104]

But, the Christian does not merely tear off masks to reveal Christ, he also becomes Jesus in and to the world. One does not go around looking for Jesus, he becomes Jesus. "Become a Christ to your neighbor, as Luther put it."[105] It may be that in true Christology Jesus is not an object of faith, nor a person, nor an event or community, but "simply . . . a place to be,

a standpoint."[106]

> That place is, of course, alongside the neighbor, being for him. This may be the meaning of Jesus' true humanity and it may even be the meaning of his divinity, and thus of divinity itself.[107]

Thus the Christian, even though he does not know extensively what to believe, he at least does know where to be.

> Today, for example, he is with the Negro community in its struggle (he will work out his own understanding of what "being with" must mean for him), working and watching, not yet evangelizing.[108]

IV

CONCLUSION

An exhaustive critique of every description of the world come of age and the Christological reconstructions for such a world is beyond the scope of the present paper. An attempt will be made, however, to draw together certain strands which unite the different positions.

The first point to be made is that the presentations are weighted heavily in favor of secular man. Why is one seeking a "secular" meaning of the Gospel? He could seek the "communist" of the "Hindu" meaning as well. Why is not the search for the Gospel's meaning of the "secular"? Evidently the "secular" is assumed to be beyond question. The fallacy involved in such an assumption is the permanent nature of Christ and the Gospel is ignored out of deference to transient cultural thought patterns. As man's point of view shifts so that he is in a different position, he needs to evaluate the place where he stands as well as ~~the way~~

the way the object looks from that standpoint.

The world come of age has been epitomized as "a world which does not need God to solve its problems or to forgive its sins. It is the newly matured world which says, 'Please, God, I'd rather do it myself!'" (Vid. supra., p. 8) The citations given from the various authors combined with the current biblical illiteracy and failure to utilize the avenue of prayer are sufficient to substantiate basically the first part of the characterization. The world really can get along well without God when it has problems to solve. Unfortunately, life is more than a series of problems, for mature man still has a soul, and so the second half of the characterization is more difficult to swallow.

The loss of a sense of transcendence (Does that mean there is a corresponding absence of real transcendence?) obviously results in an absence of one's acceptance of personal responsibility. In a word, and this is the second point of evaluation, there is no real doctrine of sin present. It would seem that when Tillich, et. al., speak of a loss of transcendence, they are echoing the definition of original sin given by the Augsburg Confession, ". . . all men are full of evil lust and inclinations . . . and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God." (AC II) The authors cited attach no evaluation or criticism to the loss of a sense of transcendence and its consequent introversion upon man. A subtle idolatry is described. Original sin may be defined also as man's striving to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). To worship God is to place him at life's center rather than one's self. Bonhoeffer's desire in this connection is admirable. But man

in a mature world, having replaced the self with God, replaces God with his neighbor. This seems to be the logical conclusion to a theology which has lost a sense of the transcendental. If there is no supernatural realm, then one can only turn his attention to the natural one. The others around him become gods for him as he serves them and gives himself up for them. God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3).

The weakness in Bonhoeffer's thinking is evident in his criticism of the approach which tries to convince man of his sin. Among other things, Bonhoeffer thinks this approach is ignoble, "because it exploits 'the weakness of man for purposes alien to him and not freely subscribed to by him.'" (Vid. supra, p. 9) This statement supports the contention that man has replaced love of God for love of neighbor, for now it is not the law of God which is one's criterion, but the law of man. Bonhoeffer is further concerned to show that pointing out the sins of man is not biblical, for the Bible is concerned about the anthropos teleios. To this one must say, "Amen!" But in the next breath he must remind Bonhoeffer of that which constitutes the total relationship of man to God as shown in the Bible. It is simply that man is inflicted with

> . . . an inexpressible impairment and such a corruption of human nature that nothing pure nor good has remained in itself and in all its internal and external powers, but that it is altogether corrupted, so that through original sin man is in God's sight spiritually lifeless and with all his powers dead indeed to that which is good. (FC:SD, I)

The total relationship of unregenerate man to God is one of separation and alienation (Cf. Eph. 2:1-3).

It is interesting that Bonhoeffer, Tillich, Robinson, and van Buren are all concerned with man's feeling "accepted." The acceptance of which they speak has no object, however. This concern for acceptance shows that when a man comes of age he may put aside his childish ways, including infantile knowledge, but he is incapable of laying aside his sinful flesh with its passions and desires. Man will never "outgrow" his sarx, and so he will always stand in need of God's forgiving love in Christ. Bonhoeffer's earlier Christology still speaks of Christ standing pro me (vid. supra., p. 20), but in his later writings he emphasizes Christ's being for others as an example for us to follow.

The third criticism is contained also in this expression of concern that one be accepted. Such a concern is indicative of a profound yearning for God. In Bonhoeffer it is expressed as placing God in the center. Robinson's acceptance-motif is his way of yearning for God. The logic of van Buren's assertions implies a notion of God. "I was chosen" implies an external force which can override man's will. Hamilton also, in insisting that Jesus is the center indicates that Jesus is more than a man.

Robinson believes the doctrine of the Atonement is the supernatural doctrine which repulses mature mankind the most. He describes man's observing Jesus' union with the Ground of his being as a genre which appeals to a mature world, however. But what if the mature man finds himself not being in union with the Ground of his own being? Is there, then, any sense of guilt, any despair? Robinson discusses grace in Tillichian terms

as a voice which says, "You are accepted." Come now, is this "still, small voice" out of the dark any less repulsive than God's becoming incarnate? It does not seem that accepting the fact one is accepted is more comforting than an objective statement like Romans 5:1:

> Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

It seems that Robinson's and Tillich's concern for one's being accepted points to remnants of a theology which describes a personal God who judges and forgives.

The fourth criticism is the presentation of the person of Christ. Bonhoeffer's emphasis in his prison writings is not on the Christ pro me, but on the man for others. Does this shift from viewing Christ as a mediator to viewing him as one who shows me how I should live my life indicate a reversion to Arian Christology? Robinson makes a strong case that the New Testament does not speak of Christ as being God. The most he can say is that Jesus was a window into God at work. Would Robinson also say that there was a time when Jesus was not? For van Buren Christ was an extraordinarily free man, but so was Socrates. Van Buren gives no description of Jesus as being divine other than his contagiousness. And, since there is no God, according to Hamilton, his Jesus certainly cannot be the Son of God. Hamilton's position is even less than Arian.

Since Nicea and Chalcedon the confession of the Church has been that Jesus was homoousios with the Father. One must not state arrogantly that Chalcedon was infallible. Luther used the

erring of councils as a weapon in his struggle with the pope. The task facing one who would evaluate the formulations presented in this paper is a return to the Scriptures to see if they support the interpretation placed upon them by Nicea, Chalcedon, , and 1500 years of subsequent Church tradition.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Cf. "God is Changing," Time, LXXXVI (October 22, 1965), pp. 61-2; Ved Mehta, "The New Theologian," New Yorker, XLI (November 13, 1965), pp. 65ff.; (November 20, 1965), pp. 60ff.; (November 27, 1965), pp. 65ff.; Lee E. Dirks, "The Ferment in Protestant Thinking," The National Observer, January 31, 1966), pp. 1,16; "Toward a Hidden God," Time, LXXXVII (April 8, 1966), pp. 82ff.; John C. Bennett, "In Defense of God," Look, XXX (April 19, 1966), pp. 69-76.

[2] Letters and Papers From Prison, edited by Eberhard Bethge and translated by Reginald H. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Co., c. 1953), p. 197.

[3] "The Shape of a Radical Theology," Christian Century, LXXXII (October 6, 1965), p. 1221.

[4] Cf. David L. Edwards, "A New Stirring in English Christianity," The Honest to God Debate, edited by David L. Edwards (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c. 1963), pp. 13-44.

[5] The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963).

[6] Cf. James Warwick Montgomery, "A Philosophical - Theological Critique of the Death of God Movement," The Springfielder, XXX (Spring, 1966), pp. 18-50; cf. also, Thomas W. Ogletree, The Death of God Controversy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c. 1966), pp. 47-74.

[7] According to his own definition, ibid., 1220.

[8] Ibid., p. 194.

[9] Ibid., p. 195.

[10] Ibid., p. 162.

[11] Ibid., p. 195.

[12] Ibid., p. 146.

[13] Ibid., pp. 127f.

[14] For a more extensive treatment of Tillich's theology as a basis for much of contemporary radical theology, cf. The Theology of Paul Tillich, edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: The Macmillan Company, c. 1952), especially the essays by Walter M. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," pp. 26-49; Theodore M. Greene, "Paul Tillich and Our Secular Culture," pp. 50-67;

Theodor Siegfried, "The Significance of Paul Tillich's Theology for the German Situation," pp. 68-85.

15 Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture, edited by Robert C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 43.

16 Ibid., pp. 43f.

17 Honest to God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 13.

18 Ibid., p. 14.

19 Van Buren, ibid., pp. 197f.

20 Ibid., p. 198.

21 Ogletree, ibid., p. 33.

22 How the Church Can Minister to the World without Losing Itself (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 20.

23 Ibid.

24 Bonhoeffer, ibid., p. 167.

25 Ibid., p. 168.

26 Ibid., p. 195.

27 Ibid., p. 196.

28 Ibid., pp. 196f.

29 Ibid., pp. 209-210.

30 Ibid., p. 213.

31 Ibid., p. 166.

32 Ibid., pp. 190f.

33 Ibid., p. 191.

34 Ibid., p. 214.

35 Ibid., pp. 219f.

36 Ibid., pp. 175f.

37 Ibid., pp. 226f.

38 Van Buren, ibid., pp. 194f.

39 Ibid., pp. 188-191

[40] Harvey Cox, "The Secular City," Commonweal, LXXXVII (November 12, 1966), p. 188.

[41] Ibid., p. 189.

[42] Van Buren, ibid., p. 18.

[43] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

[44] Ibid., p. 103.

[45] Robinson, ibid., p. 33.

[46] Ibid., p. 44.

[47] Hamilton elaborates upon this terminology and shows his relationship to Bonhoeffer in "The Death of God Theologies Today," Radical Theology and the Death of God (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 37-50.

[48] Ogletree, ibid., p. 36.

[49] Ibid., p. 37.

[50] Hamilton, ibid., pp. 48-50.

[51] Ogletree, ibid., p. 38.

[52] Bonhoeffer, ibid., pp. 236-240.

[53] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christ the Center, translated by John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, c. 1960), p. 53.

[54] Ibid., p. 151.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 61.

[57] Ibid., p. 62.

[58] Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 237.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., pp. 243f.

[61] Robinson, ibid., p. 47.

[62] Ibid., p. 55.

[63] Ibid., p. 56.

[64] Ibid., p. 70.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Cf. John A. T. Robinson, "Resurrection in the New Testament," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, IV, edited by G. A. Buttrick, et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, c. 1962), pp. 43-53.

68 Robinson, Honest to God, p. 72.

69 Ibid., p. 75.

70 Ibid., p. 80.

71 Cf. Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (London: Nisbet, 1950), pp. 163f.

72 Ibid., p. 82.

73 Van Buren, ibid., pp. 2f.

74 Ibid., p. 11.

75 Ibid., p. 104.

76 Ibid., p. 105.

77 Ibid., p. 85.

78 Ibid., p. 113.

79 Ibid., p. 155.

80 Ibid., p. 123.

81 Ibid., p. 124.

82 Ibid., p. 52.

83 Ibid., p. 147.

84 Ibid., p. 53.

85 Ibid., p. 197.

86 Ibid., p. 163.

87 Ibid., p. 152.

88 Ibid., p. 181.

89 Ibid., pp. 138-9.

90 Ibid., p. 142.

[91] Ibid., p. 140.

[92] William Hamilton, The New Essence of Christianity (New York: Association Press, 1961), pp. 12-13, 25, 30.

[93] Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," p. 1219.

[94] Ibid., p. 1220.

[95] Ibid., p. 1221.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., p. 1220.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., p. 1219.

[102] Hamilton, "The Death of God Theologies Today," p. 48.

[103] Ibid., p. 49.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., p. 50.

[106] Hamilton, "Thursday's Child," Radical Theology and the Death of God, p. 92.

[107] Ibid.

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