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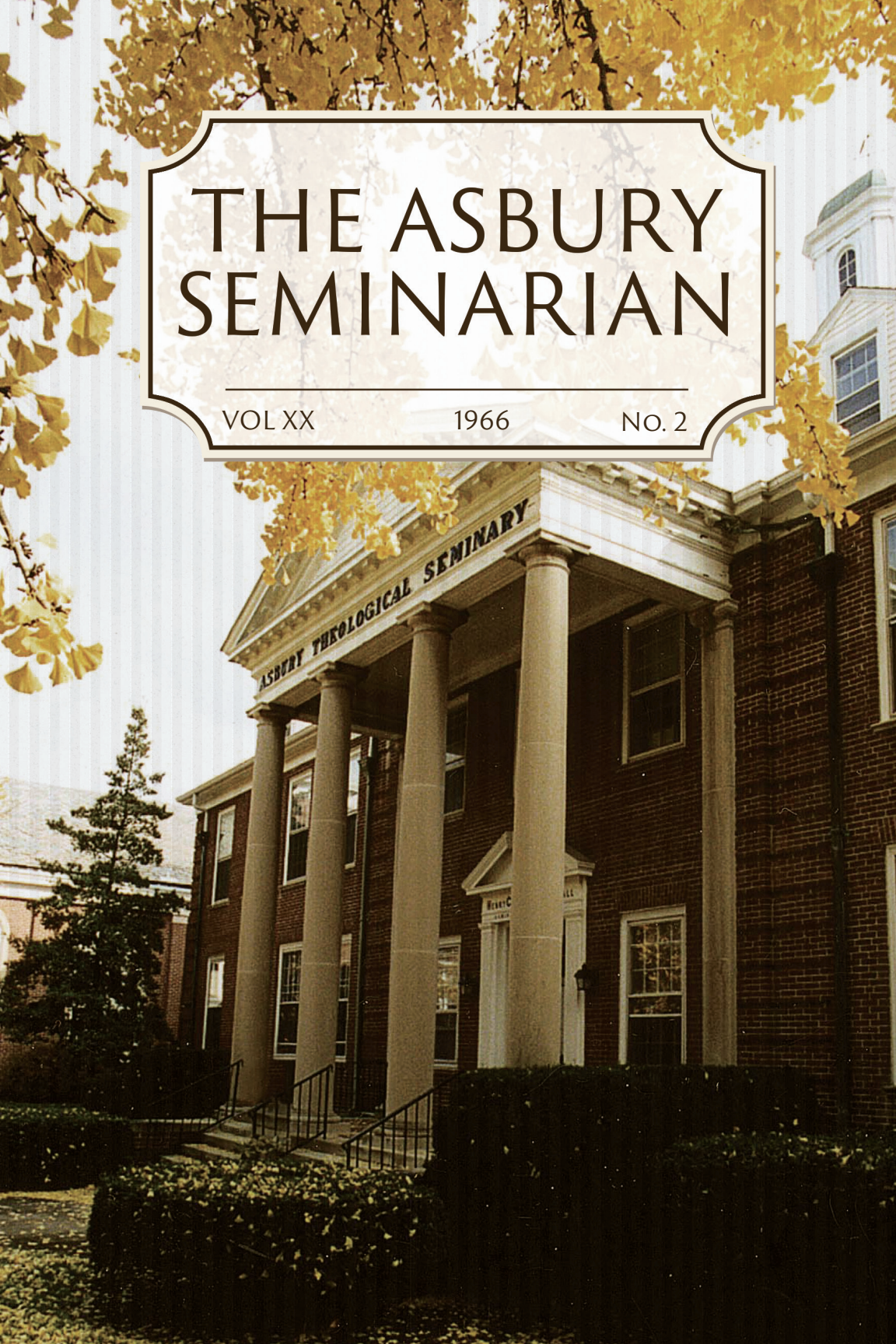

The Asbury Seminarian

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The Wesleyan Message In The Life And Thought Of Today

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The Asbury Seminarian, a semi-annual journal, is published in conjunction with the Asbury summer school bulletin and the annual catalog. The Asbury Seminarian, representing numbers I and II of the annual volume, is issued in January and June. The summer school bulletin is number III and the catalog is number IV.

Editorial: SOME FACETS OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

In this issue of *The Asbury Seminarian* the editorial committee undertakes an audacious task. However, it is deemed a necessary task. The committee recalls that an earlier issue of this periodical which dealt with contemporary theological trends was much in demand. This time we are attempting a similar task. The hazard lies in the ease with which one may assume that his sampling is representative of the whole. One is reminded of the familiar parable of the three blind men examining the elephant. One felt the tail and said the animal was like a rope; another felt a leg and said the elephant was like a tree; a third touched the side and was convinced the elephant was like a wall. We have asked our contributors to do an almost impossible task—that of examining the whole from the vantage point of the part. The danger is that of omitting salient features and overemphasizing lesser matters. We beg our readers' indulgence in this effort, trusting that it will be accepted for what it is intended to be—a sincere effort to lend some perspective and evaluation to certain facets of contemporary theology.

TRENDS IN LITERATURE

One of the most effective ways of ascertaining trends and contemporary issues is to examine the literature of an era. This is particularly difficult when literature is so excessively proliferated. Never before in human history has reading matter been so abundant and seldom has it been taken more casually. The extent and variety of our reading material tends to make us careless about its use. The newer media of communication tend to make reading itself a little bit "old fashioned." Nontheless, reading remains the most effective means of communication. A specialist in the field of literature contributes an article from the nation's crossroads. His competence in this very difficult field will be apparent to the readers of these pages.

In the current yearbook of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* an essayist reviewing the current production of literature concludes that little or no outstanding literature has been produced in recent months. Perhaps it is too much to expect really great literature to

appear every year or even in every decade. A glance at past centuries suggests that classic literature does not come with every generation. If one were to hazard an explanation for the current impoverishment of literary production it would be that the present generation —to a large extent—has been living on its inheritance rather than producing new and fruitful spiritual and intellectual discoveries. What is often regarded as new and vital theologically is an importation from Europe. Perhaps this country is still too much given to activism to be really creative in this area.

Not only is contemporary literature mediocre but there is little in it that is concerned with the doctrine of God. In a recent TV panel of authors and publishers it was noted that, unlike novels of the mid-nineteenth century, novels of today reflect uncertainty about the ultimate issues of life and death. There is even less certainty about the values of life, even to the difference between right and wrong; values and virtues are considered relative.

There are two facets, however, of contemporary literature which merit special mention. One is the recurring theme of sex. In the essay to which reference has already been made, contemporary writers, in a high percentage of cases, speak casually of sex mores as if extramarital sex were the norm. The contemporary interest in the subject is being exploited by some covertly, by others overtly. At a time when *Esquire Magazine* is discovering that life presents other interesting themes besides sex, *Playboy Magazine* professes to having discovered a new bonanza in this area. Its editor is a self-styled prophet of a "new morality," one in which age-old self-discipline is scorned. More meaningful than these is the attitude of the average reader to accept sex not only as a matter of course but as a welcome addition to his intellectual diet. The depraved appetite of the public and the greed of writers and publishers are greatly aided by court decisions, which coalescence has made the identification of pornographic literature virtually impossible. Perhaps the most disturbing phases of this is public indifference or tolerance of the unwholesome. In Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* the public preoccupation with "beauty queens" is satirized as a new form of idolatry, not unlike the fertility goddesses of pre-Christian cults.

Another facet of contemporary literature of special interest to theologically oriented persons is the concern with death. Recently a mid-western college student-sponsored forum chose death as its topic. Why was this? In most of the ages of mankind death has normally been a family community affair, and often a lingering one. The expression of sorrow was to be expected. In more recent times we have become accustomed to the spectacle of sudden death. An aeroplane crashes with four-score passengers aboard who perish instantly in flames. The death toll on American highways in one weekend may reach six hundred sudden deaths. As we read, defenders of freedom are exposing themselves to sudden death on the battlefields of Southeast Asia.

Modern man has succeeded in conquering most of the problems of his environment, of space and time, but has made little progress in his battle with death. The increasing number of suicides gives some evidence that many times death is welcomed as a way out. Others have treated death as an unnatural and unwelcome intruder into their routine of living. There are those who say that it comes as a friend. The traditional Christian view is that death is an enemy over which Christ alone has found victory. This is the teaching of the New Testament and one of the contributing factors in winning converts to Christianity in the early centuries of our era. Now "Christian" voices seem less confident about the next life and the passage to it than their forefathers. Has the scientific age blunted our spiritual sensitivity? Has the exploration of space tended to make the passage into the next life less meaningful? Without question the imagery connected therewith seems less plausible in an age preoccupied with science and the conquest of space. The effect of this upon Christian evangelism both public and private is obvious. It is probable that Jonathan Edwards' sermon entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" would be less gripping now than when it was delivered, if only because of our preoccupation with science and with astronauts who have thus far failed to locate heaven or hell. More significantly, they are not looking for such. For the Christian, however, the words of the Master are reassuring that God is not bound spatially but that He is to be found where He is worshipped in spirit and in truth.

THE "NEW MORALITY"

One of the worst effects of war is a downward revision of moral standards. Due to this, together with an increasing global society, many old inhibitions nave vanished, both personal and community. The accessibility of contraceptive devices is a scientific contribution which can be either a blessing or a bane. To many it facilitates and perhaps justifies extramarital sex relations without the traditional penalties which have inhibited such practice through the ages. Virginity prior to marriage, prized so highly in most ancient societies and demanded by Christian ethics, is in the eyes of some a source of embarrassment. There has been, indeed, a sex revolution. The new freedom is hailed by many as a deliverance from the so-called prudery of "Victorianism." The tendency now is to dismiss as "Victorian" or "puritanical" the virtues of chastity and modesty, which have antecedents that go further back and deeper than the nineteenth century.

Today sex promiscuity is often labeled the "new morality." There is little in it that is new. Most of it is the old immorality. The newness of it lies more in the freedom from inhibition, in its relative freedom from censorship. To a large measure it marks simply a revival of pre-Christian paganism. It is the culture which vitiated the life of Greece and Rome. The Roman Empire did not fall so much

from pressures without as from disintegration within. The "new morality," therefore, is really a resurgence of the old immorality, the type which St. Paul and the early Christians condemned so vigorously and so effectively. The newest thing about it is that in some quarters it is viewed with tolerance or even sanctioned by those who profess adherence to Christ. The chaplain of a girls' college was quoted as saying in a sermon, "Sex before marriage may not be bad; it may be even redemptive." A bishop has gained international prominence by asserting that absolute standards and practices in this area should not be insisted upon.

It has been said of Paul's trilogy of virtues that faith and hope have been lost by the present generation and only love remains. In the light of the foregoing the question may be raised whether the so-called love that remains is *agape* or *eros*, divine love or romantic love. Is not the new morality seeking, sometimes with ecclesiastical sanction, to substitute *eros* for *agape* without discrimination? A case might be made out also that much of the impetus for the current crusade for the equality of man stems from the *fileō* or brotherly love as much or more than from *agapaō* or divine love. The basic root of this new morality, or rather, new immorality, often with ecclesiastical tolerance, is attributable to the new commitment to existentialism. Is it not, in part at least, the result of the new humanism which makes the individual the center and end of existence? Everyone, then, can do that which is right in his own eyes. There is no absolute standard of right and wrong. Each one makes up his own standard. Ethics is relative, as Sartre, Camus, and the logical positivists insist. One may wonder whether those who call this "new" morality have ever read Heraclitus (500 B.C.) and his successors who have constantly inveighed against absolutes. From the perspective of history, and from the posture of faith, one may affirm his conviction that the new morality may be scoring some temporary victories but in the end will be put in its place by the sternness of the universal moral law which has never yet been repealed.

There are also encouraging aspects of the new morality. The social conscience seems more sensitive than formerly. A concern for one's neighbor seems more prevalent now than in most other times in human history. The strong are more willing to bear the infirmities of the weak. Initiated in most cases by the Christian conscience working like leaven in secular society, social concern is expressing itself to an unprecedented degree in social security, medicare, and concern for the indigent and infirm. This is seen on an international scale as well since the "strong" nations are willing to bear the infirmities of the "weak," and to foster their natural aspirations for freedom and equality. Leaders in this are those nations most influenced by the Bible, namely, the United States and the United Kingdom. Communist nations have been forced in many cases to follow the same strategy in order to win friends and influence peoples.

Another facet of this is seen in the recent modification of our immigration quotas to a policy of admitting people according to personal merit rather than according to country of origin. This reflects a new emphasis toward the individual as a person rather than merely a member of an ethnic unit. Most of us prefer to be judged as individuals, as persons, rather than as a member of a group.

The most striking manifestation of the recognition of individual worth is the social revolution in the civil rights movement. Here the moral emphasis in support of voter registration, equality in education, opportunities for employment, equitable housing, and equal access to public accommodations, is "over the hump" so far as general acceptance in this country is concerned. The fact that it has been so long delayed, that Christians have too often been complacent about the situation, and that it has been won at such a cost to minorities, should be a source of embarrassment to every American citizen. That it is finally coming is assured.

Civil rights leaders now face the temptation of success, often a tougher test of character than adversity. Will the civil rights movement discipline itself in its demands? Will it be more concerned with the total social welfare than are some monopolistic labor unions and their leaders? Will charismatic leaders like Dr. King be content to consolidate gains and patiently work out the details or will they feel compelled to keep themselves in the headlines by moving from one crisis to another? Will integration remain token or real? White moderates have a major responsibility to see that it does; they will decide whether segregation will become truly voluntary or remain involuntary. The tendency of civil rights advocates to pontificate about the United States' involvement in world affairs creates apprehension as to the judgment and moderation of some civil rights leaders.

A NEW LANGUAGE

From modern "would-be" prophets comes a recurring emphasis that the older traditional expressions of faith are meaningless to modern men. This is at most only a half truth. It is true that every age has its characteristic idiom and the Gospel should be phrased to articulate the thought forms of the current age. A good precedent of this is set by the writers of the Bible. The prophets and apostles went out of their way to find language that would give their message the maximum impact upon their contemporaries. This needs to be done today as in every generation. Often, however, rebels against theological language do not seem to be reaching the public even after "demythologizing" the New Testament or allegorizing the Old. One gets the impression that the proponents of discarding the old terminology need not so much to get new words to match contemporary experience as to experience the reality conveyed by the biblical terminology. The thing missing in most cases is not the right label but the lack of content. If a person becomes a "new creature in

Christ," people will still sit up and take notice when he reports what has happened to him, regardless of his language. People are still hungry and thirsty for spiritual vitality, for biblical and existential realism.

The need for new language is only half of the truth. The other half is that to speak in pictorial terms is inevitable, even in our sophisticated age of science. We never will get to the place where we can speak to the popular mind in purely conceptual language. For example, we speak of "sunrise" and "sunset" as if to imply that the sun was revolving around the earth. Why do we not say the sun appears and disappears? Because this descriptive, picturesque language is used does anyone think that the users of it are Ptolemaic in their cosmology? News media speak of gathering the news "from the four corners of the earth" as if to imply that the earth is flat and square. Is this confusing to modern man? Do users of this nomenclature believe that the earth is flat? We speak of "sailing" in "steamships" which are diesel-powered. To use the allegedly antiquated terminology of the Bible may be less a hindrance when speaking to spiritual illiterates than is commonly supposed. It is significant that the apostles of a new religious nomenclature seem to get a less popular hearing than those who still speak to their contemporaries in biblical terms. Even to sophisticated moderns it seems quite likely that the "cleansing of the heart" is as meaningful as "rectification of the will." What is needed therefore, is not so much to translate biblical terms into scientific contemporary equivalents as it is for the expounder of the Scriptures to experience what its writers experienced of God through Christ.

EXISTENTIALISM

From an historical standpoint modern existentialism represents a change from philosophies of essence to those of existence, from philosophies of conceptualism to those of pragmatism, from being to becoming, from concept to decision. The older philosophy could say with Descartes, "I think, therefore I am." The newer existentialism believes "I am, therefore I think." It is hereby suggested that many of the proponents of existentialism are in reality twentieth century Gnostics. They are exponents of a philosophical rather than of a biblical theology. While ostensibly they place knowledge in a secondary position, actually they rate sophistry higher than faith. The Gnostics of the second century of our era prided themselves on being more sophisticated than ordinary Christians. They lived on knowledge while others lived on faith. They were not content with the traditional language and forms of the Christian faith but were eager to boldly explore and appropriate contemporary intellectual trends and incorporate them into their Christian profession. A library of some of these Gnostics has recently been uncovered in the sands of Egypt, after having been preserved there during the centuries. When writing to the Colossians and the Corinthians, Paul warned them

against such an incipient gnosticism. John was aware of it when he wrote his first epistle. The early Christians were not against knowledge as such. But they were suspicious of those who considered knowledge more important than faith, hope, and love. Perhaps the best representative of this contemporary gnosticism is the late Paul Tillich. The similarities between his philosophical theology and the speculations of the early Gnostics is rather striking.

The avowed purpose of the modern existentialists is commendable, namely, to break from meaningless antiquated thought forms to idioms meaningful to their contemporaries. Is there any evidence that they have succeeded in what is their avowed and commendable purpose? Have they not rather substituted for the Christ of faith a Christ who exists only in the cogitations of those who are reluctant to discard the Christian tradition but yet present little more than a synthetic "Christ" of gnostic speculations. Many modern existentialists, like the ancient Gnostics, present a "Christ" who does not so much save from sin as deliver from ignorance and matter. What will be the future of pulpits filled with seminarians trained in schools committed to the existentialism of a pseudo-theology? The virtues and vices of today's "creative thinkers" will be a blessing or bane to church goers for the next generation. The pulpit is usually a decade behind the lecture. Many books are out of date by the time they are in print.

SO GOD IS DEAD!

The avowed disciples of some existentialist theologians are now willing to take the step which their spiritual fathers hesitated to do. Some of them are blithely announcing that God is already "dead." One of the more prominent apostles of this movement is a professor in a theological school; another is on the faculty of a church-related university. When the Psalmist heard that someone announced the death of God he called him a "fool." When Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God he was regarded by Christians as a blatant pagan. One of his most influential disciples was Adolph Hilter. Nietzsche repudiated not only Christian theology but Christian ethics. He scorned the Christian principle that "the meek shall inherit the earth." He was contemptuous of the Christian ethic that the "strong should bear the infirmities of the weak." Rather, he called for the elimination of the weak and the supremacy of the superman. Hilter put Nietzsche's theory into practice. Now we behold the spectacle of this philosophy being supported by funds consecrated to the Christian church, speaking with quasi-ecclesiastical authority. In the tradition of Nietzsche an avowed disciple of Tillich, Altizer of Atlanta, is quoted as saying, "Only when God himself has died in his original and primordial form can he be truly known as the source of alienation and repression." He adds, "The death of God makes possible wholly new forms of faith; the new humanity which they proclaim . . . calls for the reversal of all moral law and the

collapse of all historical religion" (*Christian Advocate,* Dec. 16, 1965, p. 22). It is significant here to note that, according to one of the more uninhibited and articulate disciples of this movement, not only theology but ethics is involved. History, if not the Bible, should teach responsible and thoughtful persons that theistic belief and ethics are usually linked, and it is very significant that a call to recognize the death of God is accompanied by a call also to renounce the lessons of history and even a reversal of moral law. Those who respond to this challenge find themselves in spiritual and moral chaos. It is a nihilism, perhaps even more candid than even that of Nietzsche himself. Is this really, as it professes to be, the consequence of the existentialism of the twentieth century's most influential theologian?

IN SUMMARY

On the whole, contemporary moral and theological trends, as seen editorially, are far from reassuring. Least reassuring is the frequency with which religious leaders are saying that there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. Bishop J.A.T. Robinson is saying (*Christian Morals Today*) that no rule is invariably mandatory, that morals are relative to the situation of the participants. Such an attitude can only lead eventually to moral choas, in which every man does what "is right in his own eyes." After concluding that the Bible contains numerous errors, many hold that even its most basic principles are no longer authoritative or relevant.

Douglas Rhymes (*No New Morality*) likewise has no final answer about what is right or wrong in any given situation. Instead of having a moral law to govern conduct in a given situation, he not only leaves it up to the individual in the situation but gives no fixed guideposts for judgment in that situation. Such is the heritage of two generations of Freudian psychoanalysis and the subjective "ethics" of existentialism.

Midway between an objective moral standard and the existential subjective attitude is a variation of the latter, called situation or contextual ethics. In Joseph Fletcher (*Situation Ethics*) the position is taken which admits absoluteness only in the category of *love.* This, he argues, may justify extramarital sex *in certain situations.* Much is made of the principle of the lesser of two evils even when other alternatives are available.

While Jesus made love and law inseparable—"if ye love me keep my commandemnts" (John 14:15)—modern "prophets" preach a "love without law." This is antinomianism (cf. II Peter 2:1-10).

Against this the Word of God shines as light in moral darkness and chaos. Believers are still a minority and need to discover and affirm the eternal truth found in the Scriptures, as verified by life, "for such a time as this." Jeremiah was asked the question "Is there any word from the Lord?" by King Zedekiah at a time of

national crisis. Some are asking this question rather wistfully today. We can confidently affirm that there is! The answer comes, in large measure, from another passage in Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the ways and see. Ask for the old paths wherein is a good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest to your souls." Those who dare to accept Jesus' challenge and come to Him will find this rest still available today (Jer. 6:16; Matt. 11:28-30).

G.A.T.

THE MODERN TEMPER IN LITERATURE

Paul M. Bechtel

Theological students and clergymen, like other professional people, are increasingly aware of the proliferation of knowledge. When they think seriously about it, they are astonished or bewildered by the masses of information to be assimilated and brought under some measure of intellectual control. The natural sciences double the information within their fields every few years. The behavioral studies like social science, psychology, and anthropology are amassing descriptive data and research information at a similar rate.

Phenomenal development is evidenced as well in other disciplines like theology, history, philosophy, and the arts. Specialization, much as we deplore the narrowed horizon it imposes, has been for many modern men the only possible response to the knowledge explosion. But not everyone should be a specialist alone—certainly teachers and theologians ought not limit themselves to the province of their special competence.

Most churchmen are aware of theology's current lively interest in contemporary literature. Seminary courses in theology and modern literature, conferences addressing themselves to the renewal of dialogue between the church and the arts, scores of books and articles on the subject, are witness to the apparent discovery of related concerns. The theologian finds in modern writing a valid description of contemporary men—the needy ones to whom he is pledged to bring the redemptive message. Concrete human situations made vivid and urgent in the novel and drama may often lay bare the basic self better than the philosopher's abstractions and the sociologist's statistics. To be seriously interested in literature is to be seriously interested in life.

If modern literature is to serve any useful purpose it must be approached on its own premises. The once didactic literature of the nineteenth century, the genteel tradition, has given way under the impact of two great wars to literature of a different order. Most modern writers do not regard their work as a force for moral uprightness and cultural stability, as the Victorians commonly did. They preach no absolutes, seek no anchorage in tradition, plead for no fixed

moral code or rigid discipline of self. Old patterns of thought in politics, economics, and general culture apparently must be routed. "The establishment" has broken down under new cultural burdens. The stiffness of the past is as anachronistic as the Gothic cathedral on a modern city street.

Down a twisted and rutted road contemporary man gropes his way with neither pole star to guide him nor echoing heavens to comfort him. Alienated and alone, an outsider, he is filled with anguish and dread, tormented ceaselessly from the depths of the subconscious. This is the vision of disillusioned man, who has forfeited, or never known, his identity as a unique creature. He is the rootless wanderer who moves through the pages of Sartre, Camus, Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, Bellow, Mailer, and a host of other writers.

These writers find it hard to acknowledge an external superintending force. Hence they engage in a ceaseless effort to create God in their own image, to lock eternity into time. They sketch a world which may make it on its own by setting realizable moral limits. In breaking off metaphor from belief, they would claim, they are not acknowledging loss of faith but a search for new reality.

The novel is quickly responsive to every intense concern—existentialism, the new morality, civil rights, homosexuality, the loss of identity, economic reform, the threat of nuclear war. Existentialism has had its most striking expression in French works like Sartre's *Nausea* and Camus' *The Stranger* and *The Plague*. Although there has been no American existentialist school, there are characters in pursuit of existential values in Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* and Saul Bellow's *Herzog*. Ellison and Bellow are concerned with identity in the modern world, with meaning in a world without God, with the source of values when transcendence and ultimacy have been denied. Many critics now regard Bellow—after the passing of Faulkner and Hemingway—as the foremost living American novelist. It is of the nature of the times, unhappily, that he could not give any kind of positive answer to the question, "Why am I here?"

The negro novelists have championed the cause of their own people in words of angry protest. Most of these writers are astute enough to realize that they must choose between literature as art and literature as protest. For the time being at least, they have chosen the latter. Art can wait until the territory of conscience has been invaded. Richard Wright's *Native Son,* Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man,* and James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* and *Another Country* are all strongly denunciatory of a society which imposes numerous indignities upon a large number of its citizenry. Most of these books are violent, although there is a substantial structure of truth in them. *Another Country*, praised by some competent critics, is inexcusably debased in language and situation; it lacks both taste and art.

Flannery O'Connor, at the time of her early death in 1964, was winning a growing acclaim. Hers is essentially a Christian world view, although it is often difficult for readers to recognize such a vision in the midst of the violence Miss O'Connor thought it necessary to use in order to gain attention in an age of violence. John Updike continues to be warmly championed by the critics as a superb stylist, but his limited canvasses lack wide popular appeal. He has yet to show the breadth and depth and intensity of a major novelist. J. D. Salinger's saga of the curiously erratic Glass family seems about played out. The prolific James Gould Cozzins, whom many felt would be a major talent, appears to have fallen short of the promise. Critical preoccupation with novelists who reflect the raw and jagged edges of a broken world, who subscribe to the naturalistic assumptions, leaves little room to acclaim quality novels like Shelly Mydans' *Thomas* (the story of Thomas a Beckett), Zoe Oldenbourg's *Destiny of Fire* (about the Albigensian persecution), and Conrad Richter's wholesomely pleasant novels of American pioneering days.

Modern drama had its beginning with Ibsen and the "social problem play" (*A Doll's House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the People*). The emphasis was continued in Shaw (*Mrs. Warren's Profession, Major Barbara*) and Galsworthy (*Justice*). More recent drama, like other art forms, has been vigorously alive and abrasive. It has set forth the climate of our times, recognized the doubts and confusion of the age, explored the dark recesses of the human heart. In America Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, working in reasonably conventional forms, continue to be the leading playwrights, often mirroring inner deterioration and that fear of meaninglessness which Tillich has designated as the special dread of contemporary man. Other dramatists worthy of attention are O'Neil (generally thought to be the greatest of the Americans), Synge, O'Casey, Anouilh, Pirandello, Brecht, Lorca, and Wilder.

Abroad the theater of the absurd, one of the radical experiments in drama, has attracted substantive attention with its ideas and innovations. The absurdists have appropriated the underlying philosophic assumptions of existentialism. They see man trapped in a world he did not make and cannot alter, wandering without significance and identity toward the doom of death, which frustrates reasonable expectations for long life, happy marriage, and modest security. This structure of ideas draws together such writers as Camus, Sartre, Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, and Adamov. They are most concerned with thematic ideas. Commonly they make no distinction between farce and tragedy, for in a world of absurdity and impotence our emotions can easily be reversed to make us laugh at the pitiful and cry over the ludricrous.

Eugene Ionesco's *The Bold Soprano* introduces the Smiths and the Martins, who can no longer talk lucidly to each other because they can no longer think or feel passions. They have lost their

identity as unique beings; they could become as interchangable as bits of standard machinery. What Ionesco deplores is the unrelieved conformity, the loss of individuality, the easy acceptance of shibboleths by the multitudes which transforms them into robots. The world has lost its philosophic sensibility, its sense of mystery.

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* has been the most striking of the absurdist plays. At the beginning of Act I two tramps are seen on a country road by a single tree. The play ends as it begins with these two engaged in directionless dialogue, waiting in vain for Godot, whose name clearly suggests God. Without ever saying it directly, the drama's mood implies an absurd world in which God is distantly known as a name but is nowhere engaged in the human venture. When asked what *Waiting for Godot* means, Beckett responded: "If I knew, I would have said so in the play."

Modern poetry has been less bitter than the novel and drama, yet the poet too shares much of the uncertainty of the other arts about ultimate things. Except for figures like Frost and Sandburg, modern poets have a quite limited audience, chiefly because the general reader finds the language and metaphor difficult. It should be remembered, however, that the poet has sought to do something really difficult in trying to suggest through his work all the complexity of our time in images that match the disarray of experience. He compounds the reader's difficulty by substituting for the propositional statement of nineteenth century poetry new symbols, images, and discontinuities of thought. In addition to Eliot, Auden, Thomas, Spender, MacNeice, the Sitwells and Larkin have been much praised. Of the more recent American poets Lowell, Roethke, Eberhart, and Wilbur have been particularly commended. No recent poet has been quite so much publicized as the young Russian, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, who in his flamboyant verse has spoken out with what seems like a surprising measure of freedom.

Human destiny, sketched in somber hues, has won serious attention in modern art because so many people have thought there is so much in the world today to authenticate the picture. If the vision were merely a ludicrous caricature of experience, no one would give it serious attention. Strongly fixed as the image of man in alienation is in the contemporary consciousness, the view does not go unchallenged. Man as a unique creation fashioned in the image of God has its defenders too.

T. S. Eliot was by far the most influential of modern Christian writers. He gave light and leading to many and showed that moral and religious standards in literature are something more than a Puritan anachronism. Impressive also have been figures like C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, Joyce Cary, Graham Greene, W. H. Auden, Paul Claudel, and Francois Mauriac. They have kept open a meaningful and attractive alternative to alienation and nihilism. They have helped also to excite significant dialogue

between theology and literature. Others too have joined in the dialogue, and out of the lively interest has come a substantial list of good books. Among them might be cited: *Christian Faith and the Contemporary Arts,* edited by Finley Eversole; *The Climate of Faith in Modern Literature,* edited by Nathan Scott; *The Failure of Theology in Modern Literature,* by John Killinger; *American Literature and Christian Doctrine*, by Randall Stewart; *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition,* by Amos Wilder, and *The New Orpheus: Essays Toward a Christian Poetic,* edited by Nathan Scott.

Writers like Greene, Eliot, and Lewis, while seeing orthodox religion as exciting material for the literary imagination, sometimes add to the substance of belief radical elements drawn from the most advanced pronouncements of contemporary culture. C. S. Lewis' space trilogy—*Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, That Hideous Strength*—draws frequently upon insights from the new psychology, anthropology, and physics. In these novels Lewis introduces large and transcendent issues but hardly deals explicitly with them. His approach is through a world of myth. Clyde S. Kilby says of this myth world: "There is a great, sovereign, uncreated, unconditioned Reality at the core of things, and myth is on the one hand a kind of picture-making which helps man to understand this Reality and on the other hand a deep call from that Reality."

In the novels of Graham Greene the bearers of God's witness are people burdened by fallibility and incompetence rather than saints and heroes. Yet even in these fallen ones Greene sees grace at work in the wounded spirit. His fundamental obsession, that sin calls forth grace, that sanctity follows after sin, may have little approval in orthodoxy. Yet it should be noted that here is a major novelist in whom there is still an acknowledgement of transcendence, who believes a real God reigns, has expressed himself in the Word, and actually offers grace, mercy, and peace. *The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter,* and *A Burnt-Out Case* are generally thought to set forth the landscape of Greeneland at its best.

Greene has frequently acknowledged his indebtedness to Francois Mauriac, who like himself is a Catholic novelist. The more positive and perceptive note is struck in Mauriac, particularly in *A Woman of the Pharisees.* Mauriac's characters are usually pressed hard by some consuming obsession like a desire to manipulate the lives of others, as in *A Woman of the Pharisees,* or for vengeance in *Vipers Tangle.* Yet unrighteousness is softened and transformed in Mauriac by a slow process invasion of grace from many directions rather than through a direct challenge by doctrine.

One may note that these Christian writers are predominantly Anglican and Catholic. Why these should be more productive artistically than other Christian groups is not easy to say. Some have suggested that within these traditions the commitment to liturgy, to symbol, to sacramentalism, to a theological structure more sensitive

to the aesthetic—encourages artistic sensibility and creativity.

That theological subjects or theologically related figures can make successful subjects for drama is shown in John Osborne's recent *Luther* (hardly an honor to the stalwart of Reformation faith), Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* (about Sir Thomas More), Archibald MacLeish's *J B* (using, or misusing, basic themes from *Job),* and Rolfe Hochhuth's *The Deputy* (a severe indictment of Pius XII's failure to denounce Hitler's massacre of the Jews). No drama in history has evoked so violent a response as Hochhuth's.

In a world as complex as our own no one banner draws the allegiance of all. Where there are many loyalties, no generalization is wholly valid. Ours is both an age of faith and unfaith. But denial has outpaced affirmation. Therefore Sartre and Camus get a larger popular following than Eliot and C. S. Lewis. Camus examined the assumptions of Christianity and found them, for him at least, an untenable option. And there are hosts of intellectuals like him. These people represent God in terms of His absence—the negative way—the "God-shaped blank." Sartre says he bears the burden of the world—an impossible burden because God is silent. This is a preposterous declaration certainly, but one which is made with conviction nonetheless.

Some Christians would say in response to Camus and Sartre: "Why bother with these people; they are diseased minds." To respond this way is to make our gravest error. They are artists who represent with great power one aspect of the world mind of our time. They brief us not so much on the environment we must denounce as they unfold for us authentically the area of our opportunity and responsibility. Here is where estrangement and denial can be responded to only by a reiteration of the Gospel of love in Christ. Rigorous unbelief can be matched by a small but intellectually very respectable company of modern Christian writers. Always, too, there are the great reserves like Augustine, Pascal, and Dostoevsky.

Contemporary Christian writing at its best is of a high order. But most modern writing gives back the world's own note. Even so, some close awareness of the natural can keep the church from becoming irrelevant. The sophisticated deniers of God's sovereignty in the world may well be serving His purposes by reminding us of what the world is like when Jesus Christ is denied His Lordship in human affairs.

EXISTENTIALISM IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Harold B. Kuhn

The existential mood, developing as a concomitant of the breakdown of much that has considered itself to be modern in philosophy, has sought to articulate itself at several levels during the past hundred years. This particular survey is intended to note the manner in which the existential point of viewing has found expression in some forms of non-English literature during the past century. More especially is it designed to trace the manner in which the themes elaborated by existentialist philosophers are found as outcroppings in the works of novelists and dramatists.

It goes without saying that Søren Kierkegaard gave to modern existentialism certain identifiable traits, which have tended to serve as common denominators for the movement. Outstanding among these are: opposition to essentialist systems, stress upon the individual as the bearer of authentic value, emphasis upon the individual intellect as the major perceiver of truth, and a distrust of mass attitudes and mass action.[1] Kierkegaard appears to have been clairvoyant as he looked ahead from the mid-nineteenth century and saw the processes of standardization which were to shape society and to tailor the individual to a streamlined pattern of thinking and acting. He embodied in himself the gifts of the philosopher and the dramatist, and merits treatment in terms of his very great abilities as a man of letters, treatment which will not, however, be undertaken here.

RUSSIAN LITERATURE

To a degree which is not ordinarily recognized in the West, Russia produced a series of literary men who incorporated the existentialist mood into their works, prior to the emergence of any

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1. John D. Wild, *The Challenge of Existentialism* (Bloomington, Ind.: University Press, 1955), pp. 42ff.

articulate existentialist movement. Since these men, notably Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Tolstoy and Gorky, were almost apocalyptic in tone, one wonders, in retrospect, why the Romanoffs did not perceive the "handwriting on the wall" during some of their banquetings in the Kremlin. These writers, from the perspective of troubled times and of their own personal problems, peered into the future and saw the shape of things in existential terms.

One thinks at once of Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, standing unclad in mid-winter with twenty others for half an hour, awaiting death at the hands of a firing squad, only to be told at the last moment that Czar Nicholas I had commuted the sentence to imprisonment in Siberia. The mental torture consequent upon this brutal and calculated staging of an execution left an indelible mark upon the mind of Dostoevsky, one from which he never escaped. His subsequent experiences in Siberia were mirrored in his *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, while the long series of works which followed from his pen bore the marks of his feeling of tortured loneliness, his intimate contacts with misery and death, and his critical attitude toward a complacent society, drugged with the opiates of idealist and essentialist dogmas of inevitable progress.

Dostoevsky's characters are noteworthy for their subjectivism and for their ruthless self-analysis. One notes, for example, the tortured scene of self-confessions in *The Idiot*, in which persons of high standing in the social scale make a parlor game of self-incrimination. At another level, the same phenomenon is seen in *The Possessed*. One gains the impression here that the author is describing a sort of inverted hypocrisy, in which the participants vie with one another to appear worse than they really are. To say the least, they are seeking to break out from the restrictive bands of the mass-man and of the mass-psychology, and find in this almost masochistic exercise their own individuality.

The large use of psychopaths as characters in his works marks a conspicuous departure from the conventional practice of the novelists of the time. Not only does Dostoevsky explore every by-pass of the human psyche—he does this to be sure—but he portrays the struggles which occur when men and women stand at the boundary of existence and find themselves unable to assimilate the mysteries of death and of eternity with which concrete human existence confronts them. Being apparently little interested in portraying the external and economic elements which impinge upon human life, Dostoevsky shows us his characters as faced with the elements of perplexity and contradiction with which concrete existence abounds, and as meeting these elements with the entire range of reactions: love, hate, despair, hope, cynicism, faith, impetuousness and philosophizing. His characters who are mentally sound are frequently ethical schizophrenics, caught up in radical and ambiguous situations.

In *The Brothers Karamazov* he traces in poignant fashion the gropings of the human mind with the problem of human suffering. Certainly no one can read Part V, especially Chapter 4, without recognizing that there is no tenable "easy answer" to the question of physical evil, Hegel to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor can one read his section, "The Grand Inquisitor," without realizing that Dostoevsky is saying, from the standpoint of the faith which he found at the Katorga at Omsk during his exile, that while Christ is adequate, no mere conventional Christianity can embody that which He commanded. In a fashion which shocks us, our author puts the same message which Kierkegaard encased in his tract, "It is Hard to be a Christian."

In his work *A Raw Youth*, Dostoevsky causes Versilov to say to Arcady that the judgments of the Revelation of St. John are impending; he sees the fulfillment of the apocalyptic dream, not in some distant future but in the social and economic upheaval which he sees to be immanent for the West. He develops the thesis that the upheaval of life in the urban family is but a prefiguring of the crisis which exists in the whole of society. Basic to this is the depersonalization of urban life, a theme with profound existentialist implications and with profound meaning for the present time.

Another theme characteristic of the writings of Dostoevsky is that of the primacy of the non-rational forces which tend always to overthrow the plans of, and thwart the goals set by, reason. He emphasized the powerful role of the irrational forces which lurked below the threshold of the conscious life—this long before the time of Freud. His anthropology is devoted to what Zenkovsky calls man's "underground" and places large stress upon the dark side of man's existence.[2] He sees the burdensome quality of human freedom, much as Kierkegaard came to see it; he recognized its possibilities for disorder and disorganization, no less than its glory as belonging to the "genuine" man.

Alexander Pushkin, like Dostoevsky, explored the nocturnal side of human nature; his *Ruslan and Liudmila* seems almost strained in its effort to discredit any form of classicism in literature, and to assert, in the name of realism, the claims of unrestrained sensuality. The themes of alienation and futility are portrayed in vivid fashion in his *Eugene Oneghin.* The hero rejects Tatiana initially for being less than glamorous, and finally finds himself rejected by her as she has attained new status; in true existentialist fashion, he can only turn to the life of a wanderer, isolated and alone.

Ivan Turgenev, while less preoccupied with the morbid and the melancholy, was concerned with the realities of concrete existence

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2. Rene Wellek, ed., *Dostoevsky* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 133.

as a solvent to the essentialist and classical approaches to human life. His *Fathers and Sons* portrays the hero Bazarov as an activist and an individual, with all of Kierkegaard's sense of his uniqueness, and in addition, a person in revolt against words and abstractions. Truth becomes to him, in Kierkegaard's words, "truth as subjectivity"; the more obvious theme of the work—the conflict between age and youth—is obscured in the intensity of Bazarov's assertion of the concrete, acting individual. Like his other works, this one ends with death and melancholy; a haunting and brooding spirit hover over Turgenev's writings in general, and over *Fathers and Sons* and *Clara Milich* in particular.

The sense of absurdity and futility which palls the works of Turgenev issued from his feeling that in spite of the supposed glories of youth and of patriotism, there hangs suspended over all of life an inexorable law of destruction. Man is understood as being under constant sentence, without knowing the nature of the charges lodged against him. Leo Tolstoy sees this problem in a larger setting, namely in terms of what seems very like historical determinism. In his *War and Peace* Tolstoy causes Alexander I's commander-in-chief Kutuzov to appear, on the surface at least, as but one element or factor in the operation of inexorable laws. What is really significant, it appears, is the pattern of basic human emotions and responses. These subjective factors are "real" and belong to the heart of human existence. Tolstoy wishes to bring to light the frequently hidden motives and drives; and to do so, he is at least as ruthless as Kierkegaard in tearing the masks of pretense, respectability, hypocrisy, and cant from his characters.

Maxim Gorky (the pen name of Alexis Peshkov) likewise tore away the veils of convention and respectability from classical and idealized stereotypes, and gave to the individual an exaltation akin to that ascribed to him by Nietzsche. Like the works of Dostoevsky, his novels portray torture, flogging, vice and corruption. He was completely anti-metaphysical in outlook, and carried his stress upon the individual and the particular to a positivistic, pragmatic outcome which would have pleased both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. His drama, *The Lower Depths*, is perhaps the best plea for individual responsibility and individual dignity. When he turned to revolutionary themes, such as those developed in *Foma Gordeyev* and *Mother,* his works lost much in their ability to convince. Characterization loses its sharpness, and the *elan* which marks the narratives in his *Sketches and Stories* somehow fades away. But in his earlier works, he did seize the permanent elements of the human predicament and gave them expression in terms true to the human existential situation as the post-Kierkegaardian era saw it.

It is difficult to evaluate without partiality such literature as that of Gorky, as it parades before us thieves, hobos, prostitutes, cutthroats, and misfits. Some attribute the off-beat quality of his

work to his struggle to maintain a tradition of literary realism against the rising symbolism of his times. More probably it grew out of his radically positivistic bent, and his existentialist rejection of all metaphysics. It does not belong to this paper to discuss his relation to the communist regime, which in the later years of his life sought to lionize him as the Grand Old Man of Russian revolutionary literature. Perhaps it is best to recognize him as the heir of a century of Russian apocalypticism. His role as an existential writer tended to dwindle as he became more and more engaged in political struggle, and his place as a portrayer of the mood of the existential man was taken by Serghei Essenin, who sought to reassert the claims of the rural individualism which was being lost. He, too, explored the depths of human melancholy and human loneliness, and finally followed the tragic pattern of alcoholism and suicide.

The conclusion which may be drawn from this sketchy survey of the Russian scene is, that the socio-political ferment which occurred in the land during the nineteenth century brought to the surface elements similar to those which surfaced in Denmark during the era of Kierkegaard. True, the external circumstances were totally different. Denmark was a "land of the Reformation"; Russia had not known, in any proper sense, either Reformation or Renaissance. But the themes of impersonalism, of melancholy with respect to both life and death, of alienation, and of preoccupation with the "realistic" side of life appeared in both places, and were articulated by prophetic minds.

It may be said also, that much of Russian literature was diagnostic, rather than therapeutic. Its authors were preoccupied with doom and with disaster, and seemingly offered no way out. Even Dostoevsky's conversion to Christianity did not bring him to hear the voice of hope from within Pandora's nearly empty box.

GERMAN LITERATURE

The existential strain in German literature is usually dated from the appearance of the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Born of a family which had a vague tradition of being of Polish derivation, young Friedrich showed aptitude and liking for both music and theology during his days in boarding school at Pforta. It was during his student days at Bonn that he began to show the effects of some unknown traumatic experiences which left their mark upon both his body and his mind. As a student at Bonn and Leipzig, and then as a professor of classical philology at Basel, he developed into a misogynist and misogamist, and with this, into a brooding critic of Western civilization which led him ultimately to a nihilistic outlook upon all of human existence.

In his writings were reflected the tragic quality of all life; like the apocalyptical writers of Russia, he pronounced the death of the values in the culture of his time, and the doom which impended. He added to their methodology of prediction the ingredient of savage attack upon existing institutions. Sharing the existential distrust of reason and of rationalism, he sketched in bold strokes the quality of "the will to self-assertion" which he felt to be deeply embedded in human nature. Disdaining the crowd and the "mass man," he proclaimed the solitary individual as the bearer of whatever future there might be—this to a degree which would have been unthinkable to Kierkegaard.

He sketched the coming of the superman, a being who will fulfil man's best dreams. He will break out of the circle of contemporaneousness and mark out a lonely path to a new nobility; a path which has no guiding marks and on which he will have no real companions. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra* Nietzsche causes his superman to rise above the level of mediocrity, free as he is himself from "slave morality," and from the mandates of Christianity toward meekness, humility and kindness. If it be asked in what respect this is "existential," it may be replied that like Kierkegaard he is protesting a diluted and anemic form of comfortable religion, in the name of that which is "virile" and which demands a genuine ego-investment.

It does not fall within the scope of this discussion to evaluate Nietzsche's radical attack upon Christianity and upon the traditional morality of the West. He did without question beat the "theologians" to the draw in announcing the advent of the "post-Christian era" and in proclaiming the demise of the Christian God. Some seek a deeper and therapeutic objective in his assumption of the role as mortician for God and for the Christian ethic; others regard his pronouncements at these points as being compensatory bombast. But his major existential themes are those of the primacy of the individual, the depreciation of abstract reason, the subjectivity of truth, and the necessity for the acceptance of responsibility as a correlate to the acceptance of power.

Many regard Franz Kafka to be the best expositor of existential themes through the medium of German literature. Born into a prosperous mercantile family in Prague, and caught in an ideological tug of war between eastern European Judaism and the more secularized version of Judaism in Czechoslovakia, Kafka gave literary form to a wide range of existential themes and moods. His writings have a disarming quality—a genial lack of logic which intrigues without jarring. His use of words is masterly: seldom does he employ one word too many or one word too few. His themes are frequently abrasive; certainly one does not read his *Metamorphosis* or his *Life in a Penal Colony* without feeling a certain sense of irritation and even outrage.

The emphasis upon solitariness and alienation marks the charming short story *Josephine*. The heroine is a "singer" in a world of mice. Her art is little understood, but her contemporaries could scarcely conceive of life going on without it. She is set apart from those about her by her skill, and would like, with part of her brain, to be a part of their life. But she never quite succeeds in making contact with her fellow mice. Her loneliness is only equalled by that of the animal in the tale *The Burrow*. This creature has constructed, at immense effort, an intricate underground dwelling, amply fortified and well stocked with provisions. But he is alone; his only effective contact with the outside world is one based on fear—fear which arises when he can no longer doubt that his existence is threatened by the approach of another underground enemy. Like Josephine, this creature is going downhill. Unlike her, he will retreat into aloneness, assuming that everything is unchanged but vaguely expecting the end. She, on the other hand, will survive as a fleeting episode in the life of her mouse-folk.

Even more poignant as an expression of the existential theme of alienation is the case of Gregor Samsa, "hero" of the story *Metamorphosis*, who finds himself transformed into a giant beetle. Living in the same house with his sister and his parents, he strives in vain to make any contact with them, to communicate with them. Thus alienated, he deteriorates and becomes more and more repulsive. Vainly does he try to cling to his old life of identity, and finally he dies and is swept up by his sister, after which the family seek to forget that he ever "happened" to them. Alienation as a theme appears in one of Kafka's three major novels, *The Castle*, whose hero K. tries by every means, and without success, to gain access to an official who is said to reside in a castle overlooking a broken-down town. At every turn he is frustrated and thwarted; the villagers are boorish and unable to engage in any meaningful conversation with him, and the telephone is an impenetrable barrier between him and the Land Surveyor. Finally he blends apathetically into the dull scene of the village.

The existential preoccupation with meaninglessness is part of the outlook of Kafka. In the work, *The Castle*, coherence eludes the reader, as well as the hero K., at every turn. Time seems to stand still, and K. finally succumbs to the monotony and dullness of the environment. The same lack of meaning surrounds the career of Joseph K., the central figure in the novel *The Trial*. He fails to secure any meaningful answer to any question, whether by the Examiner, the lawyers, the Judge or the gendarmes. A similar meaninglessness surrounds the career of Karl in the work *Amerika*. Whether talking to the Stoker, living with his uncle, serving as a bellboy, or being an innocent bystander among a group of artistic bohemians, he gets nowhere and achieves no purpose. One feels that the book

could have been expanded into a five-volume work of the same type without leading Karl anywhere.

The existentialist motif of the exposed quality of the individual is dramatized with powerful effect in the work called *The Trial.* Existential writers have emphasized that man's predicament is that of being confronted by vague charges which he cannot pinpoint, and which convince him that he is somehow culpable. Joseph K. is arrested, arraigned, put before the Court, and finally convicted and executed, all without being able to ascertain the nature of his "offense." He may ask as he will: of friend or foe, secular or clergy—none can inform him of the reason for his appearance before the bar of "justice" or of the identity of his accusers. This is a rather clear portrait of the man or woman who is, by reason of environment or training, incapable of clear feelings of guilt, and who in consequence is left a prey to the anxiety of submerged accusation.

The homelessness of the human spirit, a theme which recurs in the writings of existentialists, appears in a poignant form in Kafka's works. In *The Burrow*, the animal-hero has made every conceivable effort to domicile himself. So deeply ingrained are the habits of "thinking security" in his brain that he for a long while refuses to entertain in his mind what beats upon his ears—that his home is being called into jeopardy. Yet at the end, he takes the stance of the homeless, of the one who resorts to wish-thinking and to eating to stave off the day of eviction. A similar sense of homelessness appears in the case of the *Hungerkunstler* ("Hunger Artist"). He is on exhibit in his cage for the skill (i.e., long fasting) by which he has become famous. He lives in an atmosphere of "visible glory" and is world-famous, but at the same time an orphan in a world which will not take him seriously. Having lived in this atmosphere for years, he does not surprise the reader, as he is finally cleared out and buried with the straw from his cage.

The theme of the transcendence of God, a doctrine which Kierkegaard felt to have been treacherously betrayed by Hegel, finds a powerful, if disarming, dramatization in Kafka's *Novelle, The Great Wall of China.* In the novel *The Castle*, he stresses the element of human alienation and of the futility of human efforts to overcome it. Here, on the other hand, he emphasizes the manner in which the Emperor deliberately conceals himself and his work from his subjects. The great "project" is taken for granted; all subjects are in some manner or other involved in it, since their safety seems to depend upon its completion.

At the same time, the construction of the wall was deliberately planned upon a piecemeal basis, so that it might be a successful surrogate to the Tower of Babel. The imperial decrees were ambiguous; the office of the command was, the citizens felt certain, in existence somewhere, but none could pinpoint its locale. The wall, moreover, was built to defend China from vague enemies "from the

North," enemies which could not be of any vital concern to the people in southern China. In the capital city, it is true, some close to the Emperor claimed to possess some direct knowledge of what was occurring, but their knowledge somehow never reached the public.

The Emperor himself is effectively sealed off from contact with his subjects. He is said to be immortal, but so far as the average subject is concerned, it matters little, since accurate news travels so slowly that a given Emperor might be obeyed in far corners of his realm long after he was dead. It is his office, not his person, which commands obedience. The capital city is likewise remote from the citizens in the villages—more remote than the next world, as Kafka assures us. The net result of all this is, that faith is feeble and public imagination is lacking, so that the figure of the Emperor stands immobile in Peking; and at the same time, as a figure, he is "one of the greatest unifying influences among our people."

Seldom has a theological treatise given expression in such a powerful fashion to the theme of the divine transcendence. It goes without saying that Kafka does not here lay any foundation for a theology of "grace and hope." He does lay hold of an existential theme, and pursue it to its most remote nuances. While treatment of the existential quality of death appears to be equally offhand and unstructured, it is at the same time almost painfully penetrating. In none of his writings is death regarded as a mass phenomenon or as a "univeral" quality. Concreteness and existential inexorability appear as persistent concomitants of his works which treat of death. Josephine, in the novelette bearing her name as its title, must finally pass from the scene isolated from her mouse-folk. In the *Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa dies alone, but not before undergoing the intensely intimate experience of dying "his own death." In *The Judgment*, Georg Bendemann is first stripped of all his earthly supports, his "friend" in St. Petersberg, his father. He is, little by little, left a prey to existential *Angst,* until he leaves the presence of his towering father to carry out the "sentence" of the old tyrant and drowns himself.

The condemned man in the work *In the Penal Colony* (which is the most Poe-like of Kafka's writings) is likewise stripped of all supports, in this case psychological supports, and left totally exposed to the demonic instrument ordained to his execution.The Officer, who is the immediate executioner, is above all considerations of justice or mercy. The Explorer is held in a fascinated awe of him, and the condemned man finally identifies himself intimately, almost eagerly, with the engine of his own death. Gone is all objectivity and externality with respect to death; to the condemned man, death is a constitutive part of life, to be grasped with existential resolve.

This suggests Kafka's point of contact with the theme of "authentic existence" with which more formal existential formulators love to deal. The "authentic" individual, severed from the mass-man and stripped of his evasions of life, finds his supreme opportunity to express his real existence as he meets the final and categorical demands of death upon him, and in meeting it, insists that it is to be welcomed as crowning his existence. In being "authentic" the individual lives in tension, a tension created by such opposites as life and death, and accepts his temporality and finiteness. Kafka's victim may shudder at the brink of the chasm which separates him from nothingness, but at the same time he recognizes that living at the boundary means ultimately crossing the barricade.

It would be instructive if Kafka would enlighten us at the point of his belief or non-belief in life beyond the wall of death. He does not seem to be interested in spelling this out; on the one hand, he does not, like Bertolt Brecht, portray death as the brutal end of all. Indeed, if Kafka were to read Brecht's *Legend of the Dead Soldier*, he would probably reject the latter's implication of the twice-final quality of death. With equal firmness would he on the other hand, protest the mood of Dylan Thomas:

> Do not go gentle into that good night.
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

SUMMARY

This brief overview of the existential qualities and elements in selected Russian and German writers (Kafka's writings were entirely in German) suggests to us that existentialism is a versatile mood: it is capable of direct and systematic formulation (we use this last term with reservations), while at the same time it lends itself to oblique embodiment in a wide variety of literary forms. It is derived, in good measure, from the historical circumstances which have marked European history for the past century, and reflects the tragic quality of much of that history. It draws from elements in historic Christianity, while at the same time negating many of the underlying principles of Christian faith. It probably overcorrects as a result of its subjectivism. But while we may criticize existentialism, we cannot ignore its challenge to many of the abstractions and evasions of Western life. It demands a return to concreteness, to a more effective recognition of the intensely personal quality of human relationships. It cannot be expected to afford, by itself, a way of redemption, to say nothing of offering a Redeemer. This is the task of Christian theology. But it can and does prod the Christian theologian to inspect his own foundations—and this is good.

EXISTENTIALISM IN THE THOUGHT OF BULTMANN AND TILLICH

William M. Arnett

Two of the most controversial and provocative writers in our time have been the German-born theologians, Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich. Their writings reflect the strong influence of, and give impetus to, the movement called "existentialism"—a word that is frequently used and variously defined in recent years. It should not be inferred, however, that both men share the same point of view. Bultmann, for example, has criticized Tillich's view as less Christological and more philosophical, while one critic observes that Bultmann promotes independence of all philosophy, with the exception of existentialism.

Bultmann very readily fits into the category of the existentialists, since his theology may be regarded as a synthesis of elements from Søren Kierkegaard, the "father" of present-day existentialism, and Martin Heidegger, his atheistic colleague for many years at the University of Marburg. Bultmann states quite frankly that an existentialist interpretation of the Bible is the only solution whereby the Christian faith can become understandable and acceptable to modern man.[1] He calls his principle of biblical interpretation "*existential* hermeneutics . . . because the Bible is found to appeal to the same dimensions of depth and self-understanding in men to which existential philosophy appeals."[2]

It is more difficult to classify Tillich theologically, though he is often called an existentialist—a characterization which he has

1. Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Werner Bartsch (London: S P C K, 1953), p. 15.
2. Carl Michalson, "Rudolf Bultmann," in *Ten Makers of Modern Protestant Thought*, ed. Geroge L. Hunt (New York: Association Press, 1958), p. 104.

personally affirmed[3] and rejected.[4] Walter Leibrecht states that Tillich has become "the theologian for Everyman in the predicament of his existence."[5] He observes that Tillich is an *ontologist* inquiring into the meaning of Being, an *existentialist* exploring man's anxiety about the meaningfulness of his own existence, an *idealist* who sees man s spiritual problem as calling for a return of the soul from estrangement to its true essence, and a *romanticist* who uses his creative spirit to re-interpret the symbols of traditional religion in an effort to make their truth meaningful to the perplexed.[6] Actually Tillich prefers to call himself an "ecstatic naturalist," stating emphatically that ". . . I have fought supranaturalism from my early writings on, not in order to support naturalism but because I tried to overcome the alternative between naturalism and supranaturalism."[7]

Notwithstanding the divergent views of Bultmann and Tillich, there are a number of similarities between the two scholars. A strong existentialist element is evident, for example, in that both reject any knowledge of God that is objective to personal decision. Respecting anthropology, Bultmann says Tillich and he concur. Both men have sharply accommodated Christianity to a modern philosophy of science. Both scholars are known for their antipathy to the supernatural element in the Christian faith. The tendency of both, however, is to be more biblical and theological in their sermons than in their systematic theology.[8] The theology of Bultmann

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3. "His classification as an existentialist is much less clear. Nevertheless, there seem to be good reasons for placing him under this heading, especially since he sometimes classifies himself in this way." John B. Cobb, Jr., *Living Options in Protestant Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 259. This is an observation from Paul Tillich's article, "Metaphysics and Theology," in *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 10, 1956, p. 63.
4. " . . . I can only pose the question of a possible philosophical foundation for psychotherapy on the basis of my own thought, in which the existential element has a definite place, although I would not call myself an existentialist." "Existentialism, Psychotherapy, and the Nature of Man," in *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 11, No. 105, June, 1960, p. 10.
5. "The Life and Mind of Paul Tillich," in *Religion and Culture, Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich*, ed. Walter Leibrecht (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 10.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.
7. "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, eds. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 341. Cf. Walter Leibrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
8. E. G., Rudolf Bultmann, *This World and the Beyond* ([Marburg Sermons] New York: Scribner, 1960); Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Scribner, 1955); Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Scribner, 1963).

reflects elements from Kierkegaard and Heidegger, as we have already noted, and while Tillich's thought reflects the influence of both of these men, they are less determinative for him.

EXISTENTIALISM: ITS MEANING AND ISSUES

Existentialism has been described as "a method of interpreting life which is based upon an attitude of seriousness in living."[9] It makes man central to its method and is also often called a philosophical anthropology. Because man alone is the highly specialized kind of reality called existence, existentialism is sometimes referred to as a humanism (Sartre) or a personalism (Mounier and Berdyaev). It is a mode of thought and decision which concerns not the intellect merely, but the whole personality. "To think existentially, therefore, is to think not as a spectator of the ultimate issues of life and death, but as one who is committed to a decision upon them."[10] As a religious philosophy, existentialism seeks to discover the character and meaning of existence (Being) itself.

Tillich admits that "theology has received tremendous gifts from existentialism, . . . gifts not dreamed of fifty years ago or even thirty years ago."[11] He does not enumerate these gifts fully in this context, but we can note at this point some of the major emphases or issues of existentialism, many of which are discernible in the theology of Bultmann and Tillich. Existentialism begins from the situation of the existing individual, since the term basically implies the primacy of existence over essence. Closely allied with the stress upon the individual is the concept of finite freedom. Prominence is also given to the element of tragedy in human existence, with a further emphasis on the concept of Dread, or Anguish. The subjectivity of all truth is highly significant for existentialists. The homelessness of the human spirit, the concept of Nothingness, the concept of "Authentic Existence," and the significance of the "present moment," the "eternal now," are further issues of existentialism. Finally, death as an existential phenomenon is emphasized. To several of these existential issues in the thought of Bultmann and Tillich we now turn our attention.

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9. *Christianity and the Existentialists,* ed. Carl Michalson (New York: Scribner, 1956), p. 17.
10. Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 219.
11. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture,* ed. R. C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 126.

Man and Finite Freedom

Classic theology begins and ends with God. Modern man begins and ends with himself. Tillich endeavors to meet modern man half way; he begins with man, and attempts to end with God. Very central to his theological approach is the "method of correlation," and Tillich frankly states that

> systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions. The analysis of the human situation is done in terms which today are called "existential."[12]

Within the existentialist framework, "existence" and "existential" are terms which apply only to men, not to concrete things. Though Tillich moves beyond existence to ontology, his starting point is man. As David E. Roberts points out:

> The doctrine of man is clearly central in Paul Tillich's theology. Each of the five parts of his system begins with an analysis of human existence (and existence generally) as the basis for developing a theological question. Taken together, these passages constitute an integral interpretation covering (1) human rationality, (2) human finitude, (3) human sin, (4) man's living unity, and (5) human destiny. The content of the five corresponding answers—Revelation, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Kingdom of God—cannot be derived from the questions, but their form is conditioned by the fact that they must be relevant to the manner in which the questions are being asked.[13]

It should be noted that man's existence for Tillich is not in isolation but in relation to the world in which he exists. As Roberts asserts, "The basic starting point, in Tillich's thought, both for anthropology and ontology, is man's awareness of the self-world correlation."[14] We can understand life and the world only from the point of view of our own individual, personal life.

Similarly, in Bultmann's approach to the Christian faith the pivotal point is man. He believes "man's life is moved by the search for God because it is always moved, consciously or unconsciously, by the question about his own personal existence. The

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12. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 62.
13. Kegley and Bretall, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

question of God and the question of myself are identical."[15] In reply to Karl Barth's charge that Bultmann was "substituting anthropology for theology," Bultmann heartily agrees: "I *am* trying to substitute anthropology for theology, for I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life. What I mean is that the God of the Christian revelation is the answer to the vital questions."[16] His statement that to talk about God is also to talk about man has been cited as putting a question mark concerning the transcendence of God, and Bultmann has sought to clarify his meaning. "From the statement that to speak of God is to speak of myself, it by no means follows that God is not outside the believer. This would be the case only if faith is interpreted as a purely psychological event."[17] While granting that God has an existence independent of man, in Bultmann's theology it must be noted that the place where God acts is in human existence, which means in human experience. "We must speak of God as acting only in the sense that He acts with me here and now . . ."[18]

Bultmann further insists that our understanding of God is bound up with self-understanding. Accordingly, he declares that

> the most important thing is that basic insight that the theological thoughts of the New Testament are the unfolding of faith itself growing out of that new understanding of God, the world, and man which is conferred in and by faith—or, as it can also be phrased: *out of one's new self-understanding.*[19]

By this Bultmann means "an existential understanding of myself which is at one with and inseparable from my understanding of God and the World."[20] Anthropology stands at the central point of Bultmann's theological concern. Man is both the starting point and center of his thought.

Existentialists are anxious to safeguard and to develop the inner freedom of the individual person. Unitedly they oppose the two extremes which have dominated philosophical discussions of the problem of freedom, namely, a form of determinism which is incompatible with the conditioned character of human existence. For this reason, "existentialists agree that man is both free and enslaved, but the enslavement which they acknowledge and which

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15. Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner, 1958), p. 53.
16. Bartsch, *op. cit.*, "A Reply to the Theses of J. Schniewind," pp. 107, 108.
17. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology, op. cit.*, p. 70.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
19. *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1955), II, 239.
20. *Ibid.*

they seek to overcome is of a kind which could only befall free beings."[21]

Tillich affirms man's freedom. "Man is man because he has freedom, but he has freedom only in polar interdependence with destiny."[22] Man's "fall" involves the actualization of finite freedom within tragic destiny. God is infinite freedom, man is finite freedom. Man's finite freedom makes possible the transition from essence to existence. When man becomes anxiously aware of his finite freedom, he experiences a desire to make his freedom an actuality. Universally man decides for the actualization of his freedom and falls into estranged existence.[23]

Sin is not only ostentation, but self-will, says Bultmann. Repentance means returning to God from the isolation of self-will[24] The inner dividedness which Paul describes in the latter part of Romans 7 means that man himself destroys his true self.[25] Release comes through the obedience of faith, and "the new self-understanding which is bestowed with 'faith' is that of *freedom*, in which the believer gains life and thereby his own self."[26]

Estrangement, Anxiety, and Despair

In Kierkegaard's view there is an infinite abyss between God, the Holy One, and man, the sinner. The matrix of sin is fear; psychologically, it springs from dread or anxiety. Despair, which is taken by Kierkegaard as the virtual equivalent of sin, is a universal condition. Every living man is in some degree the victim of despair. Men fear or dread when they hear the challenge of eternity, the call to be spiritual. They despair when they refuse that call. There is "no man in whose inner life there does not dwell an unrest, a dispeace, a disharmony, the dread of something unknown, of something on which he dare not look, a dread of the possibilities of his own being, a dread of himself."[27]

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21. David E. Roberts, "Faith and Freedom in Existentialism" [a study of Kierkegaard and Sartre], *Theology Today* (January, 1952), VIII, 471.
22. *Systematic Theology*, I, 182.
23. *Ibid.*, II, 29ff. Cf. Kegley and Bretall, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-120.
24. Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956), pp. 54, 55.
25. *Systematic Theology*, I, 245.
26. *Ibid.*, 331.
27. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 237. Chapter on "The Theology of Paradox" (Søren Kierkegaard).

These various existentialist factors in man's experience are developed at length by Paul Tillich in his *Systematic Theology*[28] and in his book *The Courage to Be*.[29] A summary of these salient factors should be noted. For Tillich, the possibility of transition from dreaming innocence to existence is experienced as temptation. It presupposes finite freedom. Temptation also presupposes want and desire, man's desire to actualize or fulfill his potentialities. It is a state of anxiety or indecision—the anxiety of deciding whether to preserve his innocence or whether to experience actuality through knowledge, power, and guilt. It is man's desire to remove himself from the divine center and to make himself existentially the center of himself and his world in his search for fulfillment.

Estrangement is the result of the transition from essence to existence, the condition in which man finds himself after the "fall." The "fall" does not refer to a specific event in history, but is a symbol of the universal predicament of man and points to the gap between what he is and what he ought to be. Man's "fall" involves the actualization of finite freedom within tragic destiny. Estrangement is expressed as unbelief, the turning of the total self away from God; as *hubris*, the elevation of the self to the center of life; and as concupiscence, the unlimited desire to draw the whole of one's world into oneself. The desire for knowledge, sex, wealth, and power are symptoms of concupiscence when they have an unlimited character. Love, on the other hand, strives for the reunion of the separated, and for Tillich, is the opposite of estrangement.

Closely allied to the factor of estrangement is "anxiety," or "the existential awareness of nonbeing."[30] It arises out of an awareness of being finite and conditioned, and expresses the awareness of being limited in time (since men must die), space, casuality, and substance. Anxiety should not be confused with fear, though the two are inseparable. Fear has a definite object, such as pain, danger, and enemies, and can be conquered by action. Anxiety can be overcome or absorbed by courage which man receives through heritage and through reunion with God. The basic anxiety, the anxiety of a finite being about the threat of nonbeing, cannot be eliminated, says Tillich. It belongs to existence itself.[31] Tillich distinguishes three forms of anxiety: (1) the anxiety of death (2) the anxiety of meaninglessness, and (3) the anxiety of condemnation.[32]

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28. *Systematic Theology*, II, 29-78.
29. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 32-85.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 41ff.

At best, life must be lived in tension, and appears to issue in existential anxiety rather than Christian assurance.

The three types of anxiety are interwoven in such a manner that one of them gives the predominant color, but all of them participate in the coloring of the state of anxiety. They are fulfilled in the situation of despair. Despair is an ultimate or "boundary-line" situation, the final consequence or index of man's existence in estrangement.[33] It is the point where man has come to the end of his possibilities. It signifies the state of inescapable conflict between what man essentially is and ought to be, and what he actually is and cannot help ("without hope"; "no exit"). It is also the state of meaninglessness leading to paths of self-destruction in a vain attempt to escape (suicide). In despair, God is experienced as standing against man in "wrath" and "condemnation."[34]

The Subjectivity of Truth

The principle of spiritual inwardness, or subjectivity as it is often called, had a determinative influence on all of Kierkegaard's thinking. For him, truth is subjectivity, as subjectivity is truth. This does not mean that he denied objectively encountered reality. He simply meant that coldly objective, abstract thinking counts for nothing by itself. As Kierkegaard expressed it in one of his most famous dictums, "Only the truth that edifies is truth for thee."

The mood of Kierkegaard has pervaded contemporary existentialism. It has been carried to extreme forms of radical subjectivism. Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann have helped to prepare the way for these radical forms by their excessive stress upon subjectivity. Less than a year prior to Paul Tillich's death, this writer heard the renowned theologian lecture at Transylvania College on the subject, "Absolute and Relative Elements in Moral Decisions." Tillich insisted emphatically that the source of a moral decision lies in one's individual essence. "This approach," he said, "means that the individual must reject attempts to derive absolute values from other sources, such as fear, expediency, social convention or arbitrary earthly or heavenly authorities." Furthermore, "if it [a moral commandment] comes from outside our essential being we have the right to contradict it . . . Tell the young who seek moral guidance that on the basis of a concrete situation, they are free from any

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33. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

formulated law." Tillich also emphasized that "God's will is expressed in our essential being, our created goodness," and for that reason "individual essence does not conflict with the notion of obedience of God's will."[35] These opinions from the high priest of American theology stress subjectivity with a vengeance, and are in sharp disjunction with the scriptural stress upon the corruption of the human heart.

Tillich helped to spawn the radical views of Bishop John A. T. Robinson in *Honest to God* and the "God-is-dead" theologians by suggesting that the very name "God" may have to be abandoned in order to make room for and to understand a new concept for God. He writes:

> The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is *God.* That depth is what the word *God* means. And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation. Perhaps, in order to do so, you must forget everything traditional that you have learned about God, perhaps even that word itself.[36]

There is more than a touch of irony in the circumstances leading to the death of Paul Tillich last fall when one of the young "God-is-dead" professors assured Tillich in a personal confrontation, "You are our father; you have made us what we are." Tillich's ontological conception of God as being-itself tends to depersonalize Deity. Furthermore, he assures us that the personal God of Theism is a symbol only. A critic's pointed question seems very pertinent:

> Since we can only know God through religious symbols, and since the validity and truth of these symbols can in no way be judged by any ontological fact but only by human experience and its needs, why do we require the ontological reference at all?[37]

The element of subjectivity can be observed in Bultmann's view of history. He writes:

> *The meaning of history lies always in the present*, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning in history is realized. . . Always in your present lies the meaning in

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35. Lawrence Pryor, "Philosopher Says Morality Comes From Within," in *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Ky., May 19, 1965).
36. Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribner, 1948), p. 57.
37. "The Atheism of Paul Tillich," in *Religious Experience and Truth*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: New York University Press, 1961), p. 61.

> history, and you cannot see it as a spectator, but only in your responsible decisions. In every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awaken it.[38]

He distinguishes two kinds of history: *Historie* (history as record) and *Geschichte* (history as occurrence). The latter is viewed as the dynamic history that happens here, in the present moment, in me. On this basis many of the great events in the Christian faith are interpreted mythologically. The event of crucifixion, for example, is not basically the death of Jesus on Golgotha under Pontius Pilate about 30 A.D., but it is my death to sin and error. The event of resurrection is not the raising of Jesus from the tomb; it is the message of new life and my awakening to it. This is an existential interpretation, with a strong emphasis on subjectivization, which actually subverts the Gospel by the tendency to divorce it from an historical event in the biblical record.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

This brief survey, though far from being exhaustive, seeks to exhibit the existentialist features in the theology of Bultmann and Tillich. Viewed from its broad perspective, the rise and development of existentialism must be understood against the background of the tragedies and deep-rooted anxieties in the past generation, particularly in Europe. It is basically a protest against the pride and optimism of Modern Man, and had its beginning in Kierkegaard's revolt against Hegelianism, with its serene objectivity and optimistic acceptance of the actual. For Kierkegaard, Hegel's optimistic idealism was the worst possible framework in which authentic Christian faith can be set.

On the positive side, the desire to effectively communicate the Gospel to our generation, and the stress on personal decision involving commitment, and the frank assumption of personal responsibility, are wholesome emphases. Existentialism lends itself to extravagances, however, and this has not been avoided by either Tillich or Bultmann. Even the good intention of communicating the Gospel becomes a weakness with these men. The abstract, rarified jargon of Tillich is a fitting example.[39] John Herman Randall, Jr. reports the occasion when Tillich read a brilliant paper to a group of

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38. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Presence of Eternity: History and Eschatology* (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 155.
39. Cf. "A Glossary of Tillich Terms," ed. Robert E. Chiles, in *Theology Today* (April, 1960), XVII, 77-89.

professional philosophers, which included among the listeners the distinguished representative of a very different philosophical tradition and language, G. E. Moore. When it came time for Moore to comment, he said: "Now really, Mr. Tillich, I don't think I have been able to understand a single sentence of your paper. Won't you please try to state one sentence, or even one word, that I can understand?"[40] If Tillich's terms were employed in the Lord's Prayer, according to the *Religious Research Digest,* here is how it might be re-interpreted within the framework of his theological terminology:

> Our Ultimate Ground of Being, which are in the
> incomprehensible realm,
> Isolated by thy name,
> Thy Divine Acceptance come,
> Thine unknowable will be done,
> On earth as it is in the New Dimension;
> Give us this day the Courage To Be,
> And reconcile us to thyself just as we are,
> Even as we seek to be reconciled to others,
> Lead us not into guilt complexes,
> But deliver us from the Non-being of estrangement,
> For thine is the dynamic, the fellowship, and the
> Cosmic Fulfillment for ever.
> Amen?[41]

James Denney's firm declaration that "no man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save"[42] is apropos. This is not to suggest that it was Tillich's motive to be clever, but such was the result, however. A hearer did not come away from Tillich's lectures extolling the virtues of Jesus Christ, the God-man, but rather talking about Paul Tillich, the erudite and often incomprehensible man.

The most disconcerting factor in the views of Bultmann and Tillich is their rejection of, even antipathy for, the supernatural and miraculous elements in the Christian faith. To a large extent this is the burden of Bultmann's famous lecture on "New Testament and Mythology,"[43] For both Bultmann and Tillich this amounts to

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40. Kegley and Bretall, *op. cit.* p. 133.
41. *Religious Research Digest* (July-Sept., 1961), I, 3.
42. Cf. James S. Stewart, *Heralds of God* (New York: Scribner, 1946), p. 74.
43. Bartsch, ed., *op. cit.* Cf. P. E. Hughes, *Scripture and Myth: An Examination of Rudolf Bultmann's Plea for Demythologization* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1956).

nothing less than a radical transformation of classical Christianity. In addition, their rejection of biblical authority,[44] the preoccupation with a humanistic center of faith, the discounting of the historical basis and objectivity of the Christian faith, and other factors,[45] are the breeding ground for agnosticism and skepticism. The harvest has already come in the radicalism of Bishop Robinson and Bishop Pike and the "God-is-dead" theologians. An investigation of this nature leaves us with an increased conviction that we have in Bultmann's and Tillich's interpretation of the Gospel something far other than the "faith once for all delivered to the saints."

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44. Cf. Frederick Sontag, "Biblical Authority and Tillich's Search for the Ultimate," in *The Journal of Bible and Religion* (October, 1962), XXX, 278-283.
45. Cf. the writer's articles in previous issues of *The Asbury Seminarian:* "What is Existentialism?" (Spring-Summer, 1957), XI, 7-14; "Tillich's Doctrines of God" (Spring-Summer, 1959), XIII, 10-17; "Rudolf Bultmann's Existentialist Interpretation of the New Testament" (Spring-Summer, 1963), XVII, 28-38.

IS GOD DEAD?

A Philosophical-Theological Critique of the Death of God Movement*

James Warwick Montgomery

The subject of this paper is the new theological science of Theothanatology, wherein God's mortal illness or demise serves as the starting point for a radically secular approach to the modern world. [1]

The national publicity lately given to this movement in general periodicals (*Time, The New Yorker, The New York Times,* etc.) may produce the false impression that here Protestantism has again spawned an unstable lunatic fringe which will disappear before one knows it—or quickly be replaced, as the Beatles edged out Elvis Presley. A closer look, however, reveals that the death-of-God movement is no flash in the theological pan. Stokes, a critical colleague of theothanatologist Altizer at Emory University, has recently and accurately mapped "the nontheistic temper of the modern mind"; the death-of-God theologies are consciously relating to this temper.[2] Carl F. H. Henry, on closely observing the present European theological climate, has noted that, after the relatively brief Barthian interlude, the cold winds of rationalism are blowing again; in the death-of-God movement America is beginning to feel these winds

* This paper is a revised version of a lecture delivered at the Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, on February 3, 1966, by invitation of the Department of Systematic Theology and underwritten by the Fred C. Rutz Foundation.

1. We prefer the neutral term "Theothanatology" to J. Robert Nelson's "Theothanasia" (implying that the new theologians have put God to death; except for Altizer, who speaks, à la Nietzsche, of "passionately willing God's death," the death-of-God theologians regard the divine demise as a "natural" phenomenon of our time, over which one has little or no control) or "Theothanatopsis" (which conjures up the shade of William Cullen Bryant, who would have been horror-struck at this whole movement).

2. Mack B. Stokes, "The Nontheistic Temper of the Modern Mind," *Religion in Life,* XXXIV (Spring, 1965), 245-57.

turning icy cold as they are directed through an ideological morgue. *Christian Century's* editor, while varying the temperature, does not minimize the impact of the new theology; on December 1 he wrote of the so-called "Christian atheism": "Debate now rages: it looks as if we shall have a long, hot winter."[3] Cold or hot (Altizer would like this conjunction of opposites!), the movement is indeed to be reckoned with. Says one of its prime spokesmen, William Hamilton: "Members of this group are in touch with each other; plans are under way for a major meeting of the group and there is even some talk of a new journal devoted to the movement."[4]

Protestants in the Reformation tradition should especially examine this new theology with care, for it is not accidental that Hamilton regularly appeals to Luther and to motifs of Reformation theology,[5] or that a critic of the movement has shrewdly written: "Soon, I predict, Luther will become the dominant symbol of the God-is-dead theology because he left the cloister and went into the 'world'—whatever that is."[6] Even more important, as we shall see, the God-is-dead movement takes its rise from the consistent appropriation and use of a central theme in Neo-Orthodoxy—the very Neo-Orthodoxy that many Lutheran and Reformed theologians here and

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3. "Why This Non-God Talk? An Editorial," *The Christian Century,* LXXXII (December 1, 1965), 1467.
4. William Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," *The Christian Century,* LXXXII (October 6, 1965), 1220. Paul Van Buren, however, "expressed astonishment at Hamilton's announcement that there would soon be an organization of death-of-God theologians, with a new journal, etc., etc. Apparently there is less communication within this trinity [Altizer, Hamilton, Van Buren] than is assumed" (J. Robert Nelson, "Deicide, Theothanasia, or What Do You Mean?" *The Christian Century,* LXXXII November 17, 1965 , 1415). In a more recent issue of *Christian Century* (LXXXIII [February 16, 1966], 223), "Penultimate" provides a satirical application blank for the "God-Is-Dead Club."
5. E.g., in his book, *The New Essence of Christianity* (New York: Association Press, 1961).
6. He continues: "One cannot deny that he left the cloister, had some doubts, stomach aches and a father. At the same time it is equally evident that he was a highly theocentric thinker ('Nothing can be more present . . . than God himself'), and that he was also what Weber and Troeltsch call an ascetic of the 'intramundane' type whose hope was in the world above—which, I take it, is not quite 'the world.' But of course Luther's asceticism and theocentrism should never keep him from being used in Protestantism as a symbol for secular theology and the God-is-dead movement. After all, Protestant theologians have a long and glorious tradition of using history, shall we say, 'freely' " (Charles M. Nielsen, "The Loneliness of Protestantism, or More Benedictines, Please!" *The Christian Century,* LXXXII [September 15, 1965], 1121).

abroad are naively embracing today.[7] Perhaps this paper will aid some members of the theological community to check their tickets more carefully before they board contemporary trains of thought.

As to the writer's posture, let it be plainly stated at the outset: in Merrill Tenney's words, "We are not ready to be God's pallbearers yet";[8] nor are we going to function as pseudo-sophisticated embalmers of the Infinite. Rather, I find myself at the presumed death of God in the role of a coroner. My dictionary defines a coroner as "a public officer whose principal duty is to inquire into any death which there is reason to suppose is not due to natural causes." I have become convinced that there is some foul play involved in this particular death; and we shall discover, if I am not mistaken, that the death-of-God theology represents a classic case of what mystery writers call "the wrong corpse."

THE MORTICIANS IN THE CASE

Five names have become associated, for good or for ill, with the new "Christian atheism." They are: Gabriel Vahanian of Syracuse, a French Calvinist by origin, whose 1961 book, *The Death of God,* gave the new movement its name; Baptist Harvey Cox of the Harvard Divinity School, rocketed to fame by his paperback, *The Secular City* (1965), which had sold over 135,000 copies at last count; Thomas J. J. Altizer, an Episcopal layman on the faculty at Emory, whose next book will carry the title, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*; William Hamilton of Colgate Rochester, a Baptist, best known for his book, *The New Essence of Christianity,* which, however, now represents an earlier, more conservative stage in his development; and Paul M. Van Buren, an Episcopal priest teaching in the religion department at Temple University, who took his doctorate under Karl Barth at Basel and whose book, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel,* is the most substantial production yet to arise from the death-of-God camp. All of these men are "younger theologians": Cox is 36, Vahanian and Altizer are 38, and Hamilton and Van Buren are 41.

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7. Cf. Montgomery, "Lutheran Hermeneutics and Hermeneutics Today," in *Aspects of Biblical Hermeneutics* ("Concordia Theological Monthly. Occasional Papers," No. 1; St. Louis, Missouri, 1966), pp. 78-108 (soon to be published also in German translation in *Lutherischer Rundblick*).
8. Quoted in *Time's* report of the 17th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Nashville, Tennessee, December 27-29, 1965 (*Time,* January 7, 1966, p. 70).

Whether these five theologians actually constitute a "school" is still a matter of debate among them. Cox, speaking in Evanston several weeks ago at the 7th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Christian Ethics, denied the existence of a unified movement (but then observed important common elements among the "Christian atheists");[9] Paul Van Buren has remarked: "Langdon Gilkey says we belong to a 'God is dead' movement, but I think Altizer and Bill Hamilton and I are saying different things."[10] Hamilton, on the other hand, has argued cogently for the existence of a definite ideological focus shared at least by Altizer, Van Buren, and himself.[11] Of course the question of a "school" depends on one's definition of the term. The fact that the above five theologians are already linked in the common mind with the God-is-dead stir requires that we look at the position of each. Having done so, we can proceed to note the common elements in their views.

We shall take up the theothanatologists in the order already employed: Vahanian, Cox, Altizer, Hamilton, and Van Buren. This order represents, roughly, a continuum from "more conservative" to "more radical," with the caesura between Cox and Altizer. Such an arrangement takes into account a basic clarification made both by Cox and by Hamilton: Cox's distinction between the theologians (such as himself) who use the phrase death-of-God with quotation marks around either or both of its nouns, and the theologians (such as Van Buren) who use the phrase with no qualifications, to signify that God is no longer alive, even if he once existed;[12] and Hamilton's separation of the "soft" radicals ("they have God, but sometimes for strategic reasons they may decide not to talk about him") from "hard" radicals such as himself:

> The hard radicals are really not interested in problems of communication. It is not that the old forms are outmoded or that modern man must be served but that the message itself is problematic. The hard radicals, however varied may be their language, share first of all a common loss.

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9. Cox's informal paper was titled "Second Thoughts on the Secular Society" and was delivered at the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary on January 22, 1966; further reference to this paper will be made below. I was privileged to attend the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Christian Ethics as Carl F. H. Henry's surrogate; my report of the sessions appears in *Christianity Today,* X (February 18, 1966), 538.
10. Quoted in an interview with Ved Mehta, "The New Theologian. I. Ecce Homo," *The New Yorker,* XLI (November 13, 1965), 144.
11. See especially Hamilton's "The Death of God Theology," *The Christian Scholar,* XLVIII (Spring, 1965), 27-48.
12. Cox made this point in his unpublished lecture, "Second Thoughts on the Secular Society"; see footnote 9.

> 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.[13]

In terms of these typologies, Vahanian and Cox are "soft" radicals who use quotation marks, while Altizer, Hamilton, and Van Buren, by eschewing qualifications (though admittedly not always in the most clean-cut fashion) and by endeavoring to assert the ontological demise of deity, warrant classification as "hard" radicals.

The five death-of-God theologians may be further distinguished by way of their academic specializations and temperamental orientations. Thus Vahanian is principally concerned with the relations between literature and theology, and writes as an urbane litteratéur himself; Cox is basically a sociologist of religion,[14] endeavoring to unite Talcott Parsons with Karl Barth (!);[15] Altizer is "mystical, spiritual, and apocalyptic . . . all élan, wildness, excessive generalization, brimming with colorful, flamboyant, and emotive language";[16] Hamilton is the theologian's theologian, having produced (before his conversion to death-of-God thinking) such standard fare as Modern Reader's Guides to various biblical books and *The Christian Man* in Westminster Press's Layman's Theological Library; and Van Buren—"ordered, precise, cool"[17] is ever the modern linguistic philosopher: he "has neither wept at God's funeral nor, like Altizer and the dancers at a Hindu procession to the burning ghat, leaped in corybantic exultation. He plays the role of the clinical diagnostician of linguistic maladies."[18] Let us consider in turn the peculiar ideological orientation of each of these thinkers, who, in spite of their wide divergencies, are united in focusing the attention of theology on contemporary secular man rather than on transcendental deity.

Gabriel Vahanian: Mortician-Litteratéur. Though Rudolf Bultmann regards Vahanian's *Death of God* as one of the most exciting books he

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13. Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," *loc. cit.* The "hard" radicals have had hard things to say about their "soft" counterparts, e.g.: "Dr. Altizer considers Harvey Cox a 'phony masquerading as a member of the avant-garde,' a sociologist in theologian's clothing. Dr. Hamilton of Colgate Rochester describes *The Secular City* as 'pop-Barth'. . . . 'Dr. Cox will keep neo-orthodoxy alive another six months', he scoffs" (Lee E. Dirks, "The Ferment in Protestant Thinking," *The National Observer,* January 31, 1966, p. 16).
14. Cf. his article, "Sociology of Religion in a Post-Religious Era," *The Christian Scholar,* XLVIII (Spring, 1965), 9-26.
15. So Cox stated in his paper, "Second Thoughts on the Secular Society" (see footnote 9).
16. Hamilton, "The Death of God Theology," pp. 32, 34.
17. *Ibid.* p. 34.
18. Nelson, "Deicide, Theothanasia, or What Do You Mean?" *loc. cit.*

has read in recent years, its author is now considered hopelessly conservative by the advocates of Christian atheism.[19] Why? because he unabashedly uses the expression "death of God" in a metaphorical-literary, not literal, way. The subtitle of his book reveals his major concern: "The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era." "God's death" is evident in the fact that ours is a post-Christian world where (1) "Christianity has sunk into religiosity," (2) "modern culture is gradually losing the marks of that Christianity which brought it into being and shaped it," and (3) "tolerance has become religious syncretism."[20] In his latest book, *Wait Without Idols,* Vahanian explicates: "This does not mean, obviously, that God himself no longer is but that, regardless of whether he is or not, his reality, as the Christian tradition has presented it, has become culturally irrelevant: God is *de trop,* as Sartre would say"[21]—and he illustrates with the opening scenes of the film *La Dolce Vita,* where a huge crucifix suspended from a heliocopter hovers incongruously over indifferent sunbathers below.

What is the cause of this "demise of God"? Like Paul Tillich or Christian philosopher of history Eric Voegelin,[22] Vahanian finds the basic issue in "the leveling down of transcendental values to immanental ones,"[23] i.e., the worship of the idolatrous gods of cultural religiosity. In a penetrating analysis of Samuel Beckett's 1952-53 play, *En attendant Godot* (*Waiting for Godot*), where Godot

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19. Mehta, *op. cit.,* p. 138. Gilkey of Chicago, a critic of the movement, is now endeavoring to compile a book of essays on the new Christian Radicalism, but Vahanian was not included among the prospective contributors. Vahanian's relative (neo-Barthian) conservativism is demonstrated in his recent article, "Swallowed Up by Godlessness" (*The Christian Century,* LXXXII [December 8, 1965], 1506), where he argues that the radical death-of-God view "not only surrenders to the secularism of our time but views it as the remedy instead of the sickness."
20. Vahanian, *The Death of God: The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), p. 228.
21. Vahanian, *Wait Without Idols* (New York: George Braziller, 1964), pp. 31-32. Several essays in this book have been published in less complete form in journals, e.g., "The Future of Christianity in a Post-Christian Era," *The Centennial Review,* VIII (Spring, 1964), 160-73; "Beyond the Death of God: The Need of Cultural Revolution," *Dialog,* I (Autumn, 1962), 18-21.
22. Tillich described this phenomenon as the substitution of non-ultimate concerns for the only true ultimate concern, Being itself; Voegelin refers to such idolatry as "Metastatic Gnosis" (see Montgomery, *The Shape of the Past: An Introduction to Philosophical Historiography* ["History in Christian Perspective," Vol. I; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Bros., 1963], pp. 127-38).
23. Vahanian, *Wait Without Idols,* p. 233.

represents God, Vahanian concludes: "No wonder then that life is lonesomely long, when one lives it out wandering from meaninglessness to meaninglessness, from idol to idol—and not a hope in sight. Modern man's place is the right place; only his religiousness is at the wrong place, addressing itself to the Unknown God."[24]

But Vahanian has an answer for post-Christian man: he must, as his book title says, "Wait without idols." As a Calvinist and as a follower of Barth (he translated and wrote the introduction for Barth's book *The Faith of the Church*), Vahanian believes that secular "immanentism can show that God dies as soon as he becomes a cultural accessory or a human ideal; that the finite cannot comprehend the infinite (*finitum non est capax infiniti*)."[25] What then does modern man wait for? The breaking in of the Wholly Other—the transcendent God who can never be "objectified."[26]

> The Christian era has bequeathed us the "death of God," but not without teaching us a lesson. God is not necessary; that is to say, he cannot be taken for granted. He cannot be used merely as a hypothesis, whether epistemological, scientific, or existential, unless we should draw the degrading conclusion that "God is reasons." On the other hand, if we can no longer assume that God is, we may once again realize that he *must* be. God is not necessary, but he is inevitable. He is wholly other and wholly present. Faith in him, the conversion of our human reality, both culturally and existentially, is the demand he still makes upon us.[27]

Harvey Cox: Mortician-Sociologist. Bishop John A. T. Robinson, of *Honest to God* fame, recently commended Cox's *Secular City* as "a major contribution by a brilliant young theologian" and pointed up its major theme: that secularization is "the fruit of the Gospel."[28] For Cox, secularization (as opposed to secularism) is a positive phenomenon, whereby "society and culture are delivered from tutelage to religious control and closed metaphysical world-views."[29] Following Eric Voegelin and Gerhard von Rad, Cox interprets the

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24. Vahanian, "The Empty Cradle," *Theology Today*, XIII (January, 1957), 526.
25. Vahanian, *The Death of God*, p. 231.
26. Vahanian, *Wait Without Idols*, p. 231.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
28. Quoted in Mehta, *loc. cit.*
29. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: Macmillan Paperbacks, 1965), p. 20. In his recent paper at the American Society of Christian Ethics (see footnote 9), Cox stated that a revised, hardbound edition of his book will soon appear, and that this second edition will become the basis of several translations into European languages.

Genesis account of Creation and the Exodus narratives of the deliverance from Egypt and the Sinai covenant as secularizing-liberating myths—myths of which the secular city becomes a modern counterpart. Urban life, with its anonymity and mobility, can free modern man from bondage to closed, idolatrous value systems, and open him to that which is truly transcendent. He quotes Amos Wilder approvingly: "If we are to have any transcendence today, even Christian, it must be in and through the secular."[30] How will the liberating transcendence manifest itself? Cox suggests art, social change, and what he calls the "I-You partnership" (a team-work relationship). Through such means the transcendent may eventually reveal to us a new name, for the word "God" has perhaps outlived its usefulness owing to its association with old idolatries. "This may mean that we shall have to stop talking about 'God' for a while, take a moratorium on speech until the new name emerges."[31] But this should not appear strange to us, since "hiddenness stands at the very center of the doctrine of God."[32] Even "in Jesus God does not stop being hidden; rather He meets man as the unavailable 'other'. He does not 'appear' but shows man that He acts, in His hiddenness, in human history."[33] Modern urban-secular life, then, is the vehicle (the "means of grace"!) by which man in our age can be freed from bondage to lesser gods and meet the Transcendent One again.

When Cox revisted his secular city in a conference several weeks ago,[34] he made his position vis-à-vis the "death of God" even more explicit. No, he did not accept the literal demise of deity; as a close admirer of Karl Barth, he firmly believes in a transcendent, wholly other God.[35] Indeed, it is on this basis that his book strikes

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30. *Ibid.*, p. 261. Wilder's statement appears in his essay, "Art and Theological Meaning," *The New Orpheus* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 407.
31. Cox, *The Secular City*, p. 266.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
33. *Ibid.*
34. See footnote 9 and corresponding text. Cf. Cox's article, "The Place and Purpose of Theology" (*The Christian Century*, LXXXIII [January 5, 1966], 7), where he hits the "hard" death-of-God radicals for missing the prophetic challenge of the modern revolutionary polis: "Rather than helping the prophets greet a religionless, revolutionary tomorrow, some theologians are more interested in dissecting the cadaver of yesterday's pieties."
35. Not so incidentally, Cox approvingly quoted his Harvard acquaintances Krister Stendahl ("you can only have Neo-Orthodoxy after a good long period of liberalism") and Erik Erikson, author of the psychoanalytic study, *Young Man Luther*, whose view of the "identity crisis" makes Stendahl's point in psychological terms.

out against those styles of life that capture and immanentize deity. With Friedrich Gogarten, he is convinced that apart from transcendent reality—an extrinsic point of reference—the world cannot be a world at all. (He illustrated with Muzak: if it were to go on all the time, then music would cease to exist; an anti-environment is necessary for an environment, and the wholly other God is such an anti-environment for our world.) But as to the identification of the Absolute, Cox was no less vague than in his book. There he spoke of atheists and Christians as differing not in their factual orientation but in their "stance"; in his lecture, he employed an aesthetic model for Christian social decisions, and when asked for the criteria whereby one could know that the transcendent is indeed working in a given social change, he optimistically asserted that "the hermeneutical community, with its eyes of faith, discerns 'where the action is'." Whereupon the questioner shrewdly retorted: "Carl McIntire's church or yours?" Cox then readily admitted his enthusiast-anabaptist frame of reference, and noted that Lutherans and Calvinists (mainline Reformation Protestants) had been the chief critics of his *Secular City*.

Thomas J. J. Altizer: Mortician-Mystic. In spite of their radical terminology, Vahanian and Cox are familiar territory to those acquainted with the twentieth century Protestant thought world. Beginning with Barth's radical transcendence, they condemn the false gods of cultural immanentism and see the collapse of these idols in our day as the entree to a new appreciation of the Wholly Other. They differ from Barth chiefly in the means by which the Transcendent One will now show himself; for Barth, it is always through the (erring but revelatory) Word of Scripture; for Vahanian and Cox, it is through the pulsating secular life of our time.

With Altizer, however, we move into a more distinctively radical radicalism, where God's death is passionately affirmed as a real (though dialectical) event. Altizer's difficult world-view is best comprehended through the influences that have played upon him. (1) From the great phenomenologist of religion Mircea Eliade, Altizer came to see that modern man has lost his sense of the sacred;[36] but Altizer "refuses to follow Eliade's tempting advice to return to some sort of precosmic primitivism and to recover the sacred in the

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36. Altizer, *Mircea Eliade and the Dialectic of the Sacred* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963); the book grew out of an article, "Mircea Eliade and the Recovery of the Sacred," *The Christian Scholar*, XLV (Winter, 1962), 267-89. As Hamilton notes, Altizer's book is a mixture of Eliade's views and Altizer's and therefore is "not structurally satisfactory" ("The Death of God Theology," p. 31).

way archaic religion did."[37] Altizer picks up the principle of the "coincidence of opposites" (*coincidentia oppositorum*) so vital to the thinking of Eliade (and of Carl Gustav Jung), and endeavors to apply it with ruthless consistency: the only way to recover the sacred is to welcome fully the secularization of the modern world.

(2) Altizer's studies in comparative religion, particularly the Eastern religions, provided considerable grist for his mill.[38] He came to identify the basic thrusts of Christianity and atheistic Buddhism;[39] in his judgment both religions seek to liberate man from all dependence on the phenomenal world (in Buddhism, the negation of Samsara is the only means to Nirvana), yet at the same time there is "a mystical apprehension of the oneness of reality" (Nirvana and Samsara are mystically identified).[40] Here, according to Altizer, is a telling parallel with the Christian Kingdom of God, which is "in the world but not of it."

(3) From modern Protestant theology Altizer has acquired his basic understanding of Christianity. Søren Kierkegaard has contributed the dialectical method: "existence in faith is antithetically related to existence in objective reality; now faith becomes subjective, momentary, and paradoxical."[41] Rudolf Otto[42] and Karl Barth have provided a God who is wholly transcendent—who cannot be adequately represented by any human idea. But Barth, Bultmann, and even Tillich have not carried through the Kierkegaardian dialectic to its consistent end, for they insist on retaining some vestige

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37. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
38. Altizer, *Oriental Mysticism and Biblical Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961). Some of the material in this book has been incorporated into Altizer's essay, "The Religious Meaning of Myth and Symbol," published in *Truth, Myth, and Symbol,* ed. Altizer, *et al.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 87-108.
39. Like Toynbee, Altizer places Christianity and Mahayana Buddhism on the religious pinnacle together. Altizer's dependence on Toynbee would be a subject worth investigating.
40. Altizer, "Nirvana and the Kingdom of God," in *New Theology No. 1,* ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: Macmillan Paperbacks, 1964), p. 164. This essay first appeared in the University of Chicago's *Journal of Religion,* April, 1963.
41. Altizer, "Theology and the Death of God," *The Centennial Review,* VIII (Spring, 1964), 130. It is interesting to speculate whether Jaroslav Pelikan is fully aware of the consequences of his attempts theologically to baptize Kierkegaard (*From Luther to Kierkegaard*) and Nietzsche (*Fools for Christ*).
42. Cf. Altizer, "Word and History," *Theology Today,* XXII (October, 1965), 385. The degree of current popular interest in Altizer's radicalism is indicated by the fact that the *Chicago Daily News* adapted this article for publication in its Panorama section (Janurary 29, 1966, p. 4).

of affirmation; they do not see that the dialectic requires an unqualified coincidence of opposites. If only Tillich had applied his "Protestant principle" consistently, he could have become the father of a new theonomous age! Wrote Altizer not long before Tillich's death:

> The death of God (which Tillich, who refuses to be fully dialectical, denies) must lead to a repetition of the Resurrection, to a new epiphany of the New Being. Moreover his own principles lead Tillich to the threshold of this position. If Christianity will be a bearer of the religious answer only so long as it breaks through its own particularity, only to the degree in which it negates itself as a religion, then obviously it must negate its Western form. Until Christianity undergoes this negation, it cannot be open to the depths of the ground of being. Nor will Christianity continue to be able to embody the New Being if it remains closed both to non-Western history and to the contemporary historical present. Potentially Tillich could become a new Luther if he would extend his principle of justification by doubt to a theological affirmation of the death of God.[43]

Altizer now clearly sees *himself* in this role.

(4) "If radical dialectical thinking was reborn in Kierkegaard, it was consummated in Friedrich Nietzsche,"[44] says Altizer, who sees in Nietzsche's vision of Eternal Recurrence the ideal myth of the coincidence of opposites, and in his passionate proclamation of God's death—the death of metaphysical transcendence—the essential key to a new age. For "only when God is dead, can Being begin in every Now.'"[45] Therefore, to turn the wheel of the world we must dare with William Blake to "name God as Satan," i.e., to "identify the transcendent Lord as the ultimate source of alienation and repression."[46] Only then can we affirm "the God beyond the Christian God, beyond the God of the historic Church, beyond all which Christendom has known as God."[47]

(5) By a thoroughgoing acceptance of Albert Schweitzer's eschatological interpretation of Jesus in his *Quest of the Historical*

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43. Altizer, Review of *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* by Paul Tillich, *The Christian Scholar,* XLVI (Winter, 1963), 362.
44. Altizer, "Theology and the Death of God," p. 132.
45. *Ibid.* On Nietzsche vis-à-vis current thought, see the excellent article by Erich Heller, "The Importance of Nietzsche," *Encounter* (London), XXII (April, 1964), 59-66.
46. Altizer made this point in a keynote speech at a recent conference at Emory University on "America and the Future of Technology"; it was reported in *Christianity Today,* X (December 17, 1965), 1310.
47. Altizer, "Theology and the Death of God," p. 134.

Jesus, Altizer claims Jesus as the prime symbol of his world-view. "To grasp Jesus as an historical or an objective phenomenon is to live in unbelief."[48] Jesus is significant because of his single-minded attention to the coming Kingdom and his sacrifice of himself for it; he thus becomes the Christ figure—the symbol of a total rejection of the old to achieve the new—and this "mythical symbol of Christ" is "the substance of the Christian faith."[49] So Altizer calls on radical Christians to "rebel against the Christian churches and their traditions" and to "defy the moral law of the churches, identifying it as a satanic law of repression and heteronomous compulsion."[50] As "spiritual or apocalyptic" Christians, they must "believe only in the Jesus of the third age of the Spirit, a Jesus who is not to be identified with the original historical Jesus, but who rather is known here in a new and more comprehensive and universal form, a form actualizing the eschatological promise of Jesus."[51] The incarnate Word is thus seen to be fully kenotic—capable of a totally new expression in the new age ushered in when dialectically we "accept the death of God as a final and irrevocable event":

> Neither the Bible nor church history can be accepted as containing more than a provisional or temporary series of expressions of the Christian Word. . . . Not only does Christianity now have a new meaning, it has a new reality, a reality created by the epiphany of a fully kenotic Word. Such a reality cannot be wholly understood by a word of the past, not even by the word "kenosis," for the Christian Word becomes a new reality by ceasing to be itself: only by negating and thus transcending its previous expressions can the Incarnate Word be a forward-moving process.[52]

William Hamilton: Mortician-Theologian. Though Altizer outbarths Barth in his employment of the transcendence principle, thus apparently leaving the "soft" radicals far behind, his affirmation of God's death is, after all, still a dialectic affirmation: from the ashes of God's pyre will arise, like the Phoenix, a "God beyond God." Now

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48. Altizer, "The Religious Meaning of Myth and Symbol," p. 95.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Quoted in a symposium-interview in *Christianity Today,* X (January 7, 1966), 374.
51. *Ibid.* The expression, "third age of the Spirit," comes from the twelfth century mystic-millennial theologian Joachim of Floris (see Montgomery, *The Shape of the Past,* p. 48). As in Cox, so in Altizer we find a definite tone of anabaptist enthusiasm.
52. Altizer, "Creative Negation in Theology," *Christian Century,* LXXXII (July 7, 1965), 866-67.

let us consider a theothanatologist who has come to reject the dialectic as well.

In a revealing autobiographical article, Hamilton states that he did not attain his present "hard" radical position until 1964, after he had turned forty.[53] This is quite true, and much of the current interpretation of Hamilton falls wide of the mark because it is based on his 1961 book, *The New Essence of Christianity,* which explicitly disavows "the non-existence of God"[54] and even affirms Jesus' resurrection "as an ordinary event" (though it is insignificantly relegated to a footnote!).[55] But even at that time, the influence of Barth,[56] Niebuhr, and John Baillie[57] on Hamilton's thought was leading to a more radical position. Thus in the Spring of 1963 Hamilton wistfully attempted to save Mozart's Don Giovanni through the employment of Kierkegaard's dialectic of good and evil; Don Giovanni seems to typify the limbo state of the contemporary theologian–neither damned nor saved.[58] Then came Hamilton's first direct attempt to "see if there is anybody out there"[59]–if there were others who shared his growing dissatisfaction with the state of theological life: his essay, "Thursday's Child," in which he depicted the theologian of today and tomorrow as "a man without faith, without hope, with only the present and therefore only love to guide him"–"a waiting man and a praying man."[60] When interviewed in 1965 by Mehta, he said: "I am beginning to feel that the time has come for me to put up or shut up, for me to be an in or an out."[61]

The decision to be an "out"–a "hard" radical affirming the literal death of God–was made by Hamilton last year. In his *Christian Century* article previously referred to, he described the breakdown

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53. Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," pp. 1219-20. Apparently Hamilton just made it in time, for Altizer is of the opinion that "the real barrier to this kind of thinking is mainly age, because most of those under 45 do respond to it" (*Chicago Daily News,* January 29, 1966, *loc. cit.).*
54. Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity* (cited in footnote 5), p. 55.
55. *Ibid.,* p. 116.
56. *Ibid.,* pp. 93-94.
57. Nelson, "Deicide, Theothanasia, or What Do You Mean?" *loc. cit.* (in footnote 4).
58. Hamilton, "Daring to Be the Enemy of God," *The Christian Scholar,* XLVI (Spring, 1963), 40-54. Barth's lavish appreciation of Mozart is well known.
59. Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," p. 1220.
60. Hamilton, "Thursday's Child: The Theologian Today and Tomorrow," *Theology Today,* XX (January, 1964), 489, 494.
61. Mehta, *op. cit.* (in footnote 10), p. 142.

of his "good old world of middle-of-the-road, ecumenical neo-orthodoxy,"[62] and outlined his new position in three particulars: (1) God is indeed dead; the Neo-Orthodox "dialectic between the presence and absence of God" has now "collapsed." (2) A free choice is made to follow the man Jesus in obedience—to stand where he stands.[63] (3) A new optimism will "say Yes to the world of rapid change, new technologies, automation and the mass media." The last two points are clarified somewhat in Hamilton's recent analysis of the death-of-God movement, wherein he stakes out his position as compared with the views of Altizer and Van Buren.[64] Christologically, Hamilton, like Altizer, commits himself to a radically hidden, kenotic Jesus: "Jesus may be concealed in the world, in the neighbor, in this struggle for justice, in that struggle for beauty, clarity, order. Jesus is in the world as masked." Moreover, "Become a Christ to your neighbor, as Luther put it."[65]

Yet the theme of the Christian as "both a waiting man and a praying man" still remains. How is this possible if "the breakdown of the religious a priori means that there is no way, ontological, cultural, or psychological, to locate a part of the self or a part of human experience that needs God"—if "there is no God-shaped blank within man"? "Really to travel along this road means that we trust the world, not God, to be our need fulfiller and problem solver, and God, if he is to be for us at all, must come in some other role."[66] Having rejected Augustine's claim that our hearts are restless till they find their rest in God, Hamilton draws in another Augustinian theme: the distinction between *uti* and *frui*—between using God and enjoying Him.

> If God is not needed, if it is to the world and not God that we repair for our needs and problems, then perhaps we may come to see that He is to be enjoyed and delighted in. . . . Our waiting for God, our godlessness, is partly

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62. Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology," p. 1219.
63. Cf. the following lines in "Thursday's Child": "The theologian is sometimes inclined to suspect that Jesus Christ is best understood not as either the object or ground of faith, and not as person, event, or community, but simply as a place to be, a standpoint. 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" (p. 494).
64. Hamilton, "The Death of God Theology," pp. 27-48. Hamilton is collaborating with Altizer on a soon-to-be-published collection of articles; the book will carry the title, *Radical Theology and the Death of God.*
65. Hamilton, "The Death of God Theology," pp. 46-47.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

> a search for a language and a style by which we might be enabled to stand before Him once again, delighting in His presence.[67]

In the meantime, modern secular man must grow up—from an Oedipus to an Orestes, from a Hamlet to a Prospero[68]—by moving beyond the anguished quest for salvation from sin to a confident, optimistic, secular stance "in the world, in the city, with both the needy neighbor and the enemy." Thus is the orthodox relation between God and the neighbor "inverted": "We move to our neighbor, to the city and to the world out of a sense of the loss of God."[69] Man, not God, becomes the center of focus while we wait prayerfully for the epiphany of a God of delight.

Paul Van Buren: Mortician-Philosopher. Officially, Hamilton rejects a dialectic view of God's existence; yet, remarkably (or paradoxically, in spite of Hamilton's formal break with neo-Protestant paradox!) a *frui* God is hoped for at the death of a *uti* divinity. Prayer is the revealing element in Hamilton's theology: he continues to pray in spite of God's death—thus forcing the conclusion that the dialectic of divine presence-absence that he claims to have rejected has not been rejected at all in practice. Through the contemporary dark night of the soul God *is* in some sense still there, waiting as we wait, the recipient of our prayers. In Paul Van Buren, however, this inconsistency is overcome through the cool and rigorous application of linguistic philosophy. Significantly, Van Buren recently admitted: "I don't pray. I just reflect on these things."[70]

Like the other death-of-God theologians, Van Buren began his reflecting as a Barthian. We noted earlier that he took his doctorate under Barth at Basel.[71] Subsequently, however, he came into contact with the *Philosophical Investigations* of the later Wittgenstein and the writings of the so-called linguistic analysts who have

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67. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
68. Interestingly, while Hamilton was still in theological limbo, he wrote an article on Hamlet, finding portrayed there the death of a demonic idea of God: "Hamlet and Providence," *The Christian Scholar,* XLVII (Fall, 1964), 193-207.
69. Hamilton, "The Death of God Theology," p. 46.
70. Quoted in an interview with Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
71. It is not without significance that Van Buren's thesis dealt with Calvin and was published in the United States by Eerdmans: *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957). The new interest on the part of Eerdmans in the Reformed theology of Barth (paralleling a similar interest at the Fuller Theological Seminary) does not seem to harbinger good for evangelical Protestantism in America.

followed him.[72] In the process of subjecting his own Neo-Orthodox theology to rigorous analytic and linguistic criticism, he wrote his *Secular Meaning of the Gospel,* a book which, he says, "represented an important step in a personal struggle to overcome my own theological past"[73]—but "what I'm thinking now is a lot more radical even than what I said in my book."[74]

What is Van Buren's current position? It may be represented as a five-point argument, the total importance of which can hardly be overemphasized since it forms the philosophical backbone of consistent "Christian atheism": (1) Assertions compatible with anything and everything say nothing, and this is precisely the status of Neo-Orthodoxy's affirmation concerning a transcendental, wholly-other God. At the beginning of *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel,* Van Buren approvingly quotes the well-known parable by Antony Flew and John Wisdom, demonstrating the meaninglessness of such God-statements:

> Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, "Some gardener must tend this plot." The other disagrees "There is no gardener." So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. "But perhaps he is an invisible gardener." So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. (For they remember how H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* could be both smelt and touched though he could not be seen.) But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. "But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves." At last the Sceptic despairs, "But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?"[75]

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72. Van Buren, "Theology in the Context of Culture," *The Christian Century,* LXXXII (April 7, 1965), 429.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Interview with Mehta, *op. cit.,* p. 143.
75. Antony Flew, "Theology and Falsification," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology,* ed. Flew and Macintyre (London: SCM Press, 1955), p. 96.

An important section of Van Buren's book is devoted to showing that Bultmann's existential assertions about God do not escape this "death by a thousand qualifications," and that the same holds true of Schubert Ogden's attempts (God is "experienced non-objective reality," etc.) to stiffen existential affirmations with Whitehead's process-philosophy. God, then, is literally and unqualifiedly dead, and future divine epiphanies have no more meaning than present-day expressions of God's existence.

(2) Modern life is irrevocably pluralistic and relativistic, a marketplace where a multitude of "language games" are played, not a Gothic cathedral where a single comprehensive world-view is possible. The non-cognitive language game of theology has to be played relativistically in this milieu.[76]

(3) If metaphysical, transcendental God-statements are literally meaningless, what is their "cash value"? The actual worth of these affirmations of faith can be obtained only by translating them into human terms, an operation to which the concluding portion of *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* is devoted. As Van Buren put it in his recent *New Yorker* interview: "I am trying to argue that it [Christianity] is fundamentally about man, that its language about God is one way—a dated way, among a number of ways—of saying what it is Christianity wants to say about man and human life and human history."[77]

(4) This translation of God-language to man-language must be carried out particularly in reference to the central figure of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth.

> One of the ways in which the New Testament writers speak about Jesus is in divine and quasi-divine terms—Son of God, and what have you. . . . What I'm trying to do is to understand the Bible on a naturalistic or humanistic level, to find out how the references to the absolute and the supernatural are used in expressing on a human level the understanding and convictions that the New Testament writers had about their world. For by using these large cosmological terms in speaking about this particular happening, this event—the history of Jesus—they were saying the most that they could say about this man. If a man in the first century had wanted to say of a certain person that he had given him an insight into what human life was all about, he would have almost normally said, "That man is divine."[78]

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76. Van Buren, "The Dissolution of the Absolute," *Religion in Life*, XXXIV (Summer, 1965), 334-42.
77. Interview with Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Van Buren claims that his secular translation of the Gospel "stands or falls with our interpretation of the language connected with Easter."[79] What is this interpretation?

> Jesus of Nazareth was a free man in his own life, who attracted followers and created enemies according to the dynamics of personality and in a manner comparable to the effect of other liberated persons in history upon people about them. He died as a result of the threat that such a free man poses for insecure and bound men. His disciples were left no less insecure and frightened. Two days later, Peter, and then other disciples, . . . experienced a discernment situation in which Jesus the free man whom they had known, themselves, and indeed the whole world, were seen in a quite new way. From that moment, the disciples began to possess something of the freedom of Jesus. His freedom began to be "contagious."[80]

(5) Admittedly, theology is here reduced to ethics, but in our secular age we are unable to find any "empirical linguistic anchorage" for the transcendental. After all, "alchemy was 'reduced' to chemistry by the rigorous application of an empirical method."[81] So let us frankly embrace the secular world of which we are a part. Religious thought is "responsible to human society, not to the church. Its orientation is humanistic, not divine. Its norms must lie in the role it performs in human life. . . . Any insights into the 'human situation' which our religious past may provide us, therefore, can be helpful only insofar as we bring them into a dynamic conversation with and allow them to be influenced by our rapidly changing technological culture."[82]

And here *la ronde* is complete, for in his stress on our modern cultural situation Van Buren reminds us of the "soft" radicals Vahanian and Cox as much as of his "hard" compatriots Altizer and Hamilton. Is there then a death-of-God school? Even with the qualifications introduced in our discussion of each of the five theothanatologists, the answer must be Yes. For in all of these thinkers

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79. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, p. 200.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 198. Parenthetically, it is worth noting that Van Buren's argument is no more valid in reference to alchemy than it is in regard to theology; see Montgomery, "Cross, Constellation, and Crucible: Lutheran Astrology and Alchemy in the Age of the Reformation," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 4th ser., I (1963), 251-70 (also published in the British periodical *Ambix, the Journal of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry*, XI [June, 1963], 65-86, and shortly to appear in French in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*).
82. Van Buren, "Theology in the Context of Culture," p. 430.

the theological center shifts away from a God whose transcendence causes him to become more and more indistinct, until finally, in Van Buren, he passes into the realm of analytic meaninglessness. And for all of these morticians of the Absolute, God's vague or vacated position on the theological stage is replaced by Man–literary man (Vahanian), urban man (Cox), mystical man (Altizer), social man (Hamilton), ethical man (Van Buren). Correspondingly, the Christ of these "Christian atheists" moves from divine to human status: his kenosis becomes continually more pronounced until finally the divine "hiddenness" in him is absolutized, yielding a humanistic Jesus with whom modern man can truly and optimistically stand in "I-You" partnership in a world of secular challenge and dynamic change.

EFFORTS AT RESUSCITATION

As the theothantologists have taken their positions around the divine bier, ready to convey it to its final resting place, resuscitator squads of theologians and clergy have rushed to the scene in a frantic effort to show that the Subject of discussion "is not dead but sleepeth." In the five years since the appearance of Vahanian's *Death of God,* vocal opposition to the movement has increased not arithmetically but geometrically. The protests have ranged widely in scope and quality–from the revival of the anti-Nietzsche quip ("God is dead!" signed, Nietzsche; "Nietzsche is dead!" signed, God) to Eric Mascall's *The Secularisation of Christianity,* a book-length criticism of the common theological orientation of Van Buren and J. A. T. Robinson.[83] In general, it must be said that the attempts to counter "Christian atheism," though occasionally helpful in pointing up weaknesses in the theothanatologists' armor, do not cut decisively to the heart of the issue. In most instances, the reason for the critical debility lies in the dullness of the theological swords the critics wield. Let us observe several representative efforts to slay the God-is-dead ideology, after which we will be in a better position to offer our own critique.

Early in this paper we cited Hamilton's colleague Charles M. Nielsen of Colgate Rochester, who evidently has taken all that he

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83. Reference will be made to Mascall's book in the next section of this paper. Any attempt to show the connections between the God-is-dead movement and the popular British radicalism represented by Robinson, Eric Vidler, *et. al.,* would carry us too far afield; see on the latter my critique of Bishop Pike's theology in the April and May issues of *Sunday School Times.*

can bear from Hamilton and his death-of-God confreres. Nielsen is the best example of the anti-theothanatological critics who oppose the movement through satire and ridicule. Here is a delightful sample:

> On the subject of freedom: there is nothing quite like some Protestant seminaries. Presumably a medical school would be upset if its students became Christian Scientists and wanted to practice their new beliefs instead of medicine in the operating rooms of the university hospital. And a law school might consider it unbecoming to admit hordes of Anabaptists who refused on principle to have anything to do with law courts. But almost nothing (including atheism but excluding such vital matters as smoking) seems inappropriate in some Protestant settings—nothing, that is, except the traditions of Christianity and especially of Protestantism. Traditions are regarded as "square," supposedly because they are not new. The modern theologian spends his time huddled over his teletype machine, like a nun breathless with adoration, in the hope that out of the latest news flash he can be the first to pronounce the few remaining shreds of the Protestant tradition "irrelevant."
>
> So powerful is the thrust toward novelty that a famous Protestant journal is considering a series of articles by younger theologians under 60 called "How My Mind Has Changed in the Past Five Minutes." The only thing that is holding up the project is the problem of getting the journal distributed fast enough. A great aim of the liberal Protestant seminary is to be so relevant that no one would suspect Protestantism had a past, or at least a worthwhile one. The point is for the seminary to become so pertinent to modern culture that the church has nothing to say to that culture.[84]

Though such passages are great fun and make an important point, they by-pass the root question, namely, Are the death-of-God theologians *correct* in what they claim? *Is* God dead? The obvious incongruity in Hamilton's presence on the Colgate Rochester faculty, in Van Buren's retention of Episcopal ordination, etc., pales before the truth question. Nielsen never faces this problem, for he sees the difficulty simply to be a surfeit of "eccentrics" in the church, and pleads for (as the subtitle of his article puts it) "more Benedictines, please!" As a professor of historical theology who highly values the corporate tradition of the historic church, he prays: "Dear Lord, we are grateful for all the individualists and gadflies you have sent us. Hermits *are* interesting, but next time may we please also

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84. Nielsen, "The Loneliness of Protestantism," *loc. cit.* (in footnote 6).

have a few Benedictines to build, organize and serve the church?" But if the God of the historic church is not dead, then "gratitude" for theothanatological gadflies seems hardly appropriate; and if he is, then Nielsen's Benedictines are a positive menace.

The November 17, 1965, issue of *Christian Century* featured a section titled, "Death-of-God: Four Views," with the following explanation from the editor: "Letters constituting entries in the death-of-God debate . . . continue to crowd the editor's desk. To print them all would be impossible, so as a way out of the dilemma we present four articles which in one or another aspect seem to inculcate most of the views, mainly critical, advanced in the letters." These articles are indeed representative of the general reaction to the movement, and their common theme is the *inconsistency* of the theothanatologists: their impossible attempt to retain love, joyful optimism, the Christian ethic, or Jesus himself while giving up a transcendent God. Warren L. Moulton argues that "without our faith in the reality of God we can know little or nothing about the love which we call *agape*"; he notes that "for the joy that was set before him Christ endured the cross; with the arrival of 'optimism' and the departure of this particular joy, a central nerve is frayed"; and asks: "Can we stick by Jesus just because we like the toys in his sandbox?"[85] Larry Shiner writes: "To get rid of God and keep a 'Jesus ethic' of involvement with the present human situation is a species of absent-mindedness amazing to behold in a movement that takes its motto from Nietzsche. *He* at least knew better; he never tired of pointing out that Christianity is a whole and that one cannot give up faith in God and keep Christian morality."[86]

But as sound as these criticisms are from the standpoint of the biblical world-view, they overlook the plain fact that the death-of-God theologians are quite willing to follow Nietzsche, if need be, in a "transvaluation of all values." Altizer, as we have seen, has already called upon radical Christians to "defy the moral law of the churches"; and Van Buren, in his article for *Christian Century's* "How I Am Making Up My Mind" series, does not mention the name of Jesus once, and defines the task of theology entirely in humanistic terms.[87] It is therefore painfully evident that the charge of inconsistency toward the Christian tradition will not move the theothanatologists to repentance; they are fully prepared to embrace "creative negation" on all fronts. The basic issue remains: Is such negation justified?

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85. Moulton, "Apocalypse in a Casket?" *The Christian Century,* LXXXII (November 17, 1965), 1413.
86. Shiner, "Goodbye, Death-of-God!" *ibid.,* p. 1418.
87. Van Buren, "Theology in the Context of Culture," *loc.cit.*

The scholarly attempts to meet this fundamental truth question have thus far issued chiefly from the theological camps the "Christian atheists" have endeavored (quite successfully) to demolish: existentialism, Whiteheadian process-philosophy, and Neo-Orthodoxy. The result is a rather painful example of the defense of vested interests. Existential theologian John Macquarrie[88] is willing to admit, with Van Buren, that "our modern scheme of thought affords no place for another being, however exalted, in addition to the beings that we encounter within the world"; but he still sees as a viable alternative the Heidegger-Tillich-Robinson existential-ontological conception of God as Being itself:

> The alternative is to think of God as Being itself—Being which emerges and manifests itself in and with and through every particular being, but which is not itself another such being, which is nothing apart from particular beings, and yet which is more beingful than any particular being, since it is the condition that there should be any such beings whatsoever. . . . It is Heidegger's merit that he has shown the empirical anchorage of this question in certain moods of our own human existence—moods that light up for us the wider Being within which we live and move and have our own being.[89]

Process-philosophy is made the bulwark of defense against "Christian atheism" by theological advocates of this philosophical school. Stokes claims that a program to counter "the threat of a world view which repudiates the belief in a personal God . . . can best succeed with the aid of personalistic modes of thought which are informed and enriched by some of the insights of Whitehead and Hartshorne."[90] John B. Cobb, Jr., author of the Whitehead-oriented *Living Options in Protestant Theology*[91] (which does not even include orthodox Reformation theology as an option!), informs us that "once one enters the strange new world of Whitehead's vision, God becomes very much alive. . . . Insofar as I come existentially to experience myself in terms of the world to which Whitehead introduces

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88. Best known for his useful survey, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought* (London: SCM Press, 1963), which concludes with a treatment of "Existentialism and Ontology" (pp. 351 ff.); Macquarrie explicitly identifies his own position with "those philosophies of existence and being that have been developed by Martin Heidegger and other thinkers" and theologically with "the related work of men like Bultmann and Tillich" (p. 374).
89. Macquarrie, "How Can We Think of God?" *Theology Today*, XXII (July, 1965), 200-201.
90. Stokes, "The Nontheistic Temper of the Modern Mind," *op. cit.* (in footnote 2), p. 257.
91. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.

us, I experience myself in God; God as in me; God as law, as love, as grace; and the whole world as grounded in him. . . . If Whitehead's vision should triumph in the years ahead, the 'death of God' would indeed turn out after all to have been only the 'eclipse of God'."[92] Bernard Meland argues in terms of process-philosophy and comparative religion that "ultimacy and immediacies traffic together," and that "while notions of the Absolute have dissolved in our modern discourse, the vision of a *More* in experience, as a dimension that is lived rather than thought, is not unavailable."[93]

Even the Neo-Orthodox theology out of which the death-of-God theologians have carved their casket for the Infinite is presented as an answer to "Christian atheism." Langdon Gilkey, in his Crozer Lectures on the God-is-dead movement, holds that the theothanatologists are influenced solely by the "negative elements" of Neo-Orthodoxy and "not at all by the balancing positive elements."[94] On the positive side, when one looks deeply into human experience, one finds "a special kind of Void and loss," the character of which is best expressed by such terms as "ultimate," "transcendent," and "unconditioned." Here "there is either no answer at all and so despair, or, if there be an answer, it comes from beyond the creaturely." At this point revelation puts in its claim: "Revelation is that definite mode of experience in which an answer to those ultimate questions is actually experienced, in which, that is, the reality and truth of language about God is brought home to the experiencer, in which propositions about God are 'verified'."[95] In the Neo-Orthodox

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92. Cobb, "From Crisis Theology to the Post-Modern World," *The Centennial Review*, VIII (Spring, 1964), 184-85. Cf. Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology, Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), *passim.*
93. Meland, "Alternative to Absolutes," *Religion in Life*, XXXIV (Summer, 1965), 346. For further explications of process thinking in current theology, see Schubert M. Ogden, "Faith and Truth," *The Christian Century*, LXXXII (September 1, 1965), 1057-60; Norman Pittenger, "A Contemporary Trend in North American Theology: Process-Thought and Christian Faith," *Religion in Life*, XXXIV (Autumn, 1965), 500-510; and Gene Reeves, "A Look at Contemporary American Theology," *ibid.*, pp. 511-25 (Reeves employs—with some qualification—the rubric "Christless theology" for process thinking).
94. Gilkey, "Is God Dead?" *The Voice: Bulletin of Crozer Theological Seminary*, LVII (January, 1965), 4.
95. Gilkey, "God Is NOT Dead," *ibid.*, pp. 9-10. That Gilkey's approach to revelation is neither that of Reformation orthodoxy (which regarded the Bible as God's inerrant word) nor that of classic Neo-Orthodoxy (which took Scripture, though regarded as errant, as its theological *point de départ*) becomes clear when he writes: "Our theological analysis must begin with man. If we felt sure that the divine word in

spirit, Gilkey quickly adds: "No proof here is possible; only confession and conviction based on this experience." In sum: "The 'verification' of all we say about God occurs, then, in the life of faith lived by the Christian community, and from that living experience springs the usage and the reality of its God-language."[96]

The existential-ontological, process thinking, and Neo-Orthodox arguments against "Christian atheism" ring more and more hollow as analytical philosophy intensifies its barrage against these increasingly anachronistic theologies. Theothantology was built over the wreckage of these positions, and in itself it has marshalled overwhelming analytical evidence of their debility. Listen to Van Buren's decimation of such arguments as have just been presented:

> Along comes the knight of faith and speaks of "reality breaking in upon us!" Or he speaks to us in the name of "absolute reality," or, even more confusing, his faith is placed in "an objective reality." And here I would suggest that language has gone on a wild binge, which I think we should properly call a lost weekend.
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> This knight of faith is presumably speaking English, and so we take him to be using words which we have learned how to use. Only see what he does with them. "Reality" which is ordinarily used to call our attention once more to our agreements about how things are, is used now to refer to what the knight of faith must surely want to say is radically the opposite of all of our ordinary understandings. Why not better say, "Unreality is breaking in upon us"?
>
> I think we can say something about what has gone wrong here. There was a time when the Absolute, God, was taken to be the cause of a great deal of what we would today call quite real phenomena, from rain and hail to death and disease. God was part of what people took to be the network of forces and factors of everyday existence, as real and as objective as the thunderbolts he produced. But today we no longer have the same reference for the word "reality." The network of understandings to which the word points has undergone important changes. The word "reality" has taken on an empirical coloration which makes it now a bit confusing to speak of "reality breaking in upon us," unless we are referring to, for

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Scripture was the truth, then the Bible might be our starting point" (Gilkey, "Dissolution and Reconstruction in Theology," *The Christian Century,* LXXXII [February 3, 1965], 137). But in finding his answers to the human predicament in the revelation of an unconditioned, transcendent God, Gilkey places himself in the general stream of Neo-Orthodoxy.

96. Gilkey, "God Is NOT Dead," p. 11.

example, a sudden and unexpected visit from the police or a mother-in-law.[97]

The point Van Buren cleverly makes here applies equally to existential ontologies, process philosophies, and Neo-Orthodox theologies, for all of these positions offer concepts of Deity which, being compatible with anything and everything, say precisely nothing. Macquarrie's "beingful Being" may be nothing but an animistic name for the universe (the existence of which is hardly in dispute!);[98] the God of Whitehead and Hartshorne, as worshipped by Ogden, Cobb, Meland, *et al.*, may likewise be little more than a pantheistic projection of their personalities on an impersonal universe (even William James, whose notion of "the More" Meland appropriates, admitted that it might be only an extension of the subliminal, parapsychological life of man);[99] and Gilkey quite rightly encloses the word "verification" in quotation marks when he uses it, for Neo-Orthodoxy's experience of revelation as filling a "Void" is no more a validation of God's ontological reality than the existentialist's "moods that light up the wider Being within which we live" or the process theologian's experience of "non-objective reality."[100] In all of these cases, the source of the experience

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97. Van Buren, "The Dissolution of the Absolute," *op. cit.* (in footnote 76), pp. 338-39.

98. Cf. Paul Edwards, "Professor Tillich's Confusions," *Mind,* LXXIV (April, 1965), 192-214; and note the pertinence of Quine's remarks at the beginning of his essay, "On What There Is": "A curious thing about the ontological problem is its simplicity. It can be put in three Anglo-Saxon monsyllables: 'What is there?' It can be answered, moreover, in a word– 'Everything' [or 'Being itself'!]—and everyone will accept this answer as true. However, this is merely to say that there is what there is. There remains room for disagreement over cases [e.g., the existence of the transcendent God of the Bible!]" (Willard van Orman Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* 2d ed.; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963 , p. 1). Reference is also in order to the refutations of Hartshorne's ontological argument for God's existence; see *The Ontological Argument,* ed. Alvin Plantinga (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), especially pp. 123-80.

99. See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience, passim;* and cf. *William James on Psychical Research,* ed. Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou (New York: Viking Press, 1960), *passim.* Note also my "Critique of William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience,*" in my *Shape of the Past: An Introduction to Philosophical Historiography* ("History in Christian Perspective," Vol. 1; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1963), pp. 312-40.

100. Cf. Brand Blanshard, "Critical Reflections on Karl Barth," in *Faith and the Philosophers,* ed. John Hick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 159-200 (other papers in this symposium volume are also relevant to the issue); and C. B. Martin, "A Religious Way of Knowing," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology,* ed. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM Press, 1955), pp. 76-95.

could be purely psychological, and an appeal to a more-than-human level of explanation totally without warrant.[101]

Some efforts have been made to oppose the God-is-dead ideology from the standpoint of traditional orthodox theology, but these attempts, operating from presuppositionalist or fideist orientations,[102] have had little impact. Paul Holmer of Yale, whose theology falls within the Lutheran spectrum,[103] makes the excellent points that the God-is-dead school has misinterpreted Bonhoeffer, who was no advocate of atheism, and that the theothanatologists have falsely assumed that Christianity can be modified so as to become universally acceptable to modern man while still remaining true to itself. On the latter point he writes: "The Christian idea of God has never been the coin of a very large realm. . . . Theology never did have the allegiance of the intelligentsia in the West, nor did the church's other powers extend over the whole of European social life. . . . The theologian must understand the world and the people in it, not to make Christianity relevant to them as much as to help them become relevant and amenable to Christianity."[104] But when he moves to a positive defense of the Christian view of God, Holmer vitiates his effectiveness by presuppositionally driving a wedge between theology (which, presumably, could remain true no matter what) and secular knowledge (whose development cannot touch theological truth): "Theology was never so much a matter of evidence that it had to change as the evidence advanced."[105]

Robert E. Fitch of the Pacific School of Religion unmercifully castigates the God-is-dead mentality, arguing that "if there is anything worse than bourgeois religiosity, it is egghead religiosity" and that "this is the Age of the Sell-Out, the age of the Great Betrayal. We are a new Esau who has sold his spiritual birthright for a secular mess of pottage."[106] Particularly telling is Fitch's case for the permanent and culture-transcending impact of Scripture;

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101. This point is well made by the psychoanalyst in A. N. Prior's clever dialog, "Can Religion Be Discussed?" (*ibid.*, pp. 1-11).
102. I have endeavored to show the fallacies of the presuppositionalist and fideist viewpoints in reference to Christian apologetics; see my articles, "The Place of Reason," *His Magazine of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship*, XXVI (February, 1966), 8-12; (March, 1966), 13-16, 21.
103. Cf. his book, *Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion* ("The Lutheran Studies Series," Vol. 2; Minneapolis: T. S. Denison, 1961).
104. Holmer, "Contra the New Theologies," *The Christian Century*, LXXXII (March 17, 1965), 330-31.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 332. Note also in this connection Holmer's article, "Atheism and Theism," *Lutheran World*, XIII (1966), 14-25.
106. Fitch, "The Sell-Out, or the Well Acculturated Christian," *The Christian Century*, LXXXIII (February 16, 1966), 202.

he tells of the current wave of interest on the part of east Africans in the first published Swahili translation of *Julius Caesar,* and comments:

> Perhaps some cultural relativist would like to explain how an event in ancient Rome could have meaning almost 1,500 years later in Elizabethan England and how it could now, centuries later, be reborn in meaning in east Africa. What is striking is not just the continuity of meaning in the event but the continuity of expression in Plutarch-North-Shakespeare-Nyerere [the Swahili translator]. Our Bible can do as much. Indeed, it always has done so.[107]

But the universality of literary impact hardly establishes the cognitive truth of the Bible's claims, and it is the latter that the death-of-God theologians dispute. Moreover, when Fitch opposes existentialistic-experiential thinking with the argument that secular concepts and categories "yield but an erudite darkness until they are illuminated by a vision which sees this world in the light of another world," he does not move beyond the "soft" radical Cox whom he criticizes.[108] Even if Reinhold Niebuhr, with his transcendental perspective on the human predicament, accomplished more than secularist John Dewey[109] (a debatable assumption, in any case), the basic question of the *de facto existence* of the transcendent still remains. The "world seen in light of another world" is an argument subject to infinite regress, and the pragmatic effect of belief in Deity can hardly establish the independent existence of Deity. Fitch appears to operate from a presuppositional orientation which (sound though it may be) leaves death-of-God thinking basically untouched.

Representing fideistic attacks on the theothanatologists, we have Episcopal rector David R. Matlack, who speaks eloquently for most Christian believers: "Even if their assumptions were granted and their logic airtight—and this is far from the case—they would not be touching the real life experiences I believe I have had of God's grace, and the real life experiences other Christians have had."[110] Here the issue is, of course, whether Matlack's "real life experiences" and those of other believers necessarily demand the existence of a transcendent God. Suppose, as philosopher Kai Nielsen has argued in a paper written from Van Buren's analytical stance, fideistic claims such as Matlack's "are in reality no claims

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107. *Ibid.,* p. 203.
108. See text at footnote 35.
109. So argues Fitch, *loc. cit.*
110. Quoted in Dirks, *loc. cit.* (see footnote 13).

at all because key religious words and utterances are without intelligible factual content"?[111] How does the orthodox believer (any more than the existentialist) know that his experiential "encounters" require a transcendental explanation?[112] It is the contention of "hard" death-of-God thinking that such "encounters" must be translated into purely human terms to make sense. Attempts by Christian believers to meet this issue—which lies at the very heart of the God-is-dead movement—have thus far fallen wide of the mark.

A CLOSER PATHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

In endeavoring to strike to the root of the theothanatological problem, we shall focus attention on the theoretical underpinning which Van Buren has provided for the movement. Our concern will not center on the metaphorical uses of the God-is-dead formula as employed by the "soft" radicals, since their claims that people have difficulty in believing today and that theological language lacks relevance for modern man simply highlight the perpetual need to preach the gospel more vigorously and communicate its eternal truth more effectively. Likewise, we shall spend little time on the positions of the "hard" radicals Altizer and Hamilton, for, as already noted, these thinkers, in spite of the ostensively atheistic character of their affirmations, do in fact allow for the reintroduction of Deity (Altizer's "God beyond God," Hamilton's "God of delight") at the back door even while ejecting him from the front. Cox is right when he says of Altizer, "he will have to be more precise if he's going to be taken seriously,"[113] and the recent television discussion

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111. Nielsen, "Can Faith Validate God-Talk?" in *New Theology No. 1* (see footnote 40), p. 147. This penetrating essay first appeared in the July, 1963, issue of *Theology Today*.
112. Cf. Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic, and God* (New York: Harper, 1961), chap. viii ("The Logic of Encounter"), pp. 94-104.
113. Quoted in Dirks, *loc. cit.* Among the more blatant imprecisions in Altizer's thought are: (1) his highly debatable assumption that negation is the ideal way to fulfillment (does one, for example, create the best society or government by completely destroying the existing order and starting over, or by refining what already exists?); (2) his unbelievably naive and unrealistic identification of the basic doctrines of Christianity with those of Buddhism (on this, cf. my article, "The Christian Church in McNeill's *Rise of the West:* An Overview and Critique," forthcoming in *The Evangelical Quarterly*); and (3) the utterly unverifiable, indescribable character of his "God beyond God" and of his non-objective, fully kenotic Christ—the "Jesus of the third age of the Spirit" (is he not the Jesus of *Altizer's* spirit? certainly he is not the biblical Jesus, who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever"!).

in which Oxford philosopher-theologian Ian Ramsey went to work on Hamilton showed clearly that the same charge of confused ambiguity must be leveled at him.[114] The trenchant character of God-is-dead thinking comes not from these basically emotive outcries but from Van Buren's straightforward attempt to show that God-statements are meaningless unless they are translated into Man-statements. What, then, of Van Buren's argument?[115]

First, unlike most theological opponents of the death of God,[116] we readily concede the validity of Van Buren's basic epistemological principle, namely, that assertions compatible with anything and everything say nothing. Contemporary analytical philosophy, in arriving at this principle, has made an inestimable contribution to epistemology, for by way of the principle, vast numbers of apparently sensible truth-claims can be readily identified as unverifiable, and time and energy can thereby be saved for intellectual pursuits capable of yielding testable conclusions. We also agree with Van Buren that this verification principle[117] should be applied in the religious realm as fully as in other areas, and we find the Flew-Wisdom parable of striking value in illustrating the technical meaninglessness of numerous God-claims made in the history of religions and by many religious believers today, including those Protestants addicted to Neo-Orthodoxy, existentialism, and process-philosophy.[118] The

114. The discussion took place on Norman Ross's program, "Off the Cuff," Sunday, March 27, beginning at 12:30 P.M. (channel 7, Chicago).
115. For Van Buren's position, see text at footnotes 70-82.
116. E.g., M. C. D'Arcy, *No Absent God* ("Religious Perspectives," Vol. 6; New York: Harper, 1962), chap. i, pp. 15-31; and Eric Mascall, *The Secularisation of Christianity: An Analysis and a Critique* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965), pp. 103-104. Other problems with Mascall's (nonetheless valuable) book are its strongly Anglo-Catholic perspective (stress on natural theology, the visible church introduced as a kind of *deus ex machina* into arguments, and reference to such non-biblical miracles as the Holy Shroud of Turin!), and a mild incorporation of the *finitum non est capax infiniti* principle (p. 38), which, as we shall emphasize later, is actually one of the ideological roots of the death-of-God error.
117. It will be observed that the principle as here stated is not identical in form with A. J. Ayer's famous verifiability criterion that played a central role in the development of Logical Positivism. Thus the philosophical attempts to break down Ayer's principle are not relevant to the present discussion even if they are held to be successful (which is by no means certain).
118. I have developed this point in reference to Neo-Orthodox and existentialistic views of revelation in my article, "Inspiration and Inerrancy: A New Departure," *Evangelical Theological Society Bulletin*, VIII (Spring, 1965), 45-75.

God-is-dead issue, however, depends not upon whether non-Christian religions or contemporary Protestant theologians make meaningless assertions about God's existence, but whether biblical Christianity is subject to this criticism. Van Buren is thus quite correct to focus attention on the New Testament picture of Jesus, and especially on his Resurrection; but it is exactly here that Van Buren's analysis fails—and, ironically, proves itself to suffer from the very analytical nonsensicality it mistakenly sees in Christianity's continued affirmation of a transcendent God.

The New Testament affirmation of the existence of God (the Divine Gardener in the Flew-Wisdom parable) is not a claim standing outside the realm of empirical testability. Quite the contrary: the Gardener *entered* his garden (the world) in the person of Jesus Christ, showing himself to be such "by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). Mascall illustrates with Jesus' miraculous healing of the blind man in John 9, observing that "one can hardly avoid being struck by the vivid impression of eyewitness reporting and by the extremely convincing characterization of the persons involved."[119] To drive the latter point home, Mascall renders the beggar's remarks into cockney, e.g.: "Yesterday I couldn't see a ruddy thing and now I can see orl right. Larf that one orf!" (John 9:25). The Resurrection accounts, as I have argued in detail elsewhere,[120] provide the most decisive evidence of the empirical focus of the biblical affirmation that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." In I Corinthians 15 the Apostle, writing in A.D. 56, explicitly states that the Christian God-claim, grounded in the Resurrection of Christ, is not compatible with anything and everything and therefore meaningless: after listing the names of eyewitnesses who had had contact with the resurrected Christ (and noting that five hundred other people had seen him, most of whom were still alive), Paul says: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." The early Christians were quite willing to subject their religious beliefs to concrete, empirical test. Their faith was not blind faith; it was solidly grounded in empirical facticity.[121]

But, argues Van Buren, the New Testament claims only *appear* to be of an empirical nature. When the writers speak of Jesus as

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119. Mascall, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
120. Montgomery, "History & Christianity," *His Magazine of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship*, December, 1964 - March, 1965 (available as a His Reprint); and *The Shape of the Past* (*op. cit.* in footnote 99), pp. 138-45, 235-37, and *passim.*
121. Cf. my paper, "The Theologian's Craft: A Discussion of Theory Formation and Theory Testing in Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXVII (February, 1966), 67-98 (soon to be published also in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*).

God and describe his miracles, "they were saying the most that they could say about this man." The Resurrection accounts are but the final proof of how thoroughly Jesus' liberating personality changed the lives of his disciples; here we see Jesus' followers experiencing what R. M. Hare has called a "blik"—a "discernment situation" in which they placed a quite new evaluation on their whole experiential world.

On looking closely at Van Buren's superficially plausible interpretation, we discover that, being compatible with anything and everything, it says nothing! Consider: *any* point of evidence cited from the New Testament documents to refute Van Buren (e.g., the doubting Thomas episode) will be dismissed by him as simply indicating how *powerful* the "discernment" was for the disciples. The peculiar situation therefore arises that *no* amount of evidence (including Peter's direct statement, "we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty"! —II Pet. 1:16) could dislodge Van Buren from his humanistic reduction of the biblical narratives.

The meaninglessness of Van Buren's approach will become clearer by the use of analogies drawn from non-religious spheres. Suppose you were to say to me: "Napoleon conquered Europe in a remarkably short time with amazing military resourcefulness, and after suffering defeat and exile, he escaped and came close to overwhelming Europe once again";[122] and I were to reply, "You really are impressed by Napoleon, aren't you?" Obviously irritated, you retort: "Yes, I am impressed by Napoleon, *but* I'm trying to tell you some facts about him, and here are documents to prove what I have just said." Then I would blandly answer: "How wonderful! The very interest you show in marshalling such material shows me how great an impact Napoleon has had on you." Your frustration would be boundless, for no matter what evidence you produced, I could, following Van Buren's approach, dismiss it simply as an empirical code representing a non-empirical "blik" situation.

Or suppose I were to say: "My wife studied art history and enjoys painting"; and you commented: "You really love her, don't you?" "Well yes," I would say, "but she *does* have artistic interests. Here are her transcripts representing art courses she's taken, here are paintings she's done, and . . ." At which point you interrupt with a sweep of the hand: "Come, come, no need to bother with that; I can recognize true love when I see it! How commendable!" My

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122. This analogy is suggested by that remarkable apologetic tour de force by Richard Whately, *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte* (11th ed.; New York: Robert Carter, 1871).

composure would be retained with great difficulty, since I would find it impossible under the circumstances to get across a genuinely factual point.

In this way Van Buren endeavors to "larf orf" the empirical claims of Scripture to the existence of God in Jesus Christ; but his endeavor lands him squarely in the abyss of analytical nonsensicality where he mistakenly tries to place the biblical witness to the supernatural. Indeed, Van Buren is not even being faithful to the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*, whose principles he seeks to follow; for Wittgenstein saw the necessity of respecting the "language game" actually being played and the absurdity of reductionistically trying to say that a given language game really means something else. Wittgenstein asks if it is proper to assert that the sentence "The broom is in the corner" really means "The broomstick is in the corner, and the brush is in the corner, and the broomstick is attached to the brush." He answers:

> If we were to ask anyone if he meant this he would probably say that he had not thought specially of the broomstick or especially of the brush at all. And that would be the *right* answer, for he meant to speak neither of the stick nor of the brush in particular.[123]

By the same token, Van Buren's reductionistic translation of the empirical language game of biblical incarnation-claims into non-cognitive, ethical language is artificial, unwarranted, and at cross-purposes with the whole thrust of the biblical narratives. The same is true of the literary, urban, eschatological-mystical, and social reductionisms of scriptural God-assertions carried on respectively by Vahanian, Cox, Altizer, and Hamilton. The God proclaimed by the Bible as having entered the empirical world in Jesus Christ is not dead, though an obvious attempt has been made to murder him using the lethal weapon of reductionistic, humanistic bias. But the murder of God in the interests of Man has always had consequences exactly the opposite of those anticipated, as our Lord indicated when he said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." It is ironic that the theothanatologists have not learned from the experience of Sartre's Goetz: "J'ai tué Dieu parce qu'il me séparait des hommes et voici que sa mort m'isole encore plus sûrement."[124]

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123. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), Pt. I, sect. 60. Cf. George Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), chap. vii, pp. 171-87.

124. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 237. Cf. Georges Gusdorf, "The Absence of God in the World Today," *Lutheran World*, XIII (1966), 1-13.

THE CASE HISTORY YIELDS A MORAL

Why have the God-is-dead theologians so easily run into this humanistic dead-end? The answer lies in their starting-point, and a sobering moral can be drawn therefrom. As we pointed out through primary and secondary sources employed in the early portion of this paper, every one of the death-of-God thinkers was profoundly influenced by the dialectic orientation of Neo-Orthodoxy. Alasdair MacIntyre, in his incisive critique of Robinson's *Honest to God*, draws the connection between Neo-Orthodoxy and "Christian atheism":

> We can see the harsh dilemma of a would-be contemporary theology. The theologians begin from orthodoxy, but the orthodoxy which has learnt from Kierkegaard and Barth becomes too easily a closed circle, in which believer speaks only to believer, in which all human content is concealed. Turning aside from this arid in-group theology, the most perceptive theologians wish to translate what they have to say to an atheistic world. But they are doomed to one of two failures. Either they succeed in their translation: in which case what they find themselves saying has been transformed into the atheism of their hearers. Or they fail in their translation: in which case no one hears what they have to say but themselves.[125]

And why does the Kierkegaardian-Barthian theology operate as a "closed circle"? Because of its basic premise that, as MacIntyre well puts it, "the Word of God cannot be identified with *any* frail human attempt to comprehend it."[126] Since the logical consequences of such a principle are a fallible Scripture and a kenotically limited Jesus, the Bible appears to secular man as no different qualitatively from other human writings, and the Incarnate Christ becomes indistinguishable from other men. The believer thus moves in a closed

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125. Alasdair MacIntyre, "God and the Theologians," *Encounter* (London), XXI (September, 1963), 7. Gilkey in his Crozer Lectures (*op. cit.* in footnotes, 94, 95) makes the same point. Cf. Robert W. Funk's comment in his report on the Second Drew University Consultation on Hermeneutics (April 9-11, 1964): "Neo-orthodoxy taught that God is never object but always subject, with the result that third generation neo-orthodox theologians have been forced to wrestle with the non-phenomenal character of God. They are unwilling to settle for God as noumenon (perhaps as a legacy of theologies of history, and perhaps as the result of a radical empiricism), which means that for them God does not 'appear' at all" (*Theology Today*, XXI [October, 1964], 303).

126. MacIntyre, "God and the Theologians," p. 5 (MacIntyre's italics).

circle of irrational commitment, which the unbeliever finds impossible to accept. The God of such an irraticnal faith has no recourse but to become a transcendent Wholly Other, and when analytical philosophy poses the obvious verification question as to the ontological existence of the transcendent, no answer is possible. In the Flew-Wisdom parable, the Gardener-God of Neo-Orthodoxy *cannot* be discovered empirically in the garden, for his transcendence would thereby be profaned;[127] thus the garden of the world looks as secular to the believer as to the unbeliever, and the latter rightly asks: "Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?" To this, the "yes-and-no" dialectic of Neo-Orthodoxy can say nothing whatever; and the obvious result is the death of God. For contemporary theological thought, the Bible would be no more erroneous if there were no God; the Resurrection of Christ in Barth's theology would be no more unverifiable if God did not exist; and Tillich's "Protestant principle" would make Jesus no more kenotic if there were no "Ground of all being." The God-assertions of mainline theology in the twentieth century are compatible with anything and everything, and therefore can be dispensed with as meaningless. God dies, and only modern secular man is left.

This appalling situation—what Fitch calls the theological Sell-Out—is the direct result of a refusal to acknowledge God's power to reveal himself without qualification here on earth. The ancient Calvinist aphorism, *finitum non capax infiniti*, has been allowed to obscure the central biblical stress on God's incarnation and on his ability to speak the Word of truth through human words. The Bible does not present God as Rudolf Otto's transcendent, vague Wholly Other or as Tillich's indescribable Being itself, but as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who through the entire expanse of scriptural revelation speaks inerrant truth to men and who manifestly enters the garden of this world in Jesus Christ (cf. John 20:15). For orthodox Christianity, unafraid of a miraculous Saviour or of an inerrant Scripture, God's existence does make a difference in the world, for only on the basis of his existence is revelation explainable. Mainline Protestant theology, having lost its doctrine of revelation and inspiration in the days of liberalism and never having recovered it, now finds itself incapable of showing why God is necessary at all.

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127. Cf. Montgomery, "Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology of History," published both in the *Evangelical Theological Society Bulletin*, VI (May, 1963), 39-49, and in *The Cresset*, XXVII (November, 1963), 8-14.

The moral, then, is simply this: Physicians of the soul will inevitably find themselves faced with the corpse of Deity if they lose their confidence in God's special revelation. The final and best evidence of God's existence lies in his Word—in the triple sense of Christ, the gospel he proclaimed, and the Scripture that infallibly conveys it. The historicity of the Resurrection, the facticity of the biblical miracles, the internal consistency of Holy Writ and its freedom from empirical error: these must be sustained, or the God of Scripture will fade away into a misty transcendence for us too, and eventually disappear. Conversely, if we do maintain the doctrine of God's *historische* revelation through an inerrant Bible, we will find that, in an age of almost universal theological debility, we will be able to present a meaningful God to an epoch that desperately needs divine grace. The only living God is the God of the Bible, and for the sake of secular man today we had better not forget it.

FINAL AUTOPSY: A MISTAKEN IDENTITY REVEALED

The God-is-dead movement is a reflection and special case of an abnormal preoccupation with Death in our time. On the popular level we have sick comedies such as *The Loved One*; on the sociological level, analyses such as *The American Way of Death*; on the psychological level, the wide acceptance of Freud's theme of the *mortido*; and on the plane of theoretical analysis revealing works such as Feifel's anthology, *The Meaning of Death*, containing essays by Jung, Tillich, Kaufmann, and many others.[128]

It is interesting to note other eras when death was an overarching concern. Huizinga, in his classic, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, notes how "the vision of death" embraced late medieval man, and how the dance of death, the surrealistic horrors of Hieronymus Bosch's depictions of hell, and the satanic black masses blended into a symbolic projection of a collapsing culture. Fin de siecle France is another illustration of the same phenomenon: J.-K. Huysmans' description in his novel *A Rebours* of a "funeral feast" in which the orchestra played dirges while guests, dressed in black, silently ate dark foods served by negresses was no less based on fact than his accounts of satanic rites in *La-Bas*; the Parisian society of the 1880's and 1890's, living in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, had fallen into degeneration and corruption, and the preoccupation with death and hell was the cultural equivalent of psychological sublimation.

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128. Herman Feifel (ed.), *The Meaning of Death* (New York. McGraw-Hill, 1965).

Today's death-of-God thinking is likewise symbolic. Holy Scripture speaks of death also, but it is *man's* death upon which the Bible dwells: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Scripture finds the human race, not God, in the throes of death. And when God does die, it is on the Cross, as an expiation for man's mortal disease; and God's conquest of the powers of death is evidenced in his Resurrection triumph.[129]

"The sting of death is sin," however, and from Adam on the sinner has sought above all to hide himself. Thus in our day men unwilling to face their own mortality have projected their own deserved demise upon their Maker and Redeemer. As suggested at the beginning of this essay, the theothanatological movement could provide a mystery writer with a classic case of the "wrong corpse": for when one examines the body carefully, it turns out to be, not God but *one-self*—"dead in trespasses and sins." And *this* corpse (unlike that of Deity) fully satisfies the empirical test of verifiability, as every cemetery illustrates.[130]

In romantic literature, the *Doppelgänger* motif (a character meeting himself) is employed as a device to symbolize the individual's attainment of self-awareness. Let us hope that the present autopsy, insofar as it brings a sin-sick theology to a realistic confrontation with itself, may contribute to such self-knowledge.[131] How revealing it is, for example, to read William Hamilton's autobiographical description of his entrée into the death-of-God sphere at age forty: "Time was getting short and I saw I needed to make things happen."[132] When we realize the true identity of the theothanatological corpse, such a remark fits into place. It is the natural

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129. Cf. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor,* trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

130. The original presentation of this essay in lecture form had to be postponed a week because of the sudden death of my wife's mother. On the day when I was scheduled to lecture on the (unempirical) death of God, I attended the overwhelmingly empirical funeral of a loved one. This was an object lesson worth pondering.

131. Ingmar Bergman's film "The Silence" offers an analogous confrontation: "A silence has befallen us, but is is connected with the cry of the inferno. The men, the women, who have 'freed themselves' from God are not those who are happy and satisfied, who have found themselves. They are the tormented who are shown no mercy, the hungry who are not filled, the separated who cannot get away from one another. . . . Bergman in his film shows 20th century man—who does not cease in his grand technological achievements to sing his own praise and who wants to liberate himself from the tyranny of God—as he is" (Vilmos Vajta, "When God Is Silent," *Lutheran World,* XIII [1966], 60-61).

132. Hamilton, "The Shape of a Radical Theology" (cited in footnote 4), p. 1220.

man, the builder of towers of Babel, who must "make things happen" theologically. For the essence of the scriptural gospel is that sinful man cannot make things happen in the spiritual life; the living God has made them happen in Jesus Christ, and the only true theology endeavors, above all, to remain faithful to the one who "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

And if, as Christian believers, the silence of God in our age sometimes make us wonder in the depth of our souls if he still remains with us, let us soberly consider Sir Robert Anderson's profound observation that God's silence is a reminder that the amnesty of the Cross is still available to men: "A silent Heaven gives continuing proof that this great anmesty is still in force, and that the guiltiest of men may turn to God and find forgiveness of sins and eternal life."[133] The task then stands: to work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work. As for the nature of that work, Henry van Dyke described it well in his touching allegory, *The Lost Word*; it is to proclaim to our generation the word which has been lost through preoccupation with lesser words:

> "My son, you have sinned deeper than you know. The word with which you parted so lightly is the key-word of all life and joy and peace. Without it the world has no meaning, and existence no rest, and death no refuge. It is the word that purifies love, and comforts grief, and keeps hope alive forever. It is the most precious thing that ever ear has heard, or mind has known, or heart has conceived. It is the name of Him who has given us life and breath and all things richly to enjoy; the name of Him who, though we may forget Him, never forgets us; the name of Him who pities us as you pity your suffering child; the name of Him who, though we wander far from Him, seeks us in the wilderness, and sent His Son, even as His Son has sent me this night, to breathe again that forgotton name in the heart that is perishing without it. Listen, my son, listen with all your soul to the blessed name of God our Father."[134]

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133. Sir Robert Anderson, *The Silence of God* (8th ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), p. 165.

134. Henry van Dyke, *The Lost Word: A Christmas Legend of Long Ago* (New York: Scribner, 1917), pp. 87-89.

ULTIMATE OBLIGATION *

Ivan C. Howard

A member of the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary has a great opportunity but he also has a great responsibility and obligation. The magnitude of that obligation can be accurately measured only when the divine call as well as the human need is considered.

Neither the opportunity nor the obligation shall be properly appraised without a realization of the importance of philosophical and theological truth. The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian rests initially in what one believes. That difference may appear small if measured only in ethical affirmations. William James said there was little difference in men but that that difference made a tremendous change. This statement is also true of those who hold differing philosophical beliefs. A false philosophy and the true philosophy may appear to the casual observer to lie close together, but actually they stand in polar relation. Here at Asbury Theological Seminary we are committed to a definite philosophical position. Our obligation to that position is buttressed by our debt to many persons.

AREAS OF OBLIGATION

We have an obligation to the founders of this institution. This Seminary was founded at a time when the "old Liberalism," then called "Modernism," was dominant. Churches across the nation were being closed, revivals were placed under taboo as antiquated, basic doctrines were ridiculed. Christian schools, founded with the blood and tears of consecrated saints, were changed into centers of skepticism and atheism by false philosophy and false theology. It was against this background that Henry Clay Morrison and his co-workers founded this Seminary, with the express purpose of turning back into the blood stream of the Christian church a Spirit-filled,

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* This article and the one following were installation addresses given at Asbury Theological Seminary, October 12, 1965.

Scripture-based ministry. Space forbids the inclusion of the details of the sacrifice required; but only an utmost willingness to sacrifice and an uttermost faith in God kept them true to the task. As we contemplate their devotion there seems to echo across the years the words of the poem,

> We are the dead, short days ago
> We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
> But now we sleep.

And there follows in sobering tones,

> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch. Be yours to hold it high.
> If ye break faith with us who die,
> We shall not sleep.

Besides the undeniable obligation we have to the founders of this institution, we also have an obligation to those who have carried on across the intervening years. The trying times of the great depression of the thirties came only a few years after the Seminary was founded. Even long established schools failed at that time. Only by prayer, sacrifice, and unyielding efforts did this school continue and grow. Across the years of World War II and the decades that have followed, prayer and perseverance have prevailed. Today Asbury is one of the leading seminaries of the nation. What a debt of gratitude we owe to those who have and who are still carrying on.

Beyond the debt of the past there is still the obligation of the present. Students are here who are sacrificing basic comforts in order to attend. Student families are here who are living without the minimal necessities. Such families trust God and carry on, inspired with the hope of some day taking their place on the battle front of God's eternal concern and man's desperation. How deplorable if any institution robs them of their faith. How tragic if they exchange a flaming heart for a full head. But how wonderful if to their flaming heart can be added the tools for more effective service. A surgeon caught in the presence of a fatal accident exclaimed in frenzied tones, "I could save him if I only had my tools." We have the obligation here to furnish those who grace our halls of learning with the tools for effective service.

Our obligation, however, reaches beyond the classroom. Out in the world's highways and byways lie a multitude in the darkness of despair. Nothing but the Gospel can bring light and hope to such hopelessness. The decline of Western prestige in our world is primarily due to the eclipse of the Gospel within the Protestant tradition. With other Evangelicals we seek to hold the line against present day apostasy and delusion and to rekindle the same fires of Holy Spirit baptism within the Church.

AFFIRMATION OF LOYALTY

I accept this position on the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary with a firm belief that my affirmation of loyalty to this institution coincides with my dedication to God and the Gospel. An ultimate obligation rests upon me. It is ultimate horizontally because it extends to every son of Adam's race. It is ultimate vertically because it is to God who called me and entrusted me with this task.

Asbury is a confessional school; it has guidelines which give direction theologically and philosophically. Yet in no sense is our obligation merely to an established confession. Behind the present confession stands the eternal fact, and our theological position is not determined by past trends but by present truth. In a day when doctrine, in all too many places, has deteriorated to theological relatives and meaningless clichés, we proclaim a Gospel founded upon the certainty of God's eternal Word, and one which is filled with the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. In a day when coercive ecumenical uniformity is being heralded as a substitute for Holy Spirit unity, we earnestly proclaim "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The various theological trends of today, however, are not to be ignored or rejected without examination; they are to be evaluated. Such an opportunity is welcomed with the consciousness that God's revelation in the Scriptures remains a reliable standard of measurement.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE GOSPEL

Since my field is philosophy, perhaps some may ask how it has any intimate or current relation to the Gospel. The philosophical spectrum today reveals many colors not found in the rainbow. In fact there is no rainbow in today's major philosophies. Darkness has obscured the sun. The title of a recent work, *The Twilight of Western Thought*, mirrors all too accurately the philosophical outlook. Philosophy, as such, does not deal directly with religion, but it does deal with issues vital to religion. Anthropology, cosmology, metaphysics, epistemology, and our philosophy of history either support or refute our Gospel.

"What is man?" is a question of philosophical concern, but it is also vital to Christianity. The Psalmist made this query centuries ago, and the answer we give will either support or negate our religious beliefs. Is man only a product of biological processes? Is he merely the apex of biological evolution? Or did he come from the hand of God, endowed with a spirit which could know and fellowship with God? If he is only an animal then he is not salvable. Hence to

reduce man to animal status makes salvation an absurd consideration. Either man came from God's hand as a special creation or one has no more basis for a hope of heaven than for a hope of dog-heaven.

How did our cosmos originate? From whence did it come? Is it the result of chance, or is it the product of a Designer? Someone calculated that for our world to have happened by chance it would take enough chances that the figures themselves would reach around the world thirty-five times. Sir James Jeans has calculated that it would take 100,000,000 years for 100,000 monkeys pecking on 100,000 typewriters to happen by chance upon the plays of Shakespeare.[1] Certainly if we are to obtain any reliable information on creation it must come from someone who was present when it happened. The wisest guesses of men are only guesses. Perhaps someone may ask what difference does it make how the cosmos originated. It makes all the difference between atheism and a theism, with God at the helm in our world. If God did not create the universe He has no legitimate right to rule it. Moreover, if He did not create it He would scarcely be able to rule it. History is replete with theories of the origin of the universe, but the writer fails to find any suggestion which favorably compares with "God created the heavens and the earth."

What is ultimate reality? Science today hesitates to say whether matter or energy is ultimate. We have followed the secrets of nature far beyond anything known to former generations, but ultimate reality remains as much a secret as it was to the ancient world. As we peer into the darkness of futile efforts how refreshing to hear again, "In the beginning God . . ."

Shedding a fog of uncertainty over all areas is the philosophical failure in epistemology. From the end of the Middle Ages philosophy has devoted its major efforts to this field. Rationalism has made its claims and has been rejected. Idealism has likewise had its say and has been refused. Positivism with its empirical claims has persisted under different titles and has driven both rationalism and idealism from center stage. But having defeated its competitors it has examined the spoils and admitted, yea asserted, "There is no absolute knowledge." Skepticism in the meanwhile with a cynical smile has replied, "I told you so."

Having rejected God's Word we find ourselves without certainty in any area. This is especially disastrous in our philosophy of history. What does the future hold? Does life have any meaning? Does man make his own future or is there a Ruler who allows man

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1. E. Stanley Jones, *Abundant Living* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), p. 5.

his day, but who ultimately determines destiny? With philosophy totally confused, and Christian theology at a stalemate, with a world looking on in fear of the "things which are coming on the earth," we can with the certainty of God's eternal Word proclaim a Gospel of ultimate victory.

Christian philosophy is the Siamese twin of Christian theology; the latter cannot exist without the former. Because of this intimate relation of philosophy to theology it merits Christian evaluation and interpretation.

THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY:

THE WESLEYAN WAY

Gilbert M. James

It is the unique responsibility of a division of practical theology in an evangelical seminary to provide young people with the skills, techniques, and insights which they will need to make their ministry more fruitful in the modern world. They must have training in the principles and applications of communication, inter-personal witnessing, evangelism, counseling, teaching, organizational behavior, community involvement, human relationships, and social action.

Our young people must be trained to adapt the biblical message to the needs and understandings of diverse cultures and social classes. They must be prepared to reach the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the learned, the black and the white.

THE URBAN MINISTRY

With 70 per cent of America's population now living in the great urban areas, and with the concentration in these areas of alienated and hopeless human beings, our future ministers must understand not only the needs of these people but must empathize with their longings, their fears, and their anger. They must learn to go to the people where they are, the way they are. For the day is past, if it ever existed, when the city pastor could frequent only the places of unimpeachable respectability and then expect the masses to throng to his church on Sunday morning. *The battle is out there!* The man of God is not *of* this world but he surely must *be in* it.

The crushing and sickening anguish of today is not apparent in the congregation of a Sunday morning worship service or a Wednesday night prayer meeting. The problems of human distress ferment in the squalor and wretchedness of decaying tenement houses, at the back table of a "gin mill" on State street, and boil in the core of a frenzied mob seeking vengeance on its oppressors. As Nietzsche has written, "*Great problems are in the street.*" So Christian witnesses must go into the streets with compassion for the victims of sin, and with holy indignation against social, economic, and political structures of evil.

MINISTRY TO THE "WAY OUT"

But the down and outer, the slum-dweller and the impoverished minority member are not alone in their urgent need of the grace of God. There are minorities of another sort that are almost untouchable. Many intellectuals and artists live in a world so far removed from the average seminarian's view of life and speak a language so foreign to his ears that he can find no common ground on which to approach them. Yet there is hunger there, a sense of lostness among them, and an endless but fruitless search for identity and meaning. For at the end of every quest there is the inevitable fact of death. Camus writes of the artists' and intellectuals' rebellion against God: "The rejection of death, the desire for immortality and for clarity are the mainsprings of these extravagances." Our task is to reach them with the message of "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," and the clarity of the divine affirmation, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This calls for the translation of the simple and efficacious Gospel into terms that clarify God's purposes in human affairs, and answers the philosophy of the absurd with a redemptive gospel of hope, purpose, and meaning.

MINISTRY TO THE MIDDLE CLASSES

There is yet another class whose needs our seminaries must be prepared to meet. They are the faceless ones of our great middle class. They live neither in the realm of the spirit, *nor* of the mind. Their lives are patterned by the expectations of those who hold their social and economic destiny in their hands. Their rule of life is, "the right face in the right place." They are role players *par excellence.*

They drink because it is expected, not because they like it. They affect cultural tastes they do not have, and secretly detest; they entertain guests they despise and maintain friendships they abhor. Church affiliation and attendance is as much a part of their social accouterment as their membership in the country club and the downtown knife and fork fraternities.

We overlook them as an object of need because they sit beside us on Sunday morning—they are well-dressed—*relatively* well-mannered, and they are not on the relief rolls. In their religious life the principle of the "Golden mean" governs them, just as in their public life: "Don't rock the boat," "Take it easy," "Don't overdo it," "Sure, religion has its place in life just like everything else, but business is business."

Many of this "Lonely Crowd," as David Riesman calls them, find relief from the stifling strictures of middle class conformity in a social life of sophisticated debauchery that would be the envy of

every patron of the eighteenth century French salons. Here are pagans at our doors that must be reached with the conviction of their lostness.

MINISTRY OF INVOLVEMENT

These, briefly, are but a few of the areas of our society where the Gospel is so sorely needed, where special training is imperative to help our young ministers in this most crucial of all tasks. Some, by natural endowment and social background will be better qualified to minister to one group than to another, but the seminary program must not be class bound; rather it must be geared to a comprehensive outreach that leaves no segment of humanity outside its concern.

The training must be practical as well as academic. The student must learn by involvement in human affairs. We may assign readings about the peculiar problems of a quarter of a million Americans who live in prisons and reformatories, but the student will never understand until he has had an opportunity to live close to these people and to some extent feel what they feel. The student may read of racial problems and the horrors of the inner core of our cities, but until he becomes a part of its sickening life and feels its hopeless misery, he is *unprepared* to minister to its victims.

Nor is it enough to hope that after the student leaves these halls he will somehow acquire these experiences. Instead, we need an extensive internship that will send these young men and women out to the prisons, the psychiatric hospitals, the city slums, the university campuses, the plush resorts, to the coffee houses, to middle class suburbs, and to the rural slums.

Then, with these raw experiences, they will come back to the classroom for re-orientation and further help in integrating these pieces of real life into a scriptural image of the ministry.

THE QUALITY OF THE MINISTER

We must exhaust every means of human understanding and competence, that our ministers be prepared for their high calling in Christ Jesus. But let us not in our enthusiasm be misled into substituting skills and training for the quality of the man and the validity of his message. For we will not save one soul, much less the world, by the power of rhetoric or the conclusions of the social sciences. These are tools—useful means—but the man of God must be armed with a Christian philosophy and theology that has been translated into cogent and meaningful appeals to the haughty, the debased, the cynical, and the disinherited.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE MINISTRY OF CONCERN

Here the Bible and theological departments must provide a solid unshakable biblical and theological foundation on which to build a

superstructure of godly concern and action for the suffering, frightened masses of our world. All the techniques and social action, all reform efforts, are but houses built upon sand unless it is God's plan.

The man or woman of God who goes out, as has been suggested, must be a man of prayer and devotion; he must be filled with an evangelistic zeal; he must carry a soul burden for the lost.

The department of prayer and spiritual life and the department of evangelism bear an even *heavier* responsibility in the training of the ministers we envision. For this minister must have a vision and an unlimited confidence in God's power and will to save the world. His message is to bring individual men into a personal experience with God through Christ, and to lead the believer into the fulness of the Spirit-filled life.

THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL ACTION

But this is only the beginning—for transformed men must transform the institutions of men. As E. Stanley Jones has said, "A religion that does not start with the individual, does not start!" He then went on to warn, "A religion that stops with the individual, stops." We must never be guilty of the accusation of the Marxists who say that we preach "pie in the sky when you die" and then turn a deaf ear to the cries of human misery in the here and now. We must be careful of our motives. We must never undertake a program of social involvement simply because we have been falsely called "fundamentalists" and desire the favor and forgiveness of the religious humanists.

But there is even a more subtle temptation for us to attempt to relieve human suffering for the *sole purpose* of improving our proselytizing advantage. Jesus would never countenance the withholding of "a cup of cold water" unless it was spiked with an evangelistic "Mickey Finn." And in this regard, we may wonder if the Good Samaritan ever got that poor fellow saved and into the Church!

The Spirit-filled Christian has a compassion for the *total* man, and his concern is for his *total* relationship with God—*body, mind, and spirit.*

Any who may have been unduly influenced by a morbid, deterministic dispensationalism, and have no faith in God's power or will to save the world, are urged to read more history along with the Bible. In spite of the moral and spiritual decadence of our day, eighteenth century Europe was even worse. But a knight with a burning heart rode across the pages of English history, and by the grace of God, changed the moral and spiritual ethos of the British Empire. He won souls to Christ by the thousands, and the power of his influence joined by others, vanquished human slavery, reformed the prison system, inspired child labor laws, founded labor unions and credit unions, built schools, orphanages and homes for widows. Fifty years

after John Wesley's death, his mighty influence was still felt for good in the British Parliament and his evangelistic fervor had swept two continents.

These paraphrased lines from Mary Alice Tenney, *Living in Two Worlds*, are well worth reflection.

"Can Methodism change history once again? God is the same, but are we willing to be used? If in the mighty ranks of Methodism there could arise a host of men and women who recognize humbly but confidently our heritage, and resolutely put it to work in our tottering world, God might break through, and history might change again!"

BOOK REVIEWS

No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary, by Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr. Chicago: The Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965. 324 pages.

This volume has an immediate attraction for those interested in theological education. It is the historical account of more than a century of service of one of the outstanding theological seminaries in the nation. It is interestingly and excellently written by one whose leadership in theological studies is recognized by all. Any volume from the pen of President Emeritus Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr. is noteworthy.

From those early days in mid-nineteenth century when the idea of a mid-western theological seminary for Congregationalists was but a vision and a hope, the book traces the history of the Chicago Theological Seminary all the way to the present era. No effort or space is spared in order to give the reader a total picture of the Seminary: its origin, its growth, its problems, its varied experimentations in institutional expression, its distinctive accomplishments in theological education, and its significant influence not only on its own denomination but on the life of the Christian Church.

The history of the Chicago Theological Seminary is a confirmatory illustration of the usual cycles in an institution's life: the persistent vision of the founders, immediate opposition by ecclesiastical reactionaries, early struggles, difficulties in finding faculty members, growing pains, the influence of dominating personalities, financial crises, crosscurrents of constituency-opinions, heresy allegations, relentless self-studies, contemplated and actual changes in location, and epochs of significant growth and development.

The history of the Chicago Theological Seminary is, likewise, a delineation of the problems and progress of theological education in the United States. There are evident the common concerns of theological seminaries: enrollment trends, safeguards against institutional isolationism, the raising of academic standards, principles of scholarship aid, consideration of areas of neglected theological concerns, branching out into new areas of Christian thought, the social application of the Christian Gospel, continuing self-studies by the faculty, achieving a satisfying content in the curriculum, increasing its influence upon the Church, manifesting a relevant relationship to a developing ecumenical emphasis.

This reviewer is impressed by one of the concerns manifested in the developing history of this Seminary: Is it a wise trend to be more interested in having Ph.D's on a seminary faculty than in

having men with pastoral experience? Does this concern have relevance for contemporary theological education?

The reading of this history reveals one of the basic differences between the British and American higher educational systems and the Continental system. The British and American systems care for the student as a person as well as a pupil. The Continental system cares for the student only as a pupil.

Reading a history such as this emphasizes the fact that actually there are not many "new things" in contemporary theological education. Certain "things" which may appear new to us are actually rediscoveries of what has already been tried. For illustration, a plan of supervised internship for seminary students was included in the early course of study at Chicago Theological Seminary. Likewise, suggestions were made early for the continuing education of ministers who had been graduated from the Seminary. Such features as clinical pastoral training and supervised field service have for years been included in the activities of some seminaries.

Chicago Theological Seminary is to be commended for many distinctives in its developing program of theological studies through the years of its history. Within a few years of its founding, the Seminary established an Alumni Institute, which consisted of a three days' gathering on the campus when alumni could come to terms with contemporary thought in theology and philosophy. As waves of immigration from the northern parts of Europe swept into the Midwest, the Seminary realized that it would have to reach beyond a student body with "antecedents" in New England communities. In 1882 it began offering instruction in the German language; in 1884 in the Danish and Norwegian languages; and in 1885 a department of Swedish was opened.

The Seminary pioneered in an emphasis upon the social action of the Church. It was the first seminary to establish a department devoted exclusively to Christian sociology. Early it experimented with the "affiliation principle," both in relation to a university and to other theological seminaries. Even though this experiment was finally abandoned, Chicago Theological Seminary will always be remembered as a principal in the Federated Theological Faculty.

The Seminary, even though it lost its battle in the courts, took the lead among seminaries in attempting to have all of its property, including real estate holdings as well as campus property, tax-exempt. The courts ruled against tax-exempt off-campus real estate holdings. The Seminary also, at an early date, faced the possibility of admitting female candidates for the B.D. degree. Reference has been made to the Seminary's emphasis on supervised field service and clinical pastoral training. The Seminary early became interested in the emotional, artistic, and spiritual life of its students. Among seminaries it had the first department of religion and art. This was headed by Dr. Fred Eastman. The Seminary showed concern for

elevating the standard of music in the church, and for the study of church architecture. Under Matthew Spinka it pioneered in instruction in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Led by A. C. McGiffert, Jr., it promoted intensive study in American Christianity. It played a significant role, moreover, in the establishment of the American Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

In reading this volume, one is impressed anew by the significance of dominating personalities in the establishment and growth of an institution. Chicago Theological Seminary has given many greathearts to the world of theological education. Among the "founding fathers" are the names of the Rev. Stephen Peet, George S. F. Savage, L. Smith Hobart, and a layman, Philo Carpenter. Among the early leaders were Asa Turner, Charles G. Hammond, A. S. Kedzie, N. H. Eggleston, G. W. Perkins, and H. D. Kitchell.

Through the years of its history, the roster of administrators and faculty members has included such noteworthy names as these: Ozora S. Davis, Franklin Woodbury Fisk, Graham Taylor, Joseph Henry George, Arthur E. Holt, A. C. McGiffert, Jr., Albert W. Palmer, Howard Schomer, Samuel Ives Curtiss, Joseph Haven, Samuel Colcord Bartlett, Hugh Macdonald Scott, George Holley Gilbert, Fred Eastman, Anton T. Boisen, Matthew Spinka, and Wilhelm Pauck.

Nor can such lay names as the following, in addition to those of Carpenter and Hammond, ever be forgotton: Eliphalet W. Blatchford, Victor Lawson, and Robert Cashman.

None of these lists of names is complete. But certainly they are representative of those who played influential roles in the unfolding drama of the growth of Chicago Theological Seminary.

Asbury Theological Seminary takes this opportunity to salute and congratulate Chicago Theological Seminary for more than a century of significant service to theological education in particular, and to Christendom in general.

Frank Bateman Stanger

The Jew and the Cross, by Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965. 94 pages. $2.75.

This little book is from the bleeding heart of a Jew whose mother's death was caused by anti-Semitic prejudice and whose nation has suffered for centuries at the hands of organized Christianity. Throughout, the author indicts not only the cruel and unchristian attitudes and actions of members of so-called Christian nations but traces the matter to what he believes to be its source in the Roman Catholic Church, whose traditional teaching blames the Jew for the death of Christ and whose leaders have fanned the

flames of persecution and injustice. Protestants also, including the great Luther himself, are quoted, reviling the Jews as a "damned, rejected race." The author appeals to a basic sense of justice that would require all men to turn from their mad prejudice, to retract unjust accusations, and to show horror at the magnitude of the crime that has put millions of Jews to death in "Christian lands"—even in an enlightened twentieth century.

The plea is not for dialogue. The Jew feels that he knows Christians. To him, Christianity in action is not a message of love; rather, it is burnings, plunder, blood, and tears. Thousands of places by their very name serve as reminders of Christian brutality. Official church attitudes as recent as the days of Hitler are cited to show the guilt of Roman Christianity. It is not dialogue but repentance that is demanded.

The writer can perhaps be forgiven for over-playing his case from history. Ten million innocent deaths at the hands of those whom Jews consider Christians are enough to prejudice any man capable of feeling. Without ignoring the general strength of Mr. Runes' case, one might disagree with the assertion that Christians must cease to implicate the Jews of Jesus' day in any way with the crucifixion. The only records available indicate that both Romans and Jews played a vital part in that awful crime. And, contrary to the author's assertion, this account could not be the result of Romans in the fourth century tampering with the records. The New Testament text, as we have it, is too well attested to permit his conclusion. Nor are we ready to agree that the cross is necessarily an inflammatory symbol that must be replaced. Rightly understood, it bears love and hope.

But common justice still indicates that no person, Jew or Gentile, should be subjected to such atrocities over the centuries because of what certain ancestors had done any more than he should be apotheosized for the sake of other kinsmen such as Jesus Christ and Paul. Anti-Semitism is a crime against God and humanity. To commit the crime in the name of Christianity is the height of hypocrisy. The Jew has a just complaint. This book needs to be read.

Wilber T. Dayton

The Reformation, by Owen Chadwick. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 463 pages. $5.95 (hardback). $1.95 (paperback).

Owen Chadwick, formerly a professor at Cambridge, and at present Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Master of Selwyn College, England, authors Volume III of *The Pelican History of the Church,* a projected six-volume series by a variety of writers

whose aim is to cover the history of the Christian Church from the beginning to the present time.

The work is a refreshing illustration of scholarly accuracy and insight combined with lucidity of style. It may be that occasionally the American reader will need to ponder a sentence in order to catch the British idiom, but the whole is interesting and rewarding reading.

After considering the universal "cry for Reformation," the book deals respectively with Luther, Calvin, the Reformation in England, Reformed Protestantism, the Radicals of the Reformation, and the British assault on Calvinism. Then follows a section on the Counter Reformation, taking up the Roman revival, the Conquistadors, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. The last section deals with the effects of the Reformation on the life of the Church.

Chadwick has done a fine job. Any one chapter is a complete unit, and may be read individually with much profit. A selective bibliography at the end will be invaluable to one who desires to pursue significant phases of the Protestant Reformation.

Kenneth Kinghorn

The Book of Isaiah, The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes (Vol. I, Chaps. 1-18), by Edward J. Young. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 534 pages. $7.95.

This is the first of a three-volume work on the book of Isaiah by the distinguished professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. This treatise, which deals with chapters 1 through 18 of Isaiah, is the first volume to be published in the *New International Old Testament Series* of which Professor Young is the book editor. Thus, in a two-fold sense, this book sets a precedent for the other volumes to follow.

After a rather short introduction dealing with Isaiah and his times, the author gives a helpful analytical outline of the chapters in Isaiah under consideration. The writer provides his own translation of the prophecy. It is a good translation. Differing but slightly from the King James Version, it may be said to be a literal translation, one in which the Hebrew idiom is preserved.

The general quality of the book is what one has come to expect in Dr. Young's writings. In spite of the technical nature of the work, the whole is fairly easy reading. The volume reflects an author who is conversant not only with several languages but with the labors of many other scholars in this field. Dr. Young quotes profusely from writers both ancient and modern. At times the exposition seems a bit leisurely; often the same idea could be expressed more concisely.

The author consistently maintains the Reformed doctrines, such as predestination and effectual calling. This becomes difficult at times as, for example, when God, speaking through Isaiah, offers the nation the alternative between repentance and life or impenitence and death (Isa. 1:18-20). This, says Young, does not teach free will, does not teach "within itself the ability to will and to hearken. This ability God gives only to those of his favor and choice. At the same time the responsibility to the nation to obey is not lessened" (p. 78). Here, and at other places, one gets the impression that dogma takes precedence over exegesis.

As in other works of Dr. Young, apologetic interests are prominent. Often matters concerning the defense of the traditional position concerning Isaiah are placed in special notes or in footnotes. These are very helpful to the serious student. In arguing for the genuineness of Isaiah in its present form, Young presents fully and accurately the views with which he does not agree. Then in a manner that is clear and usually convincing, he presents his own reasons for disagreeing. The effectiveness is especially conspicuous in arguing for Isaiah's authorship of the oracle concerning Babylon (Isa. 13, 14).

The author tends to favor a literal translation of passages concerning which evangelicals have differed. For example, in Isaiah's description of universal peace, he takes it as literal that the animals will cease to be carnivorous (Isa. 11:6-9). However, he does not go so far as to say that there will be physiological changes in carnivorous beasts, only that they will cease to devour each other. He does not imply that the lion will be herbivorous like the ox (p. 391). On the difficult Emmanuel prophecy the author's defense of the term "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 is effective and convincing.

On the whole, the reader can be assured that he has here one of the most thorough and painstaking examples of craftmanship available on this part of the prophecy of Isaiah. Both in extent and depth the author's command of his material is astonishing. One does not need to agree with all the details to recognize the superior merit of the work. We will be looking with much anticipation for the appearance of the other volumes in this series.

George A. Turner

New International Commentary on the New Testament: Epistle to the Hebrews, by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964. 447 pages. $6.00.

Over a period of almost ten years Dr. Bruce has devoted a major portion of his time and energy to this work. The result is magnificent.

The thought pattern of the epistle is reduced to a clarity and simplicity of language within the reach of all. Yet the breadth and depth of scholarship that peer from behind every sentence and page reveal the fact that the simplicity is no "tour de force." The author has exposed himself to the book of Hebrews until it has yielded its message in forthright, forceful English.

A summary of the argument of the epistle and a brief analytical outline precede the body of the commentary and prepare the reader to think quickly and clearly through the message of the book. The format also highlights the outline in the structure of the volume itself. Detailed matters of criticism, documentation, and variant opinions do not clutter the flow of comment. Instead, one is delighted to find ample and cogent footnotes that are a veritable encyclopedia of relevant data. With characteristic thoroughness and skill, Dr. Bruce has also handled the knotty problems of introduction: destination, authorship, date, canonicity, and relation to the other books of the Bible. A valuable series of indices at the end places everything at the immediate disposal of the reader.

The balance and soundness of viewpoint and approach are impressive. The commentary is remarkably free from narrow bias. The comments are exegetically accurate, thorough, historically oriented, clearly expounded, and beautifully expressed. The author has produced a volume that should soon take its place among classics of its kind. It should serve as a model of excellence for future writers.

Wilber T. Dayton

Till We Have Faces, by C. S. Lewis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964. 313 pages. $1.95 (paperback).

Till We Have Faces is the fourth of C. S. Lewis' novels. This one was first published in England in 1956 and again released in 1964 as an Eerdman's paperback. It is a re-casting of the ancient story of Cupid and Psyche of which there have been many translations and imitations in literature and art. Lewis, in his inimitable style, has woven this piece of intriguing fiction into a fascinating tale. It makes for enjoyable if, at times, awesome reading—and a work not easy to describe.

Lewis ranks high as a myth-maker and this work is no exception. The reader lays down the book with a feeling that he has shared not so much in the frustration and anxieties of Orual as in those of all mankind; he sees in the end not the exhausted Bardia completely spent trying to fulfill all his roles, but a depleted race of men seeking to cover an inner emptiness with a facade of efficiency.

Perhaps one who has read and appreciated Lewis' allegories may be tempted to read into this story more than the author intended. Although this is not an allegory as such, the reader now and then finds himself making allegorical interpretations. These may sometimes depend more on what the reader brings to the book than on the author's intent. No one in the Christian tradition can miss the allusion when the Priest, in pleading for a sacrifice to appease the gods, says: "Bulls and rams and goats will not win Ungit's favor. . . In the Great Offering the victim must be perfect" (pp. 48-49). When Orual visits Psyche in her other world and Psyche tries to convince her of the beautiful reality of this world (invisible to Orual), one is reminded of Paul's reference to the natural man not being able to perceive spiritual matters. Again, when Psyche finally succumbs to Orual's pressure to break covenant with her unseen lover-husband, she loses her bliss and joy and goes out to suffer and wander in the night. There are many apparent allusions which no doubt would be of particular interest to the psychologist and the theologian. Lewis' own penchant for genuine honesty in all things is expressed in this statement of the Fox to Orual: "Child, to say the very thing you really mean, the whole of it, nothing more or less or other than what you really mean; that's the whole art and joy of words." The title of the book suggests an honest facing of ourselves as we really are at the center. "How can they [the gods] meet us face to face *till we have faces?*" (p. 294).

Perhaps Lewis' genius as a writer is partly in the fact that the story can have various meanings, depending on the background of the reader; or it may be enjoyed simply as a "tale that is told." The antiquity of the myth on which the story is based adds greatly to its dimensions.

Susan A. Schultz

The Irreversible Decision. 1939-1950, by Robert C. Batchelder. New York: Macmillan, 1965. 306 pages. $2.45 (paperback).

This paperback edition of a work first published four years ago comes to remind citizens of the United States of the gravity of a chain of policies formulated by our national leaders during the critical decade between the outbreak of World War II and the stabilizing of the political situation on the Continent following the end of hostilities. The volume is written by one deeply concerned for the ethical implications of our national policy, and traces the factors which led (perhaps compelled) our government to embark upon the costly path of producing nuclear devices of destruction.

The reader must be prepared for an exposure of sensitive nerve-endings in our relation to the world. Some of us have been astonished at the manner in which the dropping of nuclear fission devices upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been taken for granted within our nation. Certainly citizens of other nations, even those friendly to us, have not done this, as witnesses the number of European playwrights who deal with the theme. Dr. Batchelder, associate director of the Detroit Industrial Mission, is concerned in a major way with tracing the ethical implications of our national decision. This he does in a two-fold manner: first, by examining the ethical issues at stake; and second, by noting the manner in which the exigencies of war affect moral thinking and moral decisions.

Much of the content of the work is historical. The author does recognize that nuclear research, while initially impelled by the fear that Hitler's Third Reich would achieve his goal ahead of our scientists, had a more far-reaching significance, in that the discovery of nuclear weapons would lead also to the discovery of peacetime uses of nuclear energy. He does not, however, allow himself the luxury of thinking that any such peaceful gains will cancel out the grave responsibilities which the total program of nuclear research placed upon us as a nation. The responsible citizen needs the goading of this volume.

Harold B. Kuhn

New Testament Times, by Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 396 pages. $5.95.

In many respects this volume may well be the most timely of Dr. Tenney's works. Now when the historical and cultural milieu of New Testament events and writings has at last begun to receive the attention that it deserves, it is fitting that someone should summarize the movements and literature that make up the world situation from the death of Alexander the Great to the Church of the early second century A.D. This fine work brings these major factors into focus and makes the presentation vivid with one hundred thirty excellent photographs, several original maps, extensive charts, exhaustive indices, and a detailed bibliography. At last in the compass of one readable book is a broad orientation in the data underlying the judgments that must be made in the study of New Testament events and literature.

Dr. Tenney rightly sees three basic cultural tensions playing upon the embryonic Church: Judaism, Roman imperialism, and Hellenism. Fresh studies in these fields today are correcting many earlier

errors concerning the sources of New Testament theology and literature. Other deeply rooted views have survived in New Testament criticism in spite of their conflict with what had been traditionally supposed to be the cultural milieu from which the movements and the literature sprang. Tenney's work gives the student and the general reader the proper starting point for scholarship in a clear outline of the world in which the Church was born and the New Testament written. With this perspective, it is hoped that the future will produce more sound New Testament scholarship with a stronger hold on truth and greater ability to discern misleading errors.

The author covers an amazing amount of detail in this single volume. Five chapters lead up to the time of Christ with a broad coverage of New Testament history, including the political scene, the cultural tensions, the Jewish heritage, and the pagan pressures. Ancient and recent sources of knowledge are tapped to make the result both comprehensive and up-to-date. The Roman reigns then set the background for the birth, life, and ministry of Christ. The Jerusalem Church is seen against its environment. Step by step, Christianity unfolds in live historical situations, solving crucial problems, expanding into new territories, facing new kinds of opposition, consolidating its position, perfecting its organization, becoming an institutional church, and facing the challenge of determined emperors. The action and interaction display more clearly the spiritual dynamic of the Gospel and the other forces that left their stamp upon the Church and its literature.

Wilber T. Dayton

The Foundations of New Testament Christology, by Reginald H. Fuller. New York: Scribners, 1965. 268 pages. $5.95.

As the title indicates, this is not a statement of Christology in terms of systematic theology but an examination of the data in the New Testament books that lie at the base of the doctrines that have emerged. Following the methods of form-criticism and what the author calls traditio-historical criticism, the primary task of the book is to sort out the few valid historical references to Jesus' own self-understanding and to make plain on what bases the great bulk of the Gospel material must be referred, not to Jesus' own words, but to the interpretations added by the believing Church. Then the elements that were irrelevant to the historical Jesus are imported one by one as theological, or rather christological, data to furnish the basis of the opinions formed concerning Christ in the early Church. Or, he

more fair to Dr. Fuller's terminology, he uses the words "faith" and "interpretation" instead of "opinions."

In his detailed grasp of the documents and patterns of New Testament times, the author displays massive scholarship. He moves with facility and discernment not only through Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic sources but also in European languages relevant to his purpose. Documentation is abundant and authentic. A master of the critical method, Dr. Fuller writes with rare insight out of a background rich in facts. The volume is excellent from the standpoint of what can be produced within the critical framework that has been so popular of late. It should also be said that the breadth and depth of his insights have saved him from the extreme statements of many contemporary scholars, even on occasion suggesting a somewhat conservative approach.

But the book is hard reading for one who approaches Scripture with a simple faith in the New Testament as the reliable account of Spirit-inspired men who were first-hand witnesses to what our Lord said and did. Though Dr. Fuller handled his method well, one must question whether or not he had the right method. If not, the results could hardly be satisfactory. Starting-points and presuppositions determine conclusions. And the present reviewer holds the view that the type of source criticism here used is a reductionism which, when it has finished with the sacred page, inevitably leaves but torn scraps of equivocal reports.

Even the resurrection of Jesus, on which the fate of the New Testament turns, is not clearly affirmed. The author evades the "less important" historical question and asserts the "more significant" faith of the early believers. Whether or not Jesus had any experience of resurrection, the Church had a real experience of believing it. Anything Jesus is quoted as saying that reflects a clear Messianic self-consciousness is torn from His lips and is attributed to later interpolation resulting from the creative imagination of the Church in the light of its belief in a risen Christ. The Mark tradition, Q, the Matthean source, and the Luke source are carefully classified to give critical grounds for this reductionism. It is accepted as a settled fact that Jesus was not at all referring to Himself with any eschatological implication when He spoke of the Son of Man. It was the Church that identified Jesus with the Son of Man as a result of the awe and reverence instilled in it by the resurrection belief. Of course, Mark is held to be the earliest Gospel. The other Gospels are kept within the first century but not within the lifetime of any apostolic writer. And it is carefully noted that John, whose Gospel is full of Jesus' own Messianic proclamation, is not the apostle but some particularly unauthentic later writer.

It is natural that familiarity with these commonly accepted views dulls the sense of horror that a scholar should feel for such pious denials of the apostolic witness of Christ. But perhaps not the least

service rendered by this learned book is its setting forth in clear light for the less initiated exactly what the "modern critical method" in its common use does to the faith once delivered and to the records concerning the Saviour Himself. While it is admitted that the book ends with an abundance of christological data, its authority is not that of divine revelation and apostolic testimony. Rather it is the authority of the creative imagination of believers whose determining categories of thought come from Jewish and Greek culture patterns. Though one must grant the contribution which human background and environment have made to the phrasing of the Christian proclamation, and acknowledge the assistance this gives to the understanding of certain revealed truths, how can Christian believers attribute their very Christology to creative human imagination and to the accidents of birth in a given culture pattern? To do so is to disagree thoroughly with the scriptural proclamation itself.

Wilber T. Dayton

Healing and Redemption, by Martin H. Scharlemann. St. Louis: Concordia, 1965. 122 pages. $1.95 (paperback).

This new volume in the field of the Church's ministry of healing is authored by Martin H. Scharlemann who since 1952 has served as professor of New Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary.

Here is a much needed book. It is all too easy to think only in terms of the "activity" of a ministry of healing. But an effective ministry of healing must be undergirded by a sound theology of healing. As the author points out in his Preface:

> The need of articulating a theology of healing arises wherever the church confronts the responsibility of dealing with sickness as part of the total situation from which men long to be redeemed.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If the following chapters should make some small contribution to the ability of seeing the ministry of healing from a perspective that lies closer to the center of the church's life, one of our major purposes shall have been accomplished.

The body of the book is developed from the thesis that if men are to be healed they must be viewed in terms of their totality, their solidarity, their continuity, and their community. Man must be taken from his isolation to this new awareness of his cosmic and eternal relationships. The author is thus concerned in applying the major insights of contemporary biblical theology in relation to man's solidarity, totality, continuity, and need for community, to a ministry of healing.

Health is not just the absence of disease. It is wholeness. To be well means standing in a relationship of undisturbed solidarity with the cosmos and with God Himself, in and through Jesus Christ.

Every healing miracle is a testimony to the redemptive presence and power of Jesus Christ. If sinful men had been left to themselves, only illness and death would prevail among us. But sick people are made well—a revelation of the redemptive purpose of Him who is the Lord of the universe, the Head of the Church. The ministry of healing is part of the story of God's saving purpose with men. Actually, there is no theology of healing *per se*. Rather does a ministry of healing emerge from sound biblical and theological concepts relating to man, the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Church.

This volume is crowded with helpful insights. With clarity and conviction the writer points out the unique contribution of the Christian Faith to medical science:

> It would seem, therefore, that the Christian faith can, on this score, make a contribution to the practice of medicine, psychology, psychiatry. It would appear that here a Christian doctor, psychologist, or nurse has the opportunity to deal with his patients at a depth unknown to his secular colleagues. He is enabled to think of his patients also in terms of such spiritual values as man's totality, his need for an awareness of solidarity, a sense of continuity and community.

The author has written with more than the pastor in mind. He is thinking also in terms of the doctor, the nurse, and the missionary. An entire chapter on "Medical Missions" is appended as a "postscript." A bibliography at the end of the book is a valuable complement to the whole.

Every person interested in a sound and effective ministry of healing in the Christian Church must read this treatise. It will prove stimulating reading for the spiritually-minded person who seeks to discover an adequate biblical and theological foundation for his convictions in the area of healing.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 300 pages. $2.95.

Faith on Trial: Studies in Psalm 73, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 125 pages. $2.95.

Since sermons are not primarily meant to be read, they have never been popular reading for either preacher or people. These volumes by the successor to G. Campbell Morgan at Westminster

Chapel in London are the exception. When in London six years ago this reviewer, with limited time at his disposal, asked a prominent church leader there to recommend an outstanding pulpiteer. The reply came unhesitatingly, "Martyn Lloyd-Jones." That Sunday morning was a memorable experience. A few months later came the American edition of Lloyd-Jones' *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Vols. I, II, Eerdmans), described by one competent critic as "the most searching of all expositions of the Sermon on the Mount to be published in the twentieth century."

The present volumes show the same penetrating analysis of human nature, the same soundness of biblical interpretation, and the same strong common sense and balanced judgment. Both of these books set forth in vividly realistic fashion the Christian way as a way of conflict. Again and again the reader identifies himself in these pages in relation to the spiritual problem being treated. And he marvels that another should possess insight enough to write his [the reader's] spiritual autobiography. Often the vital thing in it all is the way Lloyd-Jones unravels what for you was a tangled bit of Scripture until you see clearly God's remedy for your particular spiritual malady. The reader feels that in this preacher he is in the hands of a man who truly loves men. With what solicitation, with what words of encouragement and confidence does this mentor of souls seek to shepherd his flock! From him preachers will learn much about the pulpit art of handling men. Lloyd-Jones speaks as one who "sat where they sat."

In *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, the writer devotes chapters to topics like these: vain regrets, fear of the future, feelings, looking at the waves, the spirit of bondage, weary in well-doing, discipline, and chastening. A basic thesis in all these sermons is the preacher's concern that Christians demonstrate in daily life the *joy of the Lord.* "In a sense a depressed Christian is a contradiction in terms, and a very poor recommendation for the gospel. We are living in a pragmatic age. The one question people ask is: Does it work?"

Preliminary to curing spiritual despondency is man's learning how to handle himself. The dictum "Know thyself" is packed with meaning in these sermons. This preacher's unveilings of the mixedness and perverseness of human nature does much to clear the ground for the application of the only remedy for man's condition—the Word of God. In this connection his elucidation of the Word is always clear, always soundly evangelical.

Faith On Trial is a study of Psalm 73. It deals with a problem that has always perplexed God's people—why should the godly suffer while the ungodly seem to prosper? Here the author in dramatic manner exposes the soul of the psalmist to our gaze. He leads him step by step from a position of near-despair to one of final victory and assurance. Eleven sermons on this Psalm suggest a rather

thorough treatment of the whole. The writer avoids perplexing textual problems that might confuse laymen, and concerns himself mainly with the heart of the psalmist's message.

Inasmuch as these sermons are reproduced virtually as they were delivered, they are oral in style, at the same time betraying one or two weaknesses not uncommon to this manner of communication. In his concern to make his meaning clear, the preacher tends to be expansive rather than concise. For the same reason, an idea is sometimes unduly amplified by presenting it in extended fashion in more than one form. The practice makes for a repetitive style. Yet on the whole the thinking is orderly and progressive. The wealth of spiritual content in these volumes neutralizes any minor defect in style. Here is preaching that communicates and illuminates. Preachers and laymen alike will read these books to their profit, constantly underscoring passages of marked worth.

James D. Robertson

Ezekiel, the Prophecy of Hope, by Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965. 274 pages. $4.50.

The author of this commentary on Ezekiel, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in West Palm Beach, Florida, is the son of the distinguished author of the same name who has written much on expository preaching. Among the distinctive features of the volume is an analytical outline of the prophecy of Ezekiel, which divides it into two parts. In the first half of the book the author finds three different cycles of warnings. The second half of the book is subdivided into four sections: one dealing with foreign nations, another with Israel's restoration, a third with the Battle of Armageddon, with a final section presenting a portrait of the redeemed community.

The commentary itself, proceeding on a verse-by-verse basis, falls within the framework of the analytical outline. Although there are no footnotes, quotations frequently are included in the body of the text. It is apparent that the author has done some extensive reading in the literature of Ezekiel; he brings to this study a knowledge of biblical languages as well as a wide range of literature on the subject.

Like many commentators on Ezekiel, Dr. Blackwood is often repelled and frustrated by the language of the prophet. Yet at the same time he is convinced that Ezekiel has a message for our times as well as one for his own generation. No special pleading is made for the book of Ezekiel, for this author is ready to recognize its shortcomings as well as its positive contributions. Difficult portions

are dealt with openly and honestly, with a willingness to face problems frankly and constructively. On the whole this volume is evangelical in perspective. A knowledge of Jewish as well as Christian writings is apparent in the sources to which the author appeals. He is alert not only to the problems of Ezekiel but to its positive, constructive values. His general competence is reflected in his judicious handling of difficult portions as, for instance, the opening vision in chapter one in which the general import of the complex vision is set forth without undue concern with its details.

The author may be too much influenced by Ezekiel's critics, a fact which could be accountable for failure to set forth the book's strong points in more favorable and more prominent perspective. Blackwood is convinced that Ezekiel did not actually go through a physical, detailed fulfillment of the dramatic parables of fasting and lying on one's side to symbolize the seige of Jerusalem. Emphasis is placed upon the fact that largely because of Ezekiel's ministry among the captives, the faith of these exiles did not fail but rather survived the destruction of their national entity. More attention could well have been given to features of the new covenant which Ezekiel enunciated so clearly. Part of this is due to the verse-by-verse format of the book, which does not lend itself particularly well to perspectives. The introduction could have been more extended, perhaps less apologetic, and could well have included some word studies of some of the dominant characteristics of the prophet. The influence of this prophecy upon the New Testament might have been set forth with greater clarity.

On the whole this is a needed volume. It calls attention to the important contribution the prophecy of Ezekiel makes to Christian theology, and it is done in a judicious and clear manner. The writer presents a nice balance between learning and practical concern. Its chief value will be to pastors and Bible teachers coming to Ezekiel for illumination and strength.

George A. Turner

Open Letter to Evangelicals: A Devotional and Homiletical Commentary on the First Epistle of John, by R. E. O. White. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 276 pages. $4.95.

In this commentary on what Wesley called "the deepest part of the Holy Scripture," the author reminds present-day evangelicals of the biblical evangelicalism of John's first epistle. This treatise is timely in a day when some forms of evangelicalism betray a high

degree of subjectivism, excessive individualism, and divisiveness. Dr. White finds that John's evangelicalism calls for a "deeper, more ethical, more costly evangelicalism." Part I of the commentary supplies the devotional interpretations (supported by notes in the back of the book). Here, preachers will find a richness of insight and understanding that will help them make Bible truth both interesting and illuminating to the contemporary mind. Part II relates this most evangelical of all epistles to modern-day evangelicals, considering, in turn, Authority, Spiritual Experience, Ethics, Ecumenicity, the Cross, and Jesus.

In discussing "Evangelicals and Ecumenism," the writer affirms the fact that the New Testament Church possessed unity in diversity, and that so long as human nature is various and conscience is free, the potent new wine of the Kingdom will need new and flexible wineskins to preserve it. Evangelicals may go in search of unity, he says, but not beyond certain limits imposed by the teachings of Christ. We cannot forget that divisions have often arisen around those who resisted sin and protested against error. John's emphasis on the communal Christian experience as inseparable from fellowship with God and with man is almost balanced by his emphasis on truth, which is also conceived communally. "All that John says about unity between the brethren is made more provocative by his contention for truth—for in the present ecumenical debate, truth and love seem to many earnest minds, to present irreconcilable imperatives" (p. 192). In other words, the tension between truth and love is inescapable. Evangelicals, convinced of the truth of their interpretation of the Gospel, face two inescapable duties: (1) to witness to that truth in ecumenical circles; and (2) to withdraw, at the point where unity becomes too high—and to do so only for truth's sake.

In "Evangelicals and Jesus," Dr. White asserts that the meaning of the incarnation is sometimes obscured in evangelical theology by the fear of losing the deity of Christ in too frank admission of His complete humanity. The Jesus of the Gospels sometimes occupies but a small place in evangelical piety. White sees the greatest evangelical peril in that type of faith which believes in the atonement, the resurrection, in salvation by faith, even in Jesus, but not in the Christ of Galilee. We are trying to be Christian without Christ as He really was, to prefer Paul's "risen Lord" to the too human, too vigorous and forthright Figure of the synoptic Gospels (p. 217). This, says White, is what John condemns. For John, all Christianity "turns on the historic revelation of God in Christ, the historic communication of divine life in Christ, the historic expiation for sin offered by the Man, Christ Jesus, Son of God" (p. 217). That is why John sets Him centrally in every verse he writes.

James D. Robertson

By What Authority, by Bruce Shelley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 166 pages. $1.95 (paperback).

The professor of church history at Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary presents a fresh analysis of the writings of the second and early third centuries as they concern authority in the Church. The study centers around four concepts that are traced through the period: creed, rule of faith, tradition, and canon.

Attention is given to the Apostolic Fathers of the early half of the second century because of the implicit standards of truth which they reflected before the challenge of heresy caused these standards to be made explicit. The appeal to the two-fold testimony of the Old Testament and the apostles of Jesus is characteristic of this age. Though there is an abundance of quasicreedal scraps, there is no formal creed in this period. Nor is there any "rule of faith" as such except in the sense that an awareness did exist of the great gulf between Christian truth and heresy.

The "Apologists," who found it necessary to defend the faith, are studied for their stress on authority. The outstanding feature of this group is their persistent appeal to the Scriptures. Trying only to gain the right of a Christian to exist in a non-Christian world, they did not find it prudent to use the New Testament in the same way as the Old. But gradually the concept of "the rule of truth" emerged as the bulwark against heresy.

In the second half of the second century, Irenaeus and Tertullian are studied as the spokesmen of the Church. They accused the Gnostic of making only a pretense of using Scripture. Against error they appealed to a "New Testament" as well as to the Old, to simple, antiheretical creeds or a "rule of faith," and to the "tradition" within the apostolic churches. Each of these had its roots in the first century but came into clearer light as the controversies progressed throughout the second and early third centuries. With the strong Greek and Jewish preference for oral communication, the lines were not always drawn sharply between the authority of the oral teachings and the writings of the Apostles. However, attention is called to the position of Irenaeus and Tertullian, summarized as follows: (1) They asserted the historical basis of the Gospel. (2) The apostles committed to the churches that they founded the truth they had received from Jesus Christ. (3) Christian truth is found in the apostolic writings and in the apostolic message preached in the churches. (4) There is no secret tradition necessary for a proper understanding of the Scriptures. (5) The Scriptures teach what the apostolic churches teach. The rule of faith and the results of proper interpretation of the Bible are the same.

In summary, the point is made that Jesus Christ is the supreme authority for all Christians. The "Protestant" approach is to anchor theology in the changeless by emphasizing the apostolic witness of

Scripture. The "Catholic" approach is to underscore the "magisterium" or living authority of the Church. Hence the problem of tradition and Scripture. The early Church differed from the former position in a greater concern for the oral tradition, and from the latter in strongly supporting the unique priority of written apostolic tradition. The book closes with helpful comments on the relevance of early church attitudes as a corrective to evangelical Protestants who sometimes scorn tradition and to Roman Catholics who elevate it above the Scriptures. An appendix also treats the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole matter.

The book is valuable for its clear analysis and rich insights into both the history and meaning of the basis of Christian belief. It should have a wide reading.

Wilber T. Dayton

Conquering, by Wesley H. Hager. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 110 pages. $2.95.

This is a book about Christian mastery, Christian maturity, Christian triumph. It is authored by the Rev. Dr. Wesley H. Hager, who for fifteen years has been the minister of Grace Methodist Church, St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Hager was educated at Hamline University, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University, and New College, Edinburgh.

The author is concerned about each Christian achieving maturity in his life. Maturity is the individual aware of himself, using the body in which he lives—and its resources and skills—effectively, getting along well with other people, mastering the circumstances of life, living for some worthy purpose, and mastered by something outside of and greater than himself, to which he has given himself. But this maturity is impossible unless one conquers the common problem areas in daily life. The writer deals with twelve of these areas: failure, anxiety, boredom, regret, nerves, prejudices, handicaps, weariness, trifles, our worst selves, futility, and death.

The volume is extremely relevant in its content. It is a plea for maturity: the enemies of wholesome living can and must be conquered. It is a plea for effective living: the conquering life has a wholesome effect not only on self but on others. It is a plea for satisfying living: the conquering life makes life worth living.

The author brings many practical spiritual insights to bear on this problem. Chapter 8, "Conquering Our Weariness," reflects this contribution:

> The test of life is living life to the very end. . . A vital daily faith is necessary to conquer life's weariness. . .

> The habit of daily prayer is imperative. . . There must also be the renunciation of self-sufficiency. We must have a power from outside ourselves. . . We must keep at our tasks. Heroes are those who keep going. Saints are the people who day after day just keep on going steadily without slacking. . . We must continually relate our work to our service for God.

The book is rich in illustrative material. This reviewer does not recall ever reading a book so abounding in illustrations—a fact testifying not only to the author's extensive background reading but also to his competence in conserving materials.

The volume will be helpful and challenging to the busy pastor, teacher, or administrator. It will be a worthwhile handbook for every Christian who wishes to learn the Christian secret of triumphant living. Just one minor criticism: In the interests of the lay reader the book would be strengthened if the author had outlined more pointedly the component parts of the techniques to be used in conquering each of these common enemies of "abundant living." Perhaps these could be summarized in outline form at the end of each chapter.

Frank Bateman Stanger

A Manual for Biblical Preaching, by Lloyd M. Perry. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965. 215 pages. $4.95.

This book, like many another "how-to-do-it" text, will seem somewhat complicated to the reader. It purports to explain just about everything needful for successful biblical preaching. The first three chapters, which comprise the larger part of the book, set forth in turn (I) processes by means of which preaching materials may be gathered from Bible books, (II) sermonic patterns ("foundational," "analytical," "etymological," "illustrational," etc.) to be followed in formulating sermons, and (III) ways of classifying biblical sermons (five kinds of "biographical" sermon, five kinds of "historical," seven kinds of "didactic," etc.). Here the dominie's fondness for analysis and logical arrangement may prove discouraging to the reader. One feels, too, that in some instances classification is arbitrary and overlapping.

Yet the prospector who stays with it will eventually strike gold. Occasionally the reader will want to read and re-read parts. The section on how to proceed in building a sermon (Ch. IA) will be enlightening, especially to the beginner. All will find rewarding content in Chapter IV, which discusses the planning of a preaching program, with particular emphasis on the Church Year. Chapter V gives practical advice concerning ministerial addresses on such

diversified occasions as P.T.A. meetings, ministers' conferences, prison sessions, professional conventions, and the like. To facilitate the study of particular aspects of the sermon an appendix indicates points of emphasis in outstanding preachers of the Church from the beginning. Another useful addition is the author's extensive, classified bibliography on preaching. This book, by the professor of practical theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Illinois) has some things of value for both beginner and veteran.

James D. Robertson

Plato, the Founder of Philosophy as Dialectic, by Gustav Emil Mueller. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965. 331 pages. $4.75.

Here is a startlingly new interpretation of Plato by one who has been an enthusiastic student and admirer of Plato all his life. The writer holds that Plato is generally misunderstood, that the usual interpretations are based upon distorted legends, that the legends cause the translations to be distorted, and these in turn become the support for the false interpretations. Even Jowett's translation is rejected.

This new interpretation is radically different from the usually accepted version. It denies that Plato was an idealist, and asserts that his supposed world of Ideas is a fiction, that he actually believed in one all inclusive Idea, and that this Idea embraced all reality. It further proposes that Plato did not teach that ideas were separate forms from objects. The writer denies, moreover, that Plato was a dualist with two separate worlds, the one ontological and the other material.

The problem in interpreting Plato, he asserts, lies in the fact that the apparent meaning of his dialogues is not the real meaning. One must be a student of Plato to understand him. Surface interpretation never reaches the real meaning. Mueller feels that Plato is the philosopher par excellence, who saw that the correct philosophical method was dialectic.

Undoubtedly the author is a keen student of Plato and not without support for his position. It seems doubtful, however, if he will soon change the usually accepted interpretation of Plato, especially so since he advocates a new translation of the Greek text. The author, in challenging the commonly accepted interpretation of Plato, may well precipitate a dialogue which will issue in a new understanding of this great thinker.

Ivan C. Howard

Primer on Roman Catholicism for Protestants, by Stanley I. Stuber New York: Association Press, 1965. 276 pages. $3.95.

The issuance of a revised edition of this publication is surely timely. The new volume is brought up to date with facts and figures from recent Roman Catholic history, such as the papacy of John XXIII and the proceedings of Vatican Council II. It aims among other things to furnish a simple and objective account of the basic beliefs and practices of the Roman Church, paralleling this account in its every particular with the corresponding Protestant position, to the end of promoting intelligent cooperation within a spirit of Christian love and understanding. The Catholic perspectives, derived solely from reliable Church sources, were checked and censored by scholars and officials of the Church. Protestant churchmen and theologians assisted the author in his appraisal of the Roman pronouncements and in supplying the Protestant points of view.

This manual will correct erroneous ideas which some Protestants hold concerning Roman Catholicism. The number of points of agreement may surprise many. On the other hand, the issues of profound disagreement between the two branches of the Church should suffice to dispel a superficial optimism that predicts any kind of organic union between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in the foreseeable future. Yet books like this one, which discuss frankly and sympathetically the beliefs and practices of the two bodies, will do much to foster interfaith activities. Dr. Stuber, a prolific author who has held membership on many ecumenical commissions, was honoured by being invited by Cardinal Bea to attend Vatican Council II as Official Guest Observer of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

James D. Robertson

Steps to Christian Unity, by John A. O'Brien, editor. New York: Doubleday, 1964. 321 pages. $4.95.

It is significant that the jacket of a volume on ecumenism should link together the ideas of Christian unity and Christian renewal. Perhaps the time will come when the two will not only be considered together but when the second will be given full priority. This symposium, pitched at the level of the knowledgeable layman, brings together the opinions of a wide range of contributors, Roman Catholic and Protestant. The requirement to politeness frequently casts an obscuring mantle over inter-confessional discussions; it does in some measure limit discussion in the work under review.

An outstanding merit of the work is that it seeks to penetrate surface issues and to formulate the hard-core differences between Romanism and Protestant Christianity. One gains the impression that both sets of contributors seem, on the surface at least, to feel that good will will serve to melt many of these. This tendency is more prevalent on the American scene than in genuinely theological circles on the Continent. Karl Barth, in an interview with Tanneguy de Quénétain which is reported by the latter (pp. 86-97), seems to this reviewer to be the most hard-hitting in this respect. His call to a non-evasion of basic understanding of the heart of Christianity is a wholesome corrective to the tendency of some other contributors to assume that differences will melt before the warm sun of dialogue.

The reader of this volume needs to keep several questions before his mind: first, How do the views of Roman Catholic thinkers with respect to the nature of the Church and the temporal centrality of present ecclesiastical authority compare with Protestant views of similar matters? Second, What do Protestant contributors really think of the Reformation? Third, What kind of agreement may be anticipated between historic Christian thought and the new "worldly" theology currently being formulated by the avant garde? Fourth, What differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are the result of several centuries of misunderstanding and mutual suspicion, and which differences issue from root divergences?

There is an admirable candor about the Catholic contributors, especially at the point of practical concerns. Gregory Baum, for example, makes it clear (p. 281) that under any ecumenical arrangement between Rome and Protestants, "the children of Catholics should be Catholics"—this in a discussion of marriages between Catholics and Protestants. Plain speaking at this and related points is all to the good. Roman Catholic contributors recognize, too, that rapprochement between Rome and the denominations composing the World Council of Churches is and will continue to be easier than movements toward unity with distinctly Evangelical bodies.

This volume is admirable for its frank statements of position(s), and for the manner in which it clarifies issues which are frequently obscured in Protestant expositions of ecumenism. The discriminating reader will be in a much better position to evaluate the movement toward overall church unity in depth and within the Christian perspective for having studied this symposium with care.

Harold B. Kuhn

BOOK NOTICES

J. D. R.

Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought, by Rubi Afnan. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965. 436 pages. $7.50.

Zoroaster and the first generations of his Persian followers were contemporaries of the early Greek thinkers. Confronting the same cultural vacuum that then pervaded the world, their reaction to it was different. If the Greek reaction was rationalistic and dialectic, the Zoroastrian claimed to be divine in origin and revelational in nature. The book shows that the two methods of dealing with the cultural predicament were complementary. The one was a dialectical search for the premises of thought, the other an assertive statement of those premises. The ultimate aim of this book is to demonstrate the complementary nature of divine revelation and human thought and to show that Greek thought could hardly have attained its eminence independent of the stimulus that came from the Zoroastrian world view.

Adventures of a Deserter, by Jan Overdeen (transl. by Harry Van Dyke). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 153 pages. $3.50.

An outstanding pulpiteer from the Netherlands and a former prisoner of the Nazis provides an interesting and thought-provoking study of Jonah, emphasizing the universality of the prophet's experience and exploring with real insight its meaning for everyman.

The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism, and Other Essays on Religion and Race, by James Daane. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 84 pages. $1.45 (paperback).

In the belief that anti-semitism has been practiced primarily by Christians, the author insists that "having chosen Israel, God does not change his mind." A timely treatise that deserves a wide reading.

Inasmuch, by David O. Moberg. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 216 pages. $2.45 (paperback).

A provocative discussion of Christian social responsibility in twentieth-century America by one well qualified in the field. The orientation throughout is that of evangelical Protestantism.

Abandoned to Christ, by L. E. Maxwell. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 248 pages. $2.25 (a paperback reprint).

The author treats the theme "Christ made sin for us" in vividly concrete fashion. The Christian life becomes an adventure—a journey of faith involving confession, dedication, challenge, and hope. Death in Christ is shown as the gateway to life and liberty.

Shield Bible Studies: Book of Deuteronomy, Book of Daniel, Ancient Israel, Epistles of John and Jude, by C. F. Pfeiffer, C. T. Francisco, P. C. Johnson, and R. A. Ward respectively. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964-1965. 65-111 pages. $1.50 each (paperback).

This is a series of manuals designed to serve as guides for the study of the Bible in colleges, Bible schools, and in local church classes. Each is from the pen of a well-qualified student of the Bible. Twenty books in the series are at present available. Other manuals will appear from time to time till the series is complete.

Of Sex and Saints, by Donald F. Tweedie. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965. 73 pages. $1.00 (paperback).

The virtue of this book is in the fact that the author is a Christian psychotherapist and deals with sex on the basis of God's Word. A useful treatment of the subject by the head of the clinic in pastoral psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Christian Calling and Vocation, by H. H. Barnette. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965. 83 pages. $1.50 (paperback).

The professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Seminary shows how life takes on new meaning and motivation when we understand that God calls every Christian with a holy calling. The focus of the study is on the calling of God as such rather than on vocation in the sense of daily work. This calling serves to integrate the totality of one's life with the eternal purpose of God in Christ.

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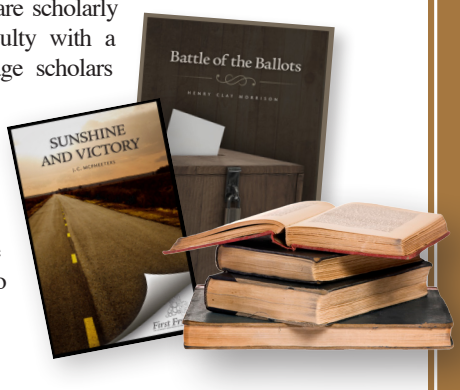

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