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Demythologizing and the Post-supernatural Era

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THERE ARE TWO PHENOMENA of great significance to contemporary theology: the ecumenical movement, and the new attempt at theological restatement. The first is symbolized and dramatized in the Faith and Order Conference at Montreal in July, 1963; the second is represented and illustrated by the phenomenal sale of J. A. T. Robinson's little monograph *Honest to God*.¹ Both movements have been with us for some time. Faith and Order met first in 1927, and is the result of earlier meetings stretching back to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, which is usually taken as the starting point of the modern ecumenical movement. The beginning of the somewhat amorphous movement of theological restatement is more difficult to pin-point, but one might well date it from 1941, when Bultmann's *Neues Testament und Theologie* was first published.² This movement too is the result of many convergent influences,³ and both movements have recently taken on significant new developments. At Montreal, Orthodoxy made itself felt with determination for the first time, and Roman Catholicism was more heavily and centrally involved. As for the other movement, Robinson's book puts forward ideas which have been on the market long enough, but now in a form which is within the reach of the layman and even the lazy clergyman. If we hold that the history of Christian theology is always the record of a continuous conversation, carried on within the Church, and between the Church and the world in which it lives,⁴ the difference between the two movements may be stated thus: the ecumenical movement is forcing theology to face the Churches, and the new attempt at theological restatement is forcing theologians to face the world.

In the contemporary situation the Church is both struggling towards unity and being forced to re-examine her witness. The great theologian of ecumenicity—one of its true fathers—is Karl Barth. The great theologians of theological restatement are Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The two movements are distinct, but they are not separate because they have the same goal. R. C. Chalmers, commenting on the Faith and Order Conference, writes: "We believe that the chief reason why the churches are considering with new zest their basic unity in the Gospel is

1. London: S.C.M. Press, 1963.

2. Translated by R. H. Fuller, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth* edited by H. W. Bartsch (London: S.P.C.K., 1953).

3. Cf. S. M. Ogden, "Introduction," *Existence and Faith* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 11.

4. J. Dillenberger and C. Welch, *Protestant Christianity* (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 179.

because it is the will of our Lord that His Church should be one. . . . And this unity is not only for its own sake, but as our Lord prayed, 'that the world may believe.'⁵ In short, theology faces the Churches and the challenge of unity in order that the Church may better accomplish her task in the world. Although the other movement apparently takes its bearings more directly from the world, an agonized question of Bonhoeffer restores the perspective: "What is the significance of a Church (church, parish, preaching, Christian life) in a religionless world?"⁶ If we ask whether the new attempt at theological restatement dissolves the Christian message into a product of human rational thinking, so that the mystery of God is destroyed by demythologizing, we have Bultmann's reply: "Not at all! On the contrary, demythologizing makes clear the true meaning of God's mystery."⁷ Some may not agree. The point, however, is not that the new theological restatement has succeeded, not that demythologizing is the "be-all and end-all" of theology, but that in intent it honestly tries to theologize with fidelity to the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are two movements. They may well exist in tension for the next few decades, as they already exist in tension within some of us. Martin Marty, himself devoted to ecumenicity, exemplifies this tension in outlining some of the gaps in the reports of the Faith and Order Conference. He writes: "There must inevitably go a better-stated theological position on the 'world'—which now appears only as a shadow, ill-defined, on almost all the pages of the reports." He goes on: "No one at Montreal could fail to detect the growth of (this) 'Protestant principle' within a movement that is taking on new catholicity. It is evident in the criticism being listened to as well as initiated by Faith and Order and by the World Council in general. This criticism does not come from antiecumenical Christian sources, which are simply neither heard nor reckoned with. It arises out of the new concerns of people inside the movement, from recognition of the apathy of the 'world.'" Marty goes on to note that many people of the "world" are not excited about Faith and Order, neither are they hostile; they are indifferent: ". . . few people feel that their destiny is involved in or watch with suspense the kind of proceedings that went forth at Montreal."⁸

The concern for the world in the new effort of theological restatement makes the ecumenical task more complicated. "There was another factor which made the work of the Montreal (Faith and Order) Conference difficult. In attendance for the first time were representatives of the critical school of Biblical Studies, often associated, however loosely, with the name of Rudolf Bultmann."⁹ Since the Church would be the poorer for not listening to those whose contribution makes its ecumenical task more difficult, for the remainder of this article I shall confine myself to the new attempt at theological restatement.

5. "Fruitful Confusion," *The United Churchman* (August, 1963), p. 9.

6. *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: Fontana Books, 1959), p. 92.

7. *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 43.

8. "Reflections on Montreal," *The Christian Century* (August 14, 1963), p. 999.

9. G. Baum, "Montreal; Faith and Order," in *The Commonwealth*, Vol. 78, 506 (1963).

Restatement has always been necessary, but I believe that our contemporary situation is different in a way that makes a new attempt mandatory. As Robinson says: "There have always been those who see the best defence of doctrine to lie in the firm reiteration, in fresh and intelligent contemporary language, of 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'"¹⁰ While this process has always gone on and will continue to do so, Robinson believes that we are being called to far more than a restatement of traditional orthodoxy in contemporary terms. A much more radical recasting is demanded, in the process of which the most fundamental categories of our theology must go into the melting-pot.¹¹ Bonhoeffer has said: "Atonement and redemption, regeneration, the Holy Ghost, the love of our enemies, the cross and resurrection, life in Christ and Christian discipleship—all these things have become so problematic and so remote that we hardly dare any more to speak of them."¹² To quote another writer: "Christianity has generally ceased to be a relevant factor in the life of Western societies. Everywhere . . . God is no longer a matter of great concern. The challenge of a rival religion which claims positively to have found answers other than God has not even been realized yet by many; but this is only symptomatic of Western religious indifference."¹³ Bonhoeffer seemed to be certain that we are in a new era—an era when man has come of age. Yet he did not deplore this fact, but welcomed it:

The attack by Christian apologetic upon the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second ignoble, and in the third un-Christian. Pointless because it looks to me like an attempt to put a grown-up man back into adolescence, i.e. to make him dependent on things on which he is not in fact dependent any more, thrusting him back into the midst of problems which are in fact not problems for him any more. Ignoble, because this amounts to an effort to exploit the weakness of man for purposes alien to him and not freely subscribed to by him. Un-Christian, because for Christ himself is being substituted one particular stage in the religiousness of man, i.e. a human law.¹⁴

We live in an epoch which has been named post-Christendom. Ronald Gregor Smith asks:

What of the Christian in all this? What are his real commitments and obligations? Where is his community, the Church, the new Creation? And if I ask the most urgent and personal question of all, 'What must I do to be saved?', I intend no blasphemy or ultimate scepticism when I say that the answer given to the jailer's question in the Book of Acts, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' does not answer my question, today, in my circumstances . . . directly or satisfactorily. It leaves me, and my companions in this modern world, both those within and those outside the Church, with many questions about who Jesus is, and where, and how, and the question about the substance of salvation itself. In other words, a great deal of re-thinking requires to be done which will be neither biblical theology by itself nor systematic theology by itself, but an existential

10. *Honest to God*, p. 7.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: S.C.M. Press, rev. ed., 1956), p. 160.

13. P. J. Friedrich, "Some Recent Works on Communism and Christianity," *Salvific Review*, Vol. 22, 321 (1963).

14. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 108.

assessment of the Bible and the world which will uncover the almost entirely dissipated claim of real transcendence as an existent force *within* this world.¹⁵

It is not surprising that the results of such a new attempt at theological restatement—which I believe necessary—should be fragmentary and unsatisfying. A whole generation of theological work lies ahead. Luther and Calvin were great reformers, yet students of these epoch-makers can hardly fail to notice that in many respects they were mediaeval men. A somewhat similar situation exists today. We are living in a hinge-period, in which the leaders are wrestling with problems that go beyond them with the aid of concepts and formulations that they themselves have scarcely mastered. This becomes painfully and blatantly apparent in such a confused little monograph as Robinson's *Honest to God*. New moulds are being fashioned, and we should not be surprised that the casts from these new moulds have an odd shape.

If one must choose a single word to designate the proponents of the new attempt at theological restatement, that word must be "demythologizers." As we have said, the movement has at least three major theological figures at its head: Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer. In addition, others have made or are making a contribution: Ronald Gregor Smith, Gerhard Ebeling, Schubert Ogden, Carl Michalson, John Macquarrie, Ian Henderson, and J. A. T. Robinson. The last-named is the popularizer of the movement. It is hardly surprising that there is wide divergence amongst them on many points. The whole body of material is immense. In order to discuss and illumine their thought I shall discuss the theme supernature and transcendence. I shall contrast traditional theology with that put forward by the proponents of the new attempt at theological restatement. In so doing, I do not mean to identify proponents of traditional theology with the leaders of the ecumenical movement, *nor* sharply to distinguish between them. My main exponent will be Bultmann, though I draw on others as well. Perhaps by this method we can clarify some things; if not, we may be able to add profitably to the confusion.

SUPERNATURE AND TRANSCENDENCE

Robinson thinks that we might do well to give up using the word *God* for a generation. Tillich has said that God does not exist. What is behind these rather startling statements is a complete dissatisfaction with traditional supernatural statements about God in their more popular form.

God is not a mass of being separated from us by physical height, or shoved to ever remoter areas of the cosmic scene. God is not a kind of super-entity, dwelling in the rarefied atmosphere of supernature, while mortals live and move and have their being in the lower stratosphere of nature. God does not inhabit a heavenly throne-room from which he descends to intervene from time to time in earthly affairs. Such a supernatural view of God errs in two respects: it fails to recognize adequately either the radical transcendence or

15. *The New Man* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1956), pp. 95f.

the radical immanence of God. It does not recognize his radical transcendence because the term *supernature* is taken from our understanding of things, and simply extended. The supernatural schema encases God in human categories and modes of thought. Tillich says:

The main argument against supernaturalism is that it transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is only an extension of the categories of finitude. This is done in respect to space by establishing a supernatural divine world alongside the natural human world; in respect to time by determining a beginning and an end of God's creativity; in respect to causality by making God a cause alongside other causes; in respect to substance by attributing individual substance to him. Against this kind of supernaturalism the arguments of naturalism are valid, and, as such, represent the true concern of religion, the infinity of the infinite, and the inviolability of the created structures of the finite.

Again, "... many theologians who have used the term 'highest being' ought to have known better . . . (This) places him on the level of other beings while elevating him above all of them."¹⁶ Bonhoeffer has the same things in mind when he says:

I often ask myself why a Christian instinct frequently draws me more to the religionless than to the religious, by which I mean not with any intention of evangelizing them, but rather, I might almost say, in "brotherhood." While I often shrink with religious people from speaking of God by name because that Name somehow seems to me here not to ring true and I strike myself as rather dishonest (it is especially bad when others start talking in religious jargon: then I dry up almost completely and feel somehow oppressed and ill at ease)—with people who have no religion I am able on occasion to speak of God quite openly and as it were naturally. Religious people speak of God when human perception is (often just from laziness) at an end, or human resources fail: their aid, either for the so-called solving of insoluble problems or as support in human failure—always, that is to say, helping out human weakness or on the borders of human existence.¹⁷

The other inadequacy of supernaturalism is that it fails to recognize the radical immanence of God. In traditional theology—at least in its more naive representatives—man's world is left pretty well on its own, save during those arbitrary and shattering occasions when God intervenes in the course of an otherwise godless nature. If the first failure of such supernaturalism is that it does not see God's separateness in kind from the world, its second is that it fails to see the closeness or contiguity of God with and in the world. In naive supernaturalism, God is "upstairs," close enough not to be too mysterious, close enough to be understood in human terms, but also conveniently removed from the living-room, where life is really going on most of the time. Of course, in an emergency, the divine can be consulted. Over against this the demythologizers hold that God is not the inhabitant of a cosmic second storey. He is active in this world, though his action is hidden. His action cannot be labelled and docketed. It is hidden, really hidden, inserted incog-

16. *Systematic Theology*, II (London: Nisbet and Co., 1957), pp. 6f.

17. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, pp. 92f.

nito in the human presence. God's action is visible only to the eye of faith. But there is a problem: if faith maintains that God's hidden action is at work within the chain of secular events, faith may be suspected of being simply pantheism. Yet this is not the case: "... faith insists not on the direct identity of God's action with worldly events, but, if I may be permitted to put it so, on the paradoxical identity which can be believed only here and now against the appearance of non-identity. In faith I can understand an accident with which I meet as a gracious gift of God, or as His punishment or as His chastisement. On the other hand, I can understand the same accident as a link in the chain of the natural course of events."¹⁸ How are we to think of God if we cast aside the furniture of supernaturalism? Gregor Smith talks about "this-worldly transcendence."¹⁹ Tillich says that "within itself, the finite world points beyond itself. In other words, it is self-transcendent."²⁰ The best phrase, in my opinion, belongs to Bonhoeffer: "God is the 'beyond' in the midst of our life."²¹ Negatively, that means: God is not known apart from the world, he is not reached by taking an elevator into the supernatural, yet he is not identifiable with the world. Positively stated, God is apprehended in this world, we know him only by participation in the here and now of history; yet we cannot point to his works and say to the neutral bystander, "That is God's activity." We can only witness to God's act, we see it only in faith, and it is directly communicable only to a person in the circle of faith.

We can see the difference between supernature and transcendence by a couple of examples. Thinking particularly of the Anglican Eucharist, Robinson mentions the so-called eastward position, in which the priest stands with his back to the people. This has the psychological effect of focussing attention upon a point somewhere in the middle distance beyond the sanctuary. In the Reformed tradition, a comparable situation arises if the minister lifts his eyes and voice in the act of prayer to a spot halfway between the top row of the balcony seats and the peak of the roof. This symbolizes the whole way of thinking in which God is domiciled in supernature. Contrast this with the "westward position," in which the minister surrounded by his assistants faces the people across the table, focussing attention upon a point in the middle, as the Christ stands among his own as the breaker of bread. There is equally here, truly here—or should be—the element of "the beyond in the midst," the element of the transcendent. But the beyond is seen not as that which is separated from the earthly and the common, but as the vertical of the unconditioned cutting into and across the limitations of the merely human fellowship, claiming it for and transforming it into the Body of the living Christ. Once again the beyond is not equated with the earthly and the common, though it has no relevance for us apart from them.²² Gregor Smith puts it this way:

18. R. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 62

19. *The New Man*, pp. 94ff.

20. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 8.

21. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 93.

22. *Honest to God*, p. 89.

The God that Christian theology speaks about . . . is not God in isolation but God in the world. To Christian faith it is God in the world and for the world who constitutes the ground of action and understanding. But Christian theology has to try to speak about this givenness in such a way that, while God is given in and for the world, at the same time he is recognized as distinct from the world, and therefore, while given in the phenomena of the world, i.e., in its structures and events and even in human persons in their relationships, yet he is never recognized as a phenomenon of the world.²³

Modern man has cast off belief in supernature. He is right in doing that. He is doing a Christian service in exploding the myth of some sort of superstructure to this world. The word *God* can no longer function as a supernatural entity. It can no longer be used to fill the gaps in our knowledge. Certain classical quotations are to be found in every study on secularization. For instance, in the field of physics, when Laplace showed Napoleon his model of the universe, and Napoleon asked him: "But, Monsieur Laplace, where do you have a place for God?" Laplace answered: "Sir, I do not need this hypothesis." In the field of biology, Darwinism substituted the mechanism of evolution for the creative forces of God. In the field of psychology, Freud's psychology of depth described religion as a function of repressed emotion. In the field of sociology, Karl Marx saw it as an ideology for the maintenance of the ruling class. The gaps in our knowledge are now filled up by new discoveries.²⁴ "The real God does not reside in the interstices left by science. He is not to be found on the sandbank of a diminishing mystery. He does not lurk in that kind of mystery at all."²⁵ We are now living in a natural, not a supernatural, world. Man has correctly disentangled himself from the supernatural world view. He sees himself set upon his own feet and he has been given a new vision of a natural universe. Heaven and hell have disappeared; God becomes increasingly unimaginable and rather thoroughly unemployed. Much of this is good, necessary, Christian. Unfortunately, it is not all good. Correctly rejecting a false supernaturalism, man dwells in practical atheism. The first step of faith, as Dorothy Sayers has said, is atheism, but the tragedy now is that all steps tend to be atheistic. Correctly casting off a false God, man is left without any. Scientifically, man has left no darkness unprobed; industrially, he has manipulated every channel of power he has been able to get his hands on. Everywhere he has become the master. Patiently, cunningly, ruthlessly, brilliantly he has dominated the scene. And yet man himself has lost the firm sense of his destiny. He is not merely unsure; he is anxious, full of dread, and incurably restless. He acts like a man driven by guilt, and clutches pathetically at small straws to prop his human venture against the winds of fate. Toynbee puts

23. "A Theological Perspective of the Secular," in *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. 43, 15 (1960).

24. Cf. C. A. Van Peursen, "Man and Reality—The History of Human Thought," in *Student World*, Vol. 56, 19 (1963).

25. R. G. Smith, "Some Implications of Demythologizing," in *The Listener*, Vol. 49, 260 (1953).

the matter bluntly: "Nemesis of creativity; idolization of an ephemeral self."²⁶

In casting off supernaturalism, man has cast off superstition. In this sense he has matured, he has come of age. In this sense he is now an adult, no longer the dupe of a second-storey God. In this sense, we now live in a post-Christian era. The phrases "post-Christian," "come of age" are ambiguous and open to misinterpretation. The proponents of a new theological restatement do not thereby state that all is now rosy. On the contrary, these phrases mean merely that man has cast off supernaturalism: they do not mean that man is now somehow divine in his bare humanity. The phrase "post-supernatural" seems to me to convey better what the demythologizers are trying to say.²⁷ There is no easy acceptance of the world as it is. Bonhoeffer, who went to death for his convictions, was born in a time when men thought that this was the best of all possible worlds, but he himself shed such a view. Correctly heralding the death of supernaturalism, Bonhoeffer nowhere suggested that man is such a perfect creature that he no longer needs God in Christ Jesus:

The first night in my cell I could sleep very little because in the next cell a prisoner wept loudly for several hours. Nobody took any notice. At the time I thought that this would happen every night, but in all the months since it has only happened once. In those first days of complete isolation I did not see anything of the actual life of the prison; I only formed a picture of what was going on from the almost uninterrupted shouting of the warders. My essential impression—and it has remained the same to this day—was that those detained for investigation are at once treated as criminals and that in practice it is impossible for those who are detained unjustly to get their rights. Later I more than once heard conversation in which some of the warders said quite openly that, if any prisoner complained of unjust treatment or of being struck—which is strictly forbidden—the authorities would never believe the prisoner, but always the warder, who could be sure of finding a colleague to testify for him under oath. I have heard of cases where this evil practice was actually carried out. After twelve days the authorities got to know of my family connections. While it was, of course, a great relief for me personally, from an objective point of view it was almost embarrassing to see how everything changed from that moment. I was put into a more spacious cell which was cleaned for me daily by one of the men. When the food came round I was offered larger rations, which I always refused, since they would have been at the expense of the other prisoners. The captain fetched me for a daily walk, with the result that the warders treated me with especial politeness. Several of them actually came to apologize: "they hadn't known," etc. It was painful.²⁸

26. Cf. S. H. Miller, "Post-Christian Man," in *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. 43, 267 (1960).

27. Actually, the "age" referred to by the demythologizers can be variously designated. Philosophically, it is a post-metaphysical age (cf. van Peursen, "Man and Reality—The History of Human Thought," pp. 13ff.); historically and sociologically, it has been called "the end of the Constantine era"—so "post-Christendom" (cf. A. Molnar, "The History of the Faith," in *Student World*, Vol. 56, 41ff. (1963)). Theologically, it has been called "the post-liberal age" (by Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (New York: Harper's, 1961), pp. 131ff.). This title is not inaccurate, but it is insufficient. It is post-liberal; but it is also post-neo-orthodox. Barth cannot be bypassed even here, as if *Zwischen den Zeiten* had never been written!

28. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 184.

The point is that the proponent of the new attempt at theological restatement, who is at one with the humanist in his rejection of supernaturalism, is no idealistic optimist. Gregor Smith says: "The scientists who today represent in the common view the vanguard of human enterprise are lost in a desert, each in his own desert of truth."²⁹ Tillich speaks of the tragic estrangement within man, and of the demonic elements of life:

In the Nuremberg War-crime trials a witness appeared who had lived for a time in a grave in a Jewish grave-yard, in Wilna, Poland. It was the only place he—and many others—could live, when in hiding after they had escaped the gas chamber. During this time he wrote poetry, and one of the poems was a description of a birth. In a grave nearby a young woman gave birth to a boy. The eighty-year-old gravedigger, wrapped in a linen shroud, assisted. When the newborn child uttered his first cry, the old man prayed: "Great God, hast Thou finally sent the Messiah to us? For who else than the Messiah Himself can be born in a grave?" But after three days the poet saw the child sucking his mother's tears because she had no milk for him.³⁰

The demythologizers wish to dispose of supernature. The concept of transcendence—"this-worldly transcendence," "beyond in the midst"—this is a more integral way of discussing God's activity in the world. But how are we to speak of God as acting if our speech is not to be understood as language saturated with supernaturalism? Let us ask first: How do we speak about love? We can, it is true, speak about love from a neutral standpoint, we can depict it psychologically, delineate it historically. Then we are *describing* love; we are talking *about* love. Yet, it is quite obvious that love comes into being only as a condition of life itself: ". . . it only *is* in that I love or am loved, not as something secondary or derivative. The same is true of the relationship of fatherhood and childhood. Viewed as a natural consequence—so that one can talk about it—it does not reveal its unique character at all, but is simply a single incident in a certain natural event which takes place between individuals of a species. Where the relationship really comes into being it cannot be seen from the outside. . . . It only is at the point where the father actually lives as father, the son as son."³¹ Talking about love presupposes a standpoint different from that in which one talks about love. For this reason it is also impossible to talk about God and show the unique character of that word-event. As Bultmann again says:

God as acting does not refer to an event which can be perceived by me without myself being drawn into the event as into God's action, without myself taking part in it as being acted upon. In other words, to speak of God as acting involves the events of personal existence. The encounter with God can be an event for man only here and now, since man lives within the limits of space and time. When we speak of God as acting, we mean that we are confronted with God, addressed, asked, judged, or blessed by God. Therefore to speak in this manner is not to speak in symbols or images, but to speak analogically. For when we

29. *The New Man*, p. 63.

30. *The Shaking of the Foundations* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959), p. 165.

31. R. Bultmann, "What Sense is There to Speak of God," Translated by F. H. Littell, in *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. 43, 213f. (1960).

speak in this manner of God as acting, we conceive God's action as an analogue to the actions taking place between men. Moreover, we conceive the communion between God and man as an analogue to the communion between man and man. It is in this analogical sense that we speak of God's love and care for men, of His demand and of His wrath, of His promise and grace, and it is in this analogical sense that we call Him Father. We are not only justified in speaking thus, but we must do so, since now we are not speaking of an idea about God, but of God Himself. Thus, God's love and care, etc., are not images or symbols; these conceptions mean real experiences of God as acting here and now.³²

We have knowledge *about* love, but its true character is apparent to us only when we are *in* love: we then have knowledge *of* God.

The proponents of the new attempt at theological restatement propose a radical abolishing of the concept of the supernatural. Their protests seem to me to be clear, cogent, and compelling. And the demythologizers feel that the concept of transcendence more adequately expresses biblical truth. Two things I would add in conclusion. First, whereas the secularist rejects supernaturalism, there is no guarantee that he will gladly receive any talk of God as "the beyond in the midst." The concept of "this-worldly transcendence" may leave him quite untouched and unmoved. Our task is not to make the gospel easily acceptable, but to state it in terms as accurate as possible, in a language which is at least intelligible to contemporary man. As Bultmann expresses it, there should be no attempt to remove the scandal or offence of the gospel, but to make sure that the scandal we present in our preaching is the real scandal of the gospel.³³ Secondly, it may be that we are dissatisfied with the new manner of speaking about God that the concept of transcendence brings. But let us remember that it is easy to destroy, and difficult to construct. Let us not be too easily impatient with the pioneers at this new frontier of contemporary theology.

32. *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 68f.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 36.