

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE THEOLOGY
OF PAUL TILlich**

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OF PAUL TILLICH**

by

Jack P. Peck, B.A., L.Th., B.D.

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AUTHOR:- Jack P. Peck B.A. (University of Western
Ontario, London, Ontario)
L.Th. (Huron College, London)
B.D. (Huron College, London)

SUPERVISOR:- Dr. C. H. Going

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:- The thesis is a positive evaluation and outline of Paul Tillich's theology of the Holy Spirit. Included in this evaluation are Tillich's views on the method of correlation, symbol and myth, and his use of the concept "boundary." Tillich's correlation of divine Spirit and human spirit is presented with emphasis on his attempt to recover the dimension of spirit in a doctrine of man. Important to this thesis is Tillich's emphasis on "the freedom of the Spirit." It was an emphasis which led Tillich to adopt definite views about the relation of the sacred to the secular realms of life. Finally, Tillich's theology on the Spirit is found to have contributed to his growing concern for a new boundary situation between Christianity and the world religions in "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit."

PREFACE

This thesis is the result of a long standing desire to study in depth a contemporary theologian. My choice of Dr. Paul Tillich has been prompted by the fact that I have personally found many of his interpretations of traditional Christian doctrines useful in my pastoral work. Dr. Tillich's insight into the problematic questions many people ask about traditional creedal statements of the Church has been helpful. Another motive, however, has prompted my specific choice of Dr. Tillich's interpretation of the doctrine of the Spirit, as a topic. In an era of growing ecumenical dialogue between the churches of Christendom, I am of the opinion that this dialogue must grow beyond the scope of the Christian church to include non-Christian religions. I believe that Tillich's theological contribution to the doctrine of the Spirit is an important step in this direction.

This study would not have been possible without the interest and advice of my thesis advisors, Dr. C. M. Going and Dr. E. P. Sanders, to both of whom I am deeply indebted.

J.P.P.

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Paul Tillich developed his doctrine of the Holy Spirit within the framework of his own specific approach to theology. This approach is both systematic and methodical, and is based on what he calls the principle of "methodological rationality." In the introductory remarks to his third volume of Systematic Theology, Tillich defends his use of the systematic form and answers the question, "why a system?" While admitting that "to emphasize the importance of the systematic form is not to deny that every concrete system is transitory and that none can be final,"¹ he points to the fact that the systematic form nevertheless has definite value in that "new organizing principles appear, neglected elements acquire central significance"² The application of the systematic form is worked out by Tillich in the "method of correlation." This method is the basis of his three volumes of Systematic Theology, and it has a direct bearing on the subject of this thesis. Two other developments of Tillich's thought

¹Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, III (1963), 4.

²Lec. cit.

have a direct bearing on his understanding of the Holy Spirit: these are his use of the concept "boundary," and his use of symbol and myth. The above mentioned areas of Tillich's theology, "method of correlation," his use of the concept "boundary" and his interpretation of symbol and myth, will be outlined in this introduction.

The Method of Correlation

The method of correlation is used by Tillich as the method which best suited his desire for consistency in writing within a systematic form. It also provides him with a logical and conceptual basis for approaching the theological problem of the relation of God to man and man to God within an ontological frame of reference. The method itself was not new and had strong roots within Christian apologetic theology. It was based on an approach to theology that sought to correlate reason and revelation. It, therefore, had ties with natural theology and insisted that man in raising the question of his own being, thereby raised the question of God. Revelation can only be given and understood within the framework of man's existential questions about himself and his world. Revelation would be meaningless if it did not come as the answer to man's questions: such revelation would not be understood. There must be a correlation between the existential question and the theological answer. The roots of the method of

correlation are to be found in the dialectical structure of question and answer. Tillich writes:

In using the method of correlation, 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.³

Two factors are stressed by Tillich in regard to the meaning of the method of correlation. These factors must be understood if more is not to be demanded of the method than Tillich intended. The two factors are "independence" and "interdependence." Tillich defines correlation as follows: "'Correlation,' a word with several meanings in scientific language, is understood as 'interdependence of two independent factors.'"⁴ Within the method of correlation, both participation and freedom must be maintained, in regard to both question and answer and in regard to situation and message. Question and answer are independent from each other. One cannot derive the substance of revelation as the self-manifestation of God from an analysis of the existential question. To do so would be to confuse the infinite with the finite. Revelation is given to man; man cannot reach God by his own power. On the other hand the existential question cannot be derived from revelation.

³Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I (1956), 62.

⁴Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, II (1957), 13.

Man asks the question he cannot avoid asking: he asks the question of himself. "Man cannot receive an answer to a question he has not asked."⁵ The independence of both question and answer must be maintained. At the same time that correlation stresses the independence of both question and answer, it recognizes the need for some interdependence between the two factors. This recognition of interdependence between question and answer becomes the emphasis of Natural Theology's assertion that man though estranged from God is not devoid of God. Thus man in the very act of raising the question of man raises the question of God. He raises the question of being. The implications of this ontological question with regard to the Divine Spirit in Tillich's system will be dealt with in Chapter 1. Here it can be said that man as finite being must have some relation to the infinite ground of being or he would not exist. The ontological question points to a tension between participation and separation, and between dependence and interdependence. This tension is expressed in the ambiguity of man's life, on the one hand, and the search for unambiguous life on the other. It is asserted by saying that God stands for and against man. Correlation is understood, by Tillich, as the attempt to preserve this note of tension between dependence and interdependence, in terms of

⁵Loc. cit.

existential question and theological answer. Thus Tillich, in adopting the method of correlation, rejected what he called "the famous 'No' of Karl Barth against any kind of natural theology, even of man's ability to ask the question of God."⁶ Tillich is of the opinion that the answer to the problem of the interdependence and dependence of existential question and theological answer must be solved within the theological circle. Tillich insists that the theologian, while committed to the revelatory experience of his own particular religion, cannot rest on the answers of that revelation. He must give the answer only after he has struggled for it within the human predicament with its estrangement and ambiguity. He must struggle for the answer as though he had never been given such an answer. The theologian must try to preserve the independence of question and answer from each other. On the other hand, the theologian must also recognize that the form of the question and the form of the answer are dependent on one another within the total theological system. Thus when theology gives the answer "the Spirit" to the questions arising from life's ambiguities, it does not mean that the answer of "the Spirit" was created by theology out of man's questions. Man cannot create the answer of "the Spirit." But out of the awareness of the dimension of spirit in his

⁶Ibid., p. 14.

own life, man can receive the answer that is given by revelation and express it in terms of the way he has asked for it: that is, in terms of spirit.

Tillich's method of correlation led him to combine two approaches in his theology: the kerygmatic and the apologetic. Kerygmatic theology emphasizes the Christian message based on revelation over against man's existential situation.⁷ Apologetic theology attempts to provide answers to the questions which arise out of man's existential situation. These answers are based on the Christian message, with one difference. Apologetic theology assumes some common ground between the question and the answer and between those within the Christian circle and those outside it.⁸ Tillich was prompted to adopt this twofold approach because of his sensitiveness to the problem of interpreting the symbols of the Christian message to modern man. He hoped to overcome what he considered the weakness of a strict theology with its exclusive transcendence and its rejection of any common ground within the situation. On the other hand, Tillich insisted on the need for apologetic theology to take seriously the message which has been given to man through revelation. Apologetic theology must answer the questions implied in existence within the scope of the

⁷Systematic Theology, I, 4.

⁸Ibid., p. 6.

answers of the kerygma. It was Tillich's hope that his method of correlation successfully combined both theological approaches in a way that safeguarded "questions and answers, situation and message, human existence and divine manifestation."⁹

Tillich developed his method of correlation in five parts in his Systematic Theology. Each of the five parts is based on the structure of existence in correlation with the structure of the Christian message. The correlation is made more explicit in the consideration of man's existence in terms of estrangement and of man's essential nature. The five parts are given by Tillich under the following titles: "Reason and Revelation," "Being and God," "Existence and the Christ," "Life and the Spirit," "History and the Kingdom of God."¹⁰ In the fourth section Tillich correlates the question posed by the ambiguities of life with the answer that the Spirit is. It will be part of the purpose of this paper to draw out clearly Tillich's correlation between the ambiguities of life and the dimension of the Spirit.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰See Systematic Theology, II, 4. Tillich notes his reasons for developing his theological system in five parts. For a most explicit and compressed exposition of Tillich's method of correlation see Alan Gragg, "Paul Tillich's Existential Questions and Their Theological Answers: A Compendium," Journal of Bible and Religion, XXXIV (1986), No. 1, 1-17.

Tillich's Use of the Concept "Boundary"

In his autobiographical sketch, On the Boundary, Tillich explains the importance for his life of what he calls the boundary position:

At almost every point, I have had to stand between alternative possibilities of existence, to be completely at home in neither and to take no definitive stand against either. Since thinking presupposes receptiveness to new possibilities, this position is fruitful for thought; but it is difficult and dangerous in life, which again and again demands decisions and thus the exclusion of alternatives. This disposition and its tension have determined both my destiny and my work.¹¹

The following example of the boundary position in Tillich's life will serve to show the power of his working concept for his thought and writing. He adopted very strong views in regard to autonomy and heteronomy. Here something of the freedom on which Tillich insists for the individual Christian in his approach to the Church and to culture may be seen. He affirmed the need for intellectual and moral autonomy in the individual, but he did so with reservation. He rejected pure autonomy when it meant "free-wheeling intelligence." He "had scant confidence in the creative power of purely autonomous thought."¹² He also rejected heteronomy: the heteronomy of imposed authority as found in the areas of politics and religion.

¹¹Paul Tillich, On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch (1966), p. 13.

¹²Ibid., p. 37.

Political heteronomy, in its worst form, was evidenced for Tillich in Nazism, while religious heteronomy was evidenced both in Catholic authority and Barthian supernaturalism.

It is in relation to Protestantism that Tillich's attitude to autonomy and heteronomy is most clear. Freeing himself from Protestant orthodoxy and thereby finding his own autonomy, Tillich discovered his main theological problem to be "the relation of the absolute, which is implied in the idea of God, to the relativity of human religion."¹³ Tillich opposed religious dogmatism in every form whether it be that of "book, community, institution or doctrine."¹⁴ The Protestant Principle stood as a protest against any historical institution or doctrine which claimed for itself the role of an absolute. When such a claim was made, Tillich designated that claim an instance of the demonic. Such an instance occurs when "something finite and limited is invested with the stature of the infinite."¹⁵ This approach led Tillich to break with Barthian supernaturalism. Tillich feared that Barth's theology represented a narrow heteronomy: it denied man's autonomy in an overemphasis on the Word of God as thrown

¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

at man.¹⁶

Is it possible to find a boundary position between autonomy and heteronomy? Within the structure of society and culture both are needed and to some extent unavoidable. Tillich was aware of the dilemma. He knew that within the Church there will always be a tension between the "sacramental and the prophetic, between the constitutive and the corrective."¹⁷ But out of this tension should come another alternative, a boundary position. This position is what Tillich calls theonomy, "that is an autonomy informed by a religious substance."¹⁸ Thus Tillich believed that Protestantism must exert an autonomous critical role within the necessary heteronomous elements of the institutional Church. In other words it must exert prophetic judgment. By doing so Protestantism would be striving for a theonomous position.

~~A further instance of the struggle between autonomy and heteronomy is seen in the tension between the secular and the Holy. Unlike many contemporary writers of the~~

¹⁶It should be noted that Tillich's rejection of Barthian supranaturalism, a rejection which he thought was dictated by the Protestant Principle, did not imply a complete denial of Barth's stand as a kerygmatic theologian. Tillich was indebted to the Barthian paradox with its profound understanding of the mystery of justification. See On the Boundary, p. 50.

¹⁷On the Boundary, p. 42.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

"no-God-language theology."¹⁹ Tillich sees the secular as a necessary criticism of the demonization of the Holy. While secularization in this sense is liberating in its influence it runs the danger of becoming what Tillich calls a "quasi-religion." He writes: "But then, a profound dialectic appears. . . . The secular which is right in fighting against the domination by the Holy, becomes empty and becomes victim of what I call 'quasi-religions.'²⁰ At this point a theonomy must be found in which the autonomous forces of knowledge, law and morals point to an ultimate meaning of life while not being dominated themselves. Tillich finds this theonomous element in "the structure of the Religion of the Concrete Spirit,"²¹ a concept important in his last lectures in the History of Religions and which is dealt with in the conclusion of this thesis.

The boundary position, then, was a concept that had growing influence on the direction of Tillich's thought, especially in the last two years of his life. During this time, Tillich was deeply involved in a study of the History of Religions and his thought turned to a consideration of

¹⁹Paul Tillich, The Future of Religions (1966), p. 82.

²⁰Ibid., p. 90.

²¹Loc. cit.

Christianity and other world religions. This study of religions represented a new boundary position in Tillich's life. It was a boundary that relates directly to his doctrine of the Spirit in his insistence on the universality of revelatory experiences in the religions.²²

Tillich's Understanding of Symbol and Myth

Tillich was very firm in his belief that a reinterpretation of the symbols of the Christian Faith was absolutely necessary if they were to be retained in a meaningful way for the contemporary generation. His interpretation of the symbolic terms "Spirit" and "God" provide instances of his attempt to reclaim the symbolic power of these religious terms. An outline of his views on symbols, therefore, is helpful to an understanding of the Holy Spirit in Tillich's theology. Tillich, in a lecture to his students "On the Divine Names," made the following comment: "When you today have a popular discussion or a bull session, and someone tells you, 'Now what we say about God is only symbolic,' you can say that this 'only' is very wrong."²³ For some people the mention of the word symbol immediately expresses a half-truth or something less than

²²See the conclusion, p. 104.

²³A History of Christian Thought, ed. Peter H. John (1956), p. 82.

true.²⁴ But for Tillich symbols are indispensable and completely necessary for the expression and understanding of reality. Thus, in the religious realm, statements about God cannot be made without the use of symbols to express the Ultimate Reality, for no other method of expression is at our disposal. Without symbolic expression there is no expression.

A lecture by Tillich entitled "Art and Ultimate Reality" outlines his views on expression and symbol. He cites the use of the term "ultimate reality" as a symbol for God and writes: "The term 'ultimate reality' is 'not' another name for God in the religious sense of the word. But the God of religion would not be God if he were not first of all ultimate reality."²⁵ If God were anything less than ultimate reality, he would be 'a being'; and even though the highest being, he would still be on the level of other beings. He would then be a part of the structure of all that is and he would not be God.

²⁴Tillich has made a very concise statement about the problem of the symbolic knowledge of God in Systematic Theology, II, 9, where he notes that "a religious symbol uses the material of ordinary experience in speaking of God, but in such a way that the ordinary meaning of the material used is both affirmed and denied." Since the symbol (i.e., participation) has some inner relationship to that which it symbolizes, it should not be said that it is only a symbol. To do so would be to confuse symbol with sign.

²⁵Paul Tillich, "Art and Ultimate Reality," Cross Currents, X (1960), No. 1, 2.

It follows for Tillich that every ultimate concern is an expression of God. He puts the matter as follows:

If the idea of God includes ultimate reality, everything that expresses ultimate reality expresses God whether it intends to do so or not. And there is nothing that could be excluded from this possibility because everything that has being is an expression, however preliminary and transitory it may be, of being-itself, of ultimate reality.²⁶

Tillich points out the element of participation in all expression. First of all, when one thing expresses another as in the case of language expressing a thought, there is separation between the thought and its expression in language. But while there is a "gap" between them, there is also a point of participation. Expression involves these two elements in tension; it both reveals and hides. Thus if we say that the sensible world is an expression of ultimate reality, we understand this to mean that all that is in the universe reveals and hides the Divine Reality.

Expression involves a further consideration. There must be someone to receive expression if it is to take place. Man in this world is that creature who can distinguish ultimate reality in the world in which it appears. And he does so in three ways, two of which are indirect, and one of which is direct. The two indirect ways are philosophy (metaphysics) and art, which express encountered

²⁶Loc. cit.

reality in cognitive concepts or in esthetic images.²⁷
 The third, direct, way of expressing ultimate reality is that of religion. In religion, ultimate reality "becomes manifest through ecstatic experiences of a concrete-revelatory character and is expressed in symbols and myths."²⁸
 Art, therefore, expresses reality in images; religion expresses ultimate reality in symbols.

Tillich defines myths as "sets of symbols." They are "symbols of faith combined in stories about divine-human encounters."²⁹ Myths are the most primitive expression of the relation of man and his world to ultimate reality. As far as they express this relation, myths have value. In the moment in which they fail to do so, they die. Further, in expressing the relation of man and ultimate reality, myths are "neither primitive science, nor primitive poetry, although both are present in them."³⁰
 Myths must face a crisis of tension, and the elements of primitive science and poetry in them must start on their own autonomous journey and face the conflict that will arise between the secular and the sacred.

Tillich believes myth to be a valid expression of

²⁷Loc. cit.

²⁸Ibid., p. 3.

²⁹Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (1957), p. 49.

³⁰"Art and Ultimate Reality," p. 3.

reality. It is not a childish or immature attempt to conceal reality in irrational garb, nor a rational deception. As man's knowledge and understanding of himself and his world increase, the value of a myth as an expression of reality may diminish or cease. Tillich rejects the naive view of symbol and myth, which treats symbol and myth as unreal. He insists that one cannot say of a symbol, "it is only a symbol."

Tillich opposed demythologizing with its negative assessment of myth and symbol. "Man's ultimate concern must be expressed symbolically, because symbolic language alone is able to express the ultimate."³¹ He nevertheless felt that demythologizing within certain limits was necessary. He explains his position carefully when he writes of demythologizing:

It must be accepted and supported if it points to the necessity of recognizing a symbol as a symbol and a myth as a myth. It must be attacked and rejected if it means the removal of symbols and myths altogether . . . because symbol and myth are forms of the human consciousness which are always present. One can replace one myth by another, but one cannot remove the myth from man's spiritual life. For the myth is the combination of symbols of our ultimate concern.³²

Tillich is conservative in his understanding of the meaning and importance of symbol and myth in his

³¹Dynamics of Faith, p. 41.

³²Ibid., p. 50.

approach to demythologizing, and he carries his views through to a radical rejection of any form of literalism. Christianity must recognize and accept a "broken myth," by which Tillich means a "myth understood as myth, but not removed or replaced."³³ To do otherwise and accept the unbroken myth would, in Tillich's view, be a denial of the first commandment: it would be idolatry.³⁴ It would neglect the function of symbol to point beyond itself to something else. Literalism, as regarded by Tillich, denies ultimacy to the ultimate and confuses the finite with the infinite. God, even though the highest being, becomes part of the structure of the conditional. "Faith, if it takes its symbols literally, becomes idolatrous! It calls something ultimate which is less than ultimate. Faith, conscious of the symbolic character of its symbols, gives God the honor which is due Him."³⁵

Tillich believed that the theologian's task was to interpret the religious symbols meaningfully to his own generation. He was convinced that the original religious terminology of Scripture and Liturgy could not be supplanted.

³³Loc. cit.

³⁴Ibid., p. 51. Tillich expresses acceptance of unbroken myth as the idolatrous character of literalism where the symbols and myths are understood in their immediate meaning.

³⁵Ibid., p. 52.

Archetypal words such as "God" might indeed have lost much of their original symbolic power. But this loss of symbolic power should not necessitate their rejection. Tillich preferred to retain the terminology of scripture and liturgy as much as possible and to redefine this terminology in its original meaning and thus avoid distortion. Here again Tillich attempted to find a solution on the boundary position, and he writes: "One must stand between the archaic and the contemporary terminologies to recapture, on the boundary, the original archetypal language."³⁶ Tillich's references in his book The Courage to Be (1952) to the God above the God of theism is an instance of his attempt to reinterpret something of the symbolic power of the archetypal word "God" for contemporary society. His point of reference in this reinterpretation is a sensitivity to the honest and radical doubt of many sincere people. He writes:

The source of this affirmation of meaning within meaninglessness, of certitude within doubt, is not the God of traditional theism but the "God above God," the power of being, which works through those who have no name for it, not even the name God.³⁷

Tillich was firm in his conviction that symbols should not be deprived of their power to preserve the mystery of what

³⁶On the Boundary, p. 65.

³⁷Systematic Theology, II, 12.

they symbolize. Behind this conviction was his sense of the mystery of life and of God as the ground of all being. Thus he asserted the appearance of genuine mystery "when reason is driven beyond itself to its 'ground and abyss,' to that which 'precedes' reason, to the fact that 'being is and nonbeing is not' (Parmenides), to the original fact (Ur-Tatsache) that there is something and not nothing."³⁸ It was impossible for Tillich to express this mystery without myth and symbol. Tillich's doctrine of the Spirit will provide a reinterpretation of the symbol Holy Spirit in terms which he anticipates will restore to this symbol something of its original symbolic power.

³⁸Systematic Theology, I, 110.

I

THE DIVINE SPIRIT

The Divine Spirit and Human Spirit

The Divine Spirit is the religious symbol for the presence of God within the finite world. "The Divine Spirit is 'God present.'"¹ As with all religious symbols which appropriate the material of ordinary experience to express that which is beyond man, the symbol Spirit appropriates God to man through the dimension of spirit in man. The infinite must express itself through the finite to the finite.

Tillich speaks of God as the "Divine Presence" and as the "Spiritual Presence." He defines presence as "having something present to one's self over against one's self."² There is a note of tension intended in the term similar to that found in the tension between participation and separation in expression. The God who reveals Himself to us is the God who hides Himself. The word "presence" also denotes the place where a sovereign or a group of

¹Systematic Theology, III, 107.

²Systematic Theology, I, 194.

high dignitaries is: it is the appropriation of a spatial metaphor to express the relation of the infinite to the finite, the divine ground of being to the creaturely life of man. Tillich, however, is careful to guard against a misinterpretation of the word "presence" and in using this spatial metaphor he does so against the background of his insistence that the symbol "God" does not refer to "a being" but to "being itself."³ One of the clearest statements Tillich makes in defining the word "Spirit" is the following:

We should become fully aware of the Spiritual Presence, around us and in us, even though we realize how limited our experience of "God present to our spirit" may be. For this is what Divine Spirit means: God present to our spirit. Spirit is not a mysterious substance; it is not a part of God. It is God himself; but not God as the creative Ground of all things and not God directing history and manifesting Himself in its central event, but God present in communities and personalities, grasping them, inspiring them, and transforming them.⁴

The Divine Spirit, therefore, is the symbol of "God with us." It is the most expressive symbol of God as the living God.

Tillich's doctrine of the Spirit is correlated directly to the dimension of spirit in man. He is quite categorical

³See Systematic Theology, I, 238-239, for a detailed treatment of symbols and their relationship to their infinite object.

⁴Paul Tillich, The Eternal Now (1956), p. 84.

when he insists on the recovery of an understanding of spirit as a dimension of man's life. He writes: "Without knowing what spirit is, one cannot know what Spirit is."⁵ The material of ordinary experience which is appropriated by the symbol Spirit is, therefore, the dimension of spirit in man. Tillich, in keeping with his intention to reinterpret the symbols of the Christian faith, attempts to recover the term "spirit" as designating the particularly human dimension of life. He thinks that much of the neglect which surrounds the symbol "Holy Spirit" is caused by the gradual disappearance of the word "spirit" from the doctrine of man.⁶ This tendency to devalue "spirit" as the particularly human dimension of life is found wherever an emphasis is placed on the separation of body and spirit. It is necessary, therefore, to follow Tillich's definition of spirit in order to understand his insistence on the correlation of human spirit and divine Spirit.

Tillich does the usual tracing of "spirit" to words meaning breath -- breath the power of life. He writes that, "as the power of life, spirit is not identical with the inorganic substratum which is animated by it; rather,

⁵ Systematic Theology, III, 22. Further reference is made in Systematic Theology, I, 249, where Tillich writes: "But it is impossible to understand the meaning of Spirit unless the meaning of spirit is understood, for Spirit is the symbolic application of spirit to the divine life."

⁶ Systematic Theology, III, 22.

spirit is the power of animation itself and not a part added to the organic system."⁷ The word "spirit" replaces, in Tillich's estimation, the words "mind" and "intellect." These words had been used in the place of the word "spirit" when they came under the influence of English empiricism. Furthermore, spirit becomes a partial substitute for the word "soul" in Tillich's doctrine of man.⁸ Under the influence of modern psychology, the doctrine of the soul, considered as an immortal substance, was replaced by the psychology of personality. Tillich believes that the word "soul," while used in biblical and liturgical language, has lost its significance in the doctrine of man. "If spirit is defined as the unity of power and meaning, it can become a partial substitute for the lost concept of soul, although it transcends it in range, in structure, and especially, in dynamics."⁹

Tillich's stress on the importance of spirit as the unity of power and meaning, and his rejection of any notion of spirit as a part of life alongside other parts, can be traced to his doctrine of the "Multidimensional Unity of Life." This theory may be expressed in the following way: Tillich defines life as "the actuality of being, or, more

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

⁸Ibid., p. 22.

⁹Ibid., p. 24. See also Systematic Theology, I, 256.

exactly, . . . [as] the process in which potential being becomes actual being."¹⁰ As such, life is a unity in which all things whether organic or inorganic share in the mixture of essence and existence. Essence may be defined "as that which makes a thing what it is."¹¹ Existence may be defined as that which "'stands out' of mere potentiality" and also as "the 'fallen world.'"¹² Tillich's understanding of life was, therefore, ontological -- that is, "life as the 'actuality of being'" and set within a framework of polarities.¹³ There are the polarities of essence and existence, individualization and participation, freedom and destiny, potentiality and actuality. Tillich in adopting an ontological understanding of life rejected the "process theory" of life with its emphasis on being as static self-identity and "becoming" as the ultimate principle. Tillich writes:

If being means static self-identity, becoming must be the ultimate principle. But if being means the power that conquers nonbeing in every life process, then even the process-philosopher must acknowledge that being, namely, the negation of non-being, precedes in ontological dignity the polarity of

¹⁰Systematic Theology, I, 242.

¹¹Ibid., p. 203.

¹²Loc. cit. The above definitions of existence are partial definitions of existence for the sake of brevity. They are expanded on p. 203.

¹³Systematic Theology, III, 11.

the static and the dynamic.¹⁴

Life for Tillich must account for the genesis of both organic and inorganic realms. Tillich believed that the ontological concept of life as a unity in which all things shared in the mixture of essence and existence met this demand.

Tillich was thus opposed to the traditional hierarchical principle of levels or grades of beings. According to the latter, "reality is seen as a pyramid of levels following each other in vertical direction according to their power of being and their grade of value."¹⁵ The difficulty presented by the metaphor "level" is summed up by Tillich:

The term "level" is a metaphor which emphasizes the equality of all objects belonging to a particular level. They are "levelled," that is, brought to a common plane and kept on it. There is no organic movement from one to the other; the higher is not implicit in the lower, and the lower is not implicit in the higher. The relation of the levels is that of interference, either by control or by revolt.¹⁶

One example which Tillich cites to show the dangers inherent in the metaphor "level" is the relationship between culture and religion, in which the latter claims primacy over the former. Religion asserts itself as the higher

¹⁴Philosophical Interrogations (1964), p. 377.

¹⁵Systematic Theology, III, 13.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

level and exerts control over such cultural areas as art and science. The autonomous functions of culture are suppressed in the name of religion. To free itself from this stricture, culture itself becomes revolutionary and in turn suppresses religion under the norms of autonomous reason.¹⁷ As an alternative to the metaphor "level" Tillich chose the metaphor "dimension" with the correlative concepts of "realm" and "grade."

The significant change from "levels" which Tillich saw in the use of the metaphor "dimension" was the latter's designation of the realms of being without an accompanying implication of interference. The term dimension expressed both distinction and unity. Thus the multidimensional unity of life "represents an encounter with reality in which the unity of life is seen above its conflicts."¹⁸ The conflicts do not come from a hierarchy of levels. They come as "consequences of the ambiguity of all life processes and are therefore conquerable without the destruction of one level by another."¹⁹ Life is a unity of all its dimensions -- the inorganic, the organic, and the spiritual. And while certain dimensions may be predomi-

¹⁷Ibid., p. 14. This struggle between culture and religion is another instance of the struggle between heteronomy and autonomy and the need for a theonomous approach.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁹Loc. cit.

nant²⁰ each must interact without destruction of the other.

Tillich emphasized the importance which he felt theology should attach to the dimension of the inorganic without which all other realms of being would dissolve. The theological problem of evolution is for Tillich a reflection of traditional religion's failure to grasp the significance of the inorganic with traditional religion's claim "that the 'first cell' can be explained only in terms of a special divine interference."²¹ Biology rightly rejected the idea of a supernatural causality. The answer, in keeping with the multidimensional unity of life, is formulated by Tillich in the sense that "the dimension of the organic is essentially present in the inorganic; its actual appearance is dependent on conditions the description of which is the task of biology and biochemistry."²² So too in regard to the problem of inner awareness in the transition from the dimension of the vegetative to the animal, Tillich proposes a solution on the basis of the potential and the actual. "Potentially, self-awareness is present in every dimension; actually, it can only appear

²⁰Tillich uses the word "realm" to designate the predominance of one dimension over another and to preserve a gradation of value among the different dimensions based on degrees of power of being.

²¹Systematic Theology, III, 20.

²²Loc. cit.

under the dimension of animal being."²³ It is within this dimension of "inner awareness or the psychological realm" that the third dimension of the "spirit" emerges. The dimension of the spirit is the realm of the personal-communal and it is to be found under present experience only in man. It is this dimension which provides Tillich with the symbolic material which can be appropriated to express the Divine Spirit.

Tillich, in defining the human spirit as a dimension of life and as the unity of power and meaning, set the form for his description of the Divine Spirit. The dimension of spirit constitutes for man the area of his cognitive and moral acts through which the personal centre relates itself to the world and functions of the world. Tillich, in defining spirit as "the unity of power and meaning," combines the Hebrew idea of spirit as the animating power of life (the ruach of life) with the Western philosophical idea of spirit as "mind" or "intellect." However, while "spirit" is the power of animation within the structure of reason it is more than reason. As the unity of power and meaning it is the source of all man's functions. Spirit, therefore, becomes an inclusive symbol for the expression of God as the living God. "God as

²³Loc. cit.

Spirit is the ultimate unity of both power and meaning."²⁴ Power is the principle of being resisting nonbeing in the Godhead: "that which makes God God."²⁵ Meaning is the principle which unites structure and creativity in the Godhead and is expressed through the logos, which may be called the "principle of God's self-objectification."²⁶ Spirit is the third principle which unites the other two principles and as such is the actualizing of God as the living God. "It is the Spirit in whom God 'goes out from' himself, the Spirit proceeds from the divine ground. He gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground and 'outspoken' in the divine logos."²⁷ Spirit is the symbol in which God is appropriated to man through spirit as the dimension of man.

The Dimension of Spirit and the Ambiguities of Life

Within the self-world relationship which constitutes the dimension of spirit in man and in which the functions of life arise, man is confronted with the ambiguities

²⁴Systematic Theology, I, 250.

²⁵Loc. cit.

²⁶Ibid., p. 251.

²⁷Loc. cit. The three principles enumerated are the three trinitarian principles which form, for Tillich, the preparation for a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity. The relation of the Spirit to the Trinitarian doctrine will be discussed in Chapter II.

of life. It is in the dimension of spirit, therefore, that the quest for unambiguous life arises, and it is in the dimension of the spirit that the answer is given. The answer that is given to the human spirit is the Divine Spirit. Tillich claims that life in all of its dimensions is ambiguous because it is a mixture of essential and existential elements. He writes that "life is neither essential nor existential but ambiguous."²⁸

The method of correlation is applied by Tillich to man's awareness of the ambiguity of life and his quest for unambiguous life. Man discovers ambiguity in the three main functions of the dimension of spirit -- that is, in religion, culture and morality; he realizes that he is finite and always liable to error. This realization of his finiteness stems from what Tillich calls "the ontological question," for "man is the being who is able to ask questions."²⁹ The ontological question arises out of man's finitude within a world of finitude. It is expressed by Tillich in this way:

The threat of nonbeing, grasping the mind, produces the "ontological shock" in which the negative side of the mystery of being -- its abysmal element -- is experienced. . . . This experience of ontological shock is expressed in the cognitive function by the basic philosophical question, the

²⁸Systematic Theology, III, 32.

²⁹Paul Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (1955), p. 11.

question of being and nonbeing.³⁰

Man's ambiguity is grounded in his finiteness. In the face of this ambiguity he asks how he can achieve unambiguous life. He attempts to transcend the estrangement of his existence and reunite with his own essential being and with God. But man is unable to achieve such unambiguous life, because all his efforts are subject to finitude and to the mixture of essence and existence. He must ask, therefore, for that which can bring about transcendent unity. This is the quest for the Divine Spirit.

We have said that for Tillich all of life is ambiguous. Potentially then, all life poses the question of unambiguous life, but only in man does the quest become conscious.³¹ It is within the religious function of the spirit that man begins his search for unambiguous life and it is here that he receives an answer to his quest. Religion is defined by Tillich as "the self-transcendence of life in the realm of the spirit." But religion itself is never unambiguous. The answer, therefore, cannot be completely identified with religion. The answer must always to some extent transcend the religious symbol in which it is expressed. Tillich outlines three religious symbols for unambiguous life. These are the Spirit of God, the Kingdom

³⁰Systematic Theology, I, 113.

³¹Systematic Theology, III, 107.

of God and Eternal Life. The Kingdom of God is a social symbol and as such expresses the historical dimension of man's life. The symbol of Eternal Life expresses the fulfillment of finite life. The symbol of the Spirit of God is an expression of the dimension of spirit. The three symbols, though using different symbolic material, are nevertheless mutually inclusive under the dimension of spirit. This is seen in the relationship between the dimension of history and that of the Spirit. As Tillich explains: "Although the historical dimension is present in all realms of life, it comes into its own only in human history. . . . There is no history proper where there is no spirit."³² Tillich thus distinguishes between the "historical dimension" which pertains to all life processes, and "history proper" which belongs to man alone. Only after understanding man as the bearer of spirit can we adequately grasp the significance of the historical dimension of life as theologically important in the symbol of the Kingdom of God. And only after understanding the ambiguities of life pertaining to man as the bearer of spirit can we appreciate fully the symbols Kingdom of God and Eternal Life. These symbols are revelation's answer within the historical dimension to man's search for unambiguous life.

Tillich has made reference to the ambiguity of

³²Ibid., p. 297.

religion itself. This reference is helpful in determining the relationship between Church and Culture, and between the Sacred and the Secular. The Church cannot, in Tillich's view, stand in the position of "lording it over" the other dimensions of man's life. Religion, because of its ambiguity, cannot claim such absolute authority. A specific example of the ambiguity of religion was given in the introductory section: the reference to the demonization of the sacred. One of the most specific of Tillich's writings on the subject of religion as a dimension in man's spiritual life is the book Theology of Culture (1959). Tillich rejects the view which claims that religion is a special function of the human spirit. Religion must not be considered a special aspect of man's spiritual life alongside other functions. On the other hand it is possible that religion may be accepted by the other functions of morality and culture as a "poor relation,"³³ and made subservient to them. For Tillich, religion is neither a special function of the human spirit nor one which must find its home in one of the other functions, but is the depth of them all. Religion is the quality of ultimate concern found in all functions of the spirit.³⁴ Therefore, in the moral sphere, to reject religion means to reject the ultimate seriousness

³³Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (1959), p. 6.

³⁴Systematic Theology, III, 102.

of the moral demand. The same is true for all functions of the human spirit. Tillich puts his point precisely in the following words:

You cannot reject religion with ultimate seriousness, because ultimate seriousness, or the state of being ultimately concerned, is itself religion. Religion is the substance, the ground, and the depth of man's spiritual life. This is the religious aspect of the human spirit.³⁵

Tillich remarks that religion takes on the character of a "double ambiguity."³⁶ By this, he means that religion becomes susceptible to profanization on the one hand and demonization on the other hand. The profanization of religion arises in the attempt to make religion a special function of life apart from the functions of morality and culture. Religion is defined by Tillich as the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit and as the depth of all life's functions. The particularization of religion in spite of its essential self-transcendent nature is the expression of the first form of its ambiguity through profanization. The result of this profanization is the separation of morality and culture from religion. The self-transcendent character of both morality and culture is denied. The moral imperative becomes conditioned to the demands of the situation, and

³⁵Theology of Culture, p. 8.

³⁶Paul Tillich, Ultimate Concern (1965), p. 23.

culture loses its ultimate meaning. "With the loss of its religious substance, culture is left with an increasingly empty form. Meaning cannot live without the inexhaustible source of meaning to which religion points."³⁷

Religion shows its second ambiguity in the ambiguity of the divine and the demonic. Unlike profanization which resists self-transcendence, the demonic distorts it by claiming infinity for the finite and by confusing the bearer of holiness with Holiness itself. It is precisely because religion is the point at which man's quest for unambiguous life is answered that its distortion of the divine with the demonic is all the more serious. No aspect of religion can escape this ambiguity. Tillich finds such ambiguity even in the interpretation of the central event of the Christian Faith, that is, the Cross of Christ. Christianity claims that in the Cross of Christ the final victory in the struggle over the ambiguities of life has taken place. But as Tillich points out, "that which is rightly said about the Cross of Christ is wrongly transferred to the life of the church, whose ambiguities are denied."³⁸ Tillich expresses this as follows:

This is the reason why theologians have protested against applying the term "religion" to Christianity. They have contrasted religion with

³⁷Systematic Theology, III, 97.

³⁸Ibid., p. 104.

revelation and have described religion as man's attempt to glorify himself. This is, indeed, a correct description of demonized religion, but it ignores the fact that every religion is based on revelation and that every revelation expresses itself in a religion. In so far as religion is based on revelation it is unambiguous; in so far as it receives revelation it is ambiguous.³⁹

The ambiguity of religion is also discussed by Tillich in terms of "ecstasy." Tillich metaphorically expresses the relation between the Divine Spirit and the human spirit when he states "that the divine Spirit dwells and works in the human spirit."⁴⁰ Ecstasy is for Tillich the state of being unconditionally grasped by the Divine Spirit. Whenever the Divine Spirit comes to bear upon the human spirit it forces the human spirit beyond itself into self-transcendence. Yet in driving man into self-transcendence, the ecstatic experience of the Spiritual Presence does not destroy the essential rational structure of the human spirit or the centredness of the integrated self. If this happened we would have demonic possession. This safeguarding of the rational structure becomes Tillich's test for judging the phenomena of "ecstatic happenings." Such phenomena occur in instances of "speaking in tongues" and the physical transference of objects from one place to another. Tillich does not mean to deprive the word

³⁹Loc. cit.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 111.

"ecstasy" of the power to convey the miraculous character of the manifestations of the Spiritual Presence. But Tillich does maintain (by definition) that although "ecstasy . . . is the state of mind in which reason . . . [goes] beyond itself, that is, beyond its subject-object structure,"⁴¹ nevertheless, in this self-transcendent experience, reason cannot deny itself. Ecstasy, therefore, is the experience in which the mind is grasped by the mystery of the divine ground of being. But there must always be a subjective and an objective side to the ecstatic experience. The danger of ecstatic experiences in some religious groups is that they are purely subjective, with the result that "overexcitement is confused with the Divine Spirit."⁴² Tillich also stresses that man in his self-transcendence can reach for unambiguous life but he cannot create it. This is always the creation of the divine Spirit in its impact on man's spirit. Man cannot compel the divine Spirit to enter the human spirit. If man were able to compel the divine Spirit then man would have a demonized form of the human spirit and not the divine Spirit. Tillich strives to maintain both the immanence and

⁴¹Systematic Theology, I, 112.

⁴²See Systematic Theology, III, 116-117. Tillich refers to Paul's doctrine of the Spirit as found in the First Letter to the Corinthians. He finds that Paul emphasizes classically the unity of ecstasy and structure in his theology of the Spirit.

the transcendence of God who is always God "for and against us."

Tillich raises the further problem of what he calls the doctrine of "transitory dualism." This doctrine stems from the use of the metaphor "dimension" in preference to the metaphor "level."⁴³ The term "transitory dualism" points out for Tillich the difficulty of adequately expressing the relation of the infinite to the finite. While the multidimensional unity of life precluded for Tillich a dualistic or supernaturalistic doctrine of man in relation to God, he nevertheless saw the danger of a criticism along these lines. He expected that the question would be raised as to whether he had created a new dualism between man's spirit and God's Spirit. Tillich answers this criticism by defining the metaphor "dimension" in terms of the potential and actual relationship between the finite and the infinite.

It is only in the self-transcendence of life that the "memory" of the essential unity with the infinite is preserved. The dualistic element implied in such a terminology is, so to speak, preliminary and transitory; it simply serves to distinguish the actual from the potential and the existential from the essential. Thus it is neither a dualism of levels nor supernaturalistic.⁴⁴

Tillich notes the need to distinguish carefully

⁴³Tillich's preference for the metaphor "dimension" in place of the metaphor "level" was discussed earlier in the chapter, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁴Systematic Theology, III, 114.

between the use of "dimension" as a metaphor and as a symbol. When used as a metaphor it refers to the dimensions of life within the scope of the multidimensional unity of life. When used in a phrase like "dimension of the ultimate" it is a symbolic expression for the divine Spirit. The metaphorical use of "dimension" in place of the metaphor "level" guards against taking the divine Spirit as a new dimension within the series of life's dimensions. The divine Spirit is the ultimate and unconditional which breaks upon man's spirit and drives it into self-transcendence. The divine Spirit is "a meaning-bearing power which grasps the human spirit in an ecstatic experience."⁴⁵ But the human spirit remains human spirit. Tillich refers to the problem of the relation of human spirit and divine Spirit when he writes that "man's existential situation requires the method of correlation and prohibits the dualism of levels. In the human spirit's essential relation to the divine Spirit, there is no correlation, but rather, mutual immanence."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 115.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 114. Tillich also points out on p. 113 that any answer to the problem of the contrast between human spirit and divine Spirit must recognize that the relation of finite and infinite is "incommensurable and cannot adequately be expressed by the same metaphor which expresses the relations between finite realms." Yet one can only use "finite material and the language of symbols."

II

THE DIVINE SPIRIT AND NEW BEING

Spirit and New Being

One of the difficulties confronting any theology of the Holy Spirit is that of expressing the relation between the Spirit and Christ. Tillich has attempted to express this relation of the Spirit and Christ under the theme of Spirit and New Being.

The most direct statement that can be made regarding the relation of the Spirit to New Being is this: the Divine Spirit creates New Being. Before this statement can be elaborated we must outline what Tillich means by New Being. New Being is the divine power, breaking into finite existence and overcoming the split between essence and existence.¹ It is essential being conquering the estrangements of man's life and making possible a restitution of man's essential life. Tillich emphasizes the universality of the quest for New Being and finds this quest in all religions.² He distinguishes two main lines of approach in

¹Systematic Theology, III, pp. 138-139.

²Systematic Theology, II, p. 86.

the quest for New Being: that which is above history and that which is the aim of history. The trans-historical quest for New Being was expressed in the transmutation of the gods, in divine manifestations and oracles and in spiritual elevations. These divine manifestations can be received by individuals but not by groups. In this trans-historical quest, New Being becomes the assertion of the Ground of Being over all other beings. In the West the quest for New Being was tied to the historical process. This was true for Persian beliefs, for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Tillich expresses this historical process in terms of the horizontal as opposed to the trans-historical or "vertical" expectation. Tillich also states that the search for New Being in the horizontal plane was undertaken within the affirmation of the essential goodness of the whole of reality in spite of its existential estrangement.³ The expectation of New Being was, therefore, the expectation of the transformation of the whole of reality. The bearers of this New Being could be families, groups, or nations as well as individuals. According to Tillich, the actualization of New Being could be a direct or a slow process. It could be "now" or "not yet." It can be said that Christianity emphasizes the New Being in terms of both the "now" and the "not yet," while Judaism emphasizes the

³Ibid., p. 87.

latter.⁴ Christianity asserts the "now" in terms of the central event of Jesus as the Christ as well as the "not yet" in Christian eschatological expectations such as the second coming of the Christ. Judaism rejects this claim with the assertion that the New Being has "not yet" appeared. Christianity further emphasizes both the historical-horizontal expectation and the trans-historical, vertical expectation. The Christ event of Jesus of Nazareth as a life lived within the historical process is the expression of New Being on the horizontal plane. The Johannine emphasis on the logos doctrine is a vertical expression of the trans-historical and cosmic expectation of New Being as found in Hellenism. Paul's Christ mysticism in Philippians is a further expression of the vertical direction of Christian belief in the New Being. It is Tillich's view that the universality of Christianity is found in the uniting of these two directions: the horizontal and vertical expectations of New Being. Tillich writes:

The universal quest for the New Being is a consequence of universal revelation. If it claims universality, Christianity implicitly maintains that the different forms in which the quest for the New Being has been made are fulfilled in Jesus as the Christ. Christianity must show -- and has always tried to show -- that the historical type of the expectation of the New Being embraces itself and the non-historical type.

⁴Ibid., p. 88.

while the non-historical is unable to embrace the historical type.⁵

In the last chapter we noted that an analysis of life establishes for man the fact of the ambiguity of all life. This awareness then poses for man the question of unambiguous life and how he is to achieve it. It was in the description of spirit as a dimension of life that the answer was to be found. That answer was the divine Spirit breaking in upon man's spirit and driving man into successful self-transcendence. The divine Spirit creates New Being by overcoming man's estrangement. Tillich gives a concise statement of this by saying "the Spiritual Presence, elevating man through faith and love to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life, creates the New Being above the gap between essence and existence and consequently above the ambiguities of life."⁶ For Tillich the Divine Spirit is present in all history in revelatory experiences, which transform and exert a saving influence within man's life. Tillich states the meaning of the Divine Spirit in terms that give his theology a positive stance against the "no-God" theology or what is now termed the "God is Dead" theology. Although Tillich agrees that we can experience God as "the absent" God, he qualifies this by saying:

⁵Ibid., p. 89.

⁶Systematic Theology, III, 138-139.

"Mankind is never left alone."⁷ The Divine Presence is continually breaking in upon man's spirit and at some moments very dramatically. These great, dramatic moments of the Divine Presence's manifesting itself to the human spirit are called the historical kairoi. However, although man is "never alone," his participation in the New Being remains fragmentary. In this sense, man in this life never escapes the ambiguity of life.

Spirit Christology

The term "Spirit Christology" is used by Tillich to refer to the Divine Presence in Jesus as the Christ. The "event" of Jesus of Nazareth becomes Christianity's claim to the universal New Being and the title "Christ" points to Jesus as the bearer of the New Being. In Tillich's view this is the only genuine paradox of the Christian message: that Jesus is the Christ. He defines paradox as that which goes against man's usual interpretation of his own existence. The appearance of New Being in Jesus as the Christ becomes a judgment on man's self-reliance and self-salvation. It becomes an offense. "The appearance of the New Being under the conditions of existence, yet judging and

⁷Ibid., p. 140. See also The Eternal Now, pp. 87-88, for Tillich's interpretation of "God as absent." Any reading of "God is Dead" theology (such as that of Altizer), should be done with some understanding of what Tillich means by the Spirit who hides God from us.

conquering them, is the paradox of the Christian message."⁸ This paradox may be expressed by saying that in a distinct personal life (Jesus of Nazareth), New Being or essential manhood has been lived in this world under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them. Tillich's care to explain "Christ" as the title for the Messiah is related to his emphasis on the paradox of New Being appearing in the personal life of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus as the Christ was the bearer of the New Being or the new reality. He was the Mediator and Saviour by representing God to man; i.e., by making the ultimate concrete. Mediation, however, meant more than bridging the infinite and the finite. It also meant reunion. This is the role of Jesus as Saviour. He is the bearer of the New Being in which man's sense of estrangement is overcome. Man is reconciled with himself, with his neighbour and with God, though fragmentarily. Jesus as the Christ shows man what he ought to be and what he essentially is.

It is necessary at this point to make some presentation of Tillich's Christology. Tillich calls his Christological theory a "dynamic relational" theory in preference to the two-nature theory. His Christological approach is based on a point which was made earlier, that is, his insistence that we must not confuse the Infinite with the

⁸Systematic Theology, II, 92.

finite. Incarnation for Tillich does not mean that God became man in any sense that would imply a "mythical metamorphosis." It means rather the paradox of God participating in historical existence. The meaning of Incarnation (the logos became flesh) is stated by Tillich when he writes: "This is not a myth of transmutation but the assertion that God is manifest in a personal life-process as a saving participant in the human predicament."⁹ Jesus the Christ is the One Who brings New Being, freeing men from the estrangement and self-destructive consequences of old being. Christianity, according to Tillich, was not born in Bethlehem but at Caesarea Philippi when one of Jesus' disciples exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ." The uniqueness of Jesus the Christ as the bearer of New Being has two sides. There is the historical event of the life of the man Jesus of Nazareth and there is the reception of this event by those who accept Jesus as the Christ. The Messiah was to be the bearer of a new order of reality, a new son, but instead he is defeated by the powers of the old son. The transformation of the eschatological expectations of Jesus as the Messiah was thrust upon the disciples by the death of Jesus. Nature and history remained basically unchanged. What was the meaning of the new son which Jesus brought and yet which left the old son with power? The import of this

⁹Ibid., p. 95.

problem will be discussed more fully in Chapter III under the heading "The Kingdom of God As the End of History." What can be said here is that the New Being appeared in the event of the personal life of Jesus of Nazareth. Since potentialities of being are actualized completely in personal life, the appearance of New Being had to be in a personal life if mankind was to be restored to essential being. Existence and its estrangement through finite freedom could only be conquered by one who lived under estrangement but who conquered it by his essential relation to the Ground of Being, to God. The tacit implication of the doctrines of the pre-existence and post-existence of Jesus as the Christ is for Tillich the symbolic expression of Jesus as the manifestation of the New Being and New Reality for the whole of creation. In bringing New Being to man Jesus implicitly brings it to all realms of life and cosmos.

Jesus as the Christ is the creation of the Divine Spirit. This is the meaning of the symbol of the Virgin Birth for Tillich. "It expresses the conviction that the divine Spirit who has made the man Jesus of Nazareth into the Messiah has already created him as his vessel, so that the saving appearance of the New Being is independent of historical contingencies and dependent on God alone."¹⁰

¹⁰Ibid., p. 160. The Virgin Birth is, for Tillich, a mythological story which has the symbolic value of asserting that the bearer of New Being was historically

We pointed out that the event of Jesus as the Christ as the bearer of the New Being has a factual, historical side in the event of Jesus of Nazareth and also a receptive side in those who call Jesus the Christ. Paul referred to those who are "in Christ" as "new creatures" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is our participation in new being which makes us new creatures. It is participation in a form of life that overcomes the cleavage between essence and existence -- a cleavage which is the source of man's estrangement. Tillich writes that "Inasmuch as Jesus as the Christ is a creation of the divine Spirit, according to the Synoptic theology, so is he who participates in the Christ made into a new creature by the Spirit."¹¹ The New Being which comes to all those who receive the Christ is the gift and the creation of the Spirit in power and in meaning. It is in Jesus the Christ that "the Spirit and the Life [are] manifest without limits."¹² The import behind the words "to experience the New Being in Jesus as the Christ" is the experience of the power which in Jesus has conquered existential estrangement in himself and in all who partici-

determined before his birth. Beyond this symbolic content Tillich finds the Virgin Birth a denial of Jesus' full participation in life through the rejection of a human father in his procreation.

¹¹Ibid., p. 119.

¹²The Eternal Now, p. 91.

pate in him. Tillich writes:

The word "being" points to the fact that this power is not a matter of someone's good will but that it is a gift which precedes or determines the character of every act of the will. . . . one can say that the concept of the New Being re-establishes the meaning of grace.¹³

Tillich is of the opinion that the Spirit-Christology of the Synoptic Gospels guarded against the view that it was the spirit of the man Jesus which made him the Christ. The Synoptics speak of the Spirit descending upon Jesus at his baptism and of the Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness. It is the human spirit of Jesus which was "possessed" by the divine Spirit. This possession of his spirit by the divine Spirit made him the bearer of the New Being. Tillich rejects what he calls a "Jesus theology" which he feels would make the man Jesus an object of Christian faith. Otherwise, Tillich maintains, we are departing from Paul's Spirit-Christology with its expression of the relation of the Spirit and Christ in the words "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Tillich interprets this Pauline phrase to mean that "we do not 'know' him according to his historical existence (flesh) but only as the Spirit who is alive and present."¹⁴

Tillich also makes brief reference to the consider-

¹³Systematic Theology, II, 125.

¹⁴Systematic Theology, III, 148.

ation of faith as one of the manifestations of the Spiritual Presence in the life of Jesus as the Christ. He asserts that the faith of Jesus must be stated in terms of the Spiritual Presence and not in the usual sense which implies an "in spite of."¹⁵ Faith for Jesus is the state of being unambiguously grasped by the divine Spirit, though in a fragmentary way. He knew what it was to struggle and despair. Jesus always remains the Christ, the one who is grasped completely and without distortion by the divine Spirit (I and the Father are one).

Tillich in claiming uniqueness for the coming of New Being in Jesus as the Christ does not limit the appearance of New Being to this historical moment alone. "The event 'Jesus as the Christ' is unique but not isolated."¹⁶ Tillich asserts that the New Being has been creatively present in all periods of history before and after the Christ event and that "the Spiritual Presence in history is essentially the same as the Spiritual Presence in Jesus as the Christ."¹⁷ It is the Spirit who reveals Jesus as the Christ after his death. Tillich in his theory of the

¹⁵Ibid., p. 145. Tillich expresses the sense of "in spite of" in terms of the doctrine of "justification through faith by grace." The latter designates the acceptance as just of one who is unjust.

¹⁶Systematic Theology, III, 147.

¹⁷Loc. cit.

Resurrection says of the resurrected Christ: "He 'is the Spirit' and we 'know him now' only because he is the Spirit."¹⁸ As Tillich points out: "In the divine economy, the Spirit follows the Son, but in essence, the Son is the Spirit."¹⁹ The theological problem encountered here contributed to the final split between the Roman and Eastern churches. The Eastern Church tended to maintain that the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone. The Western Church kept the Spirit in a Christocentric frame of reference with its filioque clause. It insisted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The problem can be expressed by asking the following question: If the Holy Spirit is seen to be exclusively the Spirit of Christ²⁰ how then do we express the activity of the Spirit before Christ? Tillich's statements on the relation of the Spirit to the Son leave his position somewhat unclear. It would seem that he attempts to preserve the Eastern tradition of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone while maintaining at all times a Christocentric frame of reference by saying that "every new manifestation of the Spiritual

¹⁸Systematic Theology, II, 157.

¹⁹Systematic Theology, III, 148.

²⁰See Neill Q. Hamilton, The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul (1957), the chapter on "The Holy Spirit and the Lord," for a strong Christocentric approach to the Spirit.

Presence stands under the criterion of his manifestation in Jesus as the Christ."²¹ Tillich stands on a theological boundary that attempts to touch both sides of Christological doctrine. The Spirit makes the man Jesus to be the Christ, the New Being. As such Jesus the Christ stands for what Tillich calls "the double test of finality." Jesus as the Christ maintained continuous unity with the ground of being and he continuously sacrificed himself as Jesus to himself as the Christ.²² Tillich puts the problem of the "two natures" in Jesus in the following frame of reference: The doctrine of the two-natures is the attempt to preserve both the Jesus-character of the Christ (his humanity) and the Christ-character of Jesus (his divinity). Tillich's judgement on the two great councils of the Early Church -- Nicaea and Chalcedon -- is clear. The work of both councils preserved the "Jesus" and the "Christ" character of him who is the bearer of the New Being -- Jesus the Christ.

The Spirit and Community

Tillich prefers to speak of Spiritual Community

²¹Systematic Theology, III, 148.

²²Theology of Culture, pp. 211-213. Tillich here expresses in less technical terms his view on the need for a modern Christology which avoids the "two-nature" doctrine. He writes that "Christ is the place where the New Reality is completely manifest because in him in every moment, the anxiety of finitude and the existential conflicts are overcome. That is his divinity."

rather than of the Church because of the latter's involvement in the ambiguities of religion. The Spiritual Community for Tillich is the "Community of the New Being." It is the spiritual community of all those who share the new reality of the Christ and who have been grasped by the power of New Being. The Spiritual Community is the place where New Being is real. The Spiritual Community is the receptive side of all Christology²³ and carries on the experience of the first disciples' acknowledgement "Thou art the Christ." Reference to the Church as the "body of Christ" or as the "assembly of God" expresses for Tillich the creation of unambiguous life by the divine Spirit in those who participate in the New Being.

Two New Testament stories are important in Tillich's understanding of the relation between the New Being in Jesus as the Christ and the New Being in the Spiritual Community. The first story refers to the confession of Peter that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus remarks that this confession was itself prompted by the Spirit and came not of man but of God. Peter's spirit was grasped by the divine Spirit, and only thus was he able to recognize the Spirit in Jesus which makes him the Christ. Tillich writes: "Therefore we can say: As the Christ is not the

²³See p. 48 of this chapter. The receptive side of the event Jesus the Christ as the bearer of the New Being is stressed.

Christ without those who receive him as the Christ, so the Spiritual Community is not Spiritual unless it is founded on the New Being as it has appeared in the Christ."²⁴ The second story is that of Pentecost. According to Tillich this story exhibits five characteristics of the Spiritual Community under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. Briefly they may be stated as: ecstasy, the creation of faith, the creation of love, the creation of unity, and universality.²⁵ Pentecost was the ecstatic experience of the divine Spirit by the disciples after the death of Jesus. The disciples in being grasped by the Spiritual Presence were shaken out of despair and found themselves possessed of a new and unshakeable faith. But it was faith united with love (which is always the manifestation of the divine Spirit) and it expressed itself in caring for those in need and in mutual sharing of goods and resources. The unity of ecstasy and structure (Paul's criterion for judging the ecstatic manifestations of the Spirit) was seen in the speaking in tongues which was a symbol of the overcoming of the barriers between men and nations. Finally the Spirit at Pentecost brought universality in the immediate missionary impulse to speak to men of all nations.

Tillich goes on to clarify his designation of the

²⁴Systematic Theology, III, 150.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 151-152.

Church as the Spiritual Community in his references to the Church as latent and manifest. He avoids referring to "the" Church and prefers to speak of Spiritual Community as designating the New Testament concept of the Church as the "body of Christ" or the Reformation concept of the "Church invisible or Spiritual." Tillich's insistence here is that the Spiritual Presence is the invisible essence of all religious communities.

The difference between the Spiritual Community determined by the reception of Jesus as the Christ, and the Spiritual Community in its relation to the manifold and various religious communities is described by Tillich in terms of the "latent" and the "manifest" church. Tillich does not mean a distinction between the visible and the invisible church. Such a distinction is assumed under both the latent and the manifest church. The latent church is the Spiritual Community before it has encountered the central revelation of the New Being in Christ. The manifest church is the Spiritual Community which has encountered and received Jesus as the Christ. Latency is a term which implies that which is partly actual and that which is still potential. Tillich would, therefore, hold that certain political and cultural movements, as well as non-Christian religions, are the Spiritual Community in a latent form. All have elements of faith in being grasped by unconditional concern and all exhibit love as the

movement of reunion with the separated. But in them the Spiritual Community is latent in that the faith and love of the Christ as the bearer of New Being is not known actually. The Divine Spirit, therefore, creates the Spiritual Community whether in its latent or manifest form, and both are the manifestation of the New Being as it appeared in Jesus as the Christ. Wherever there is a Spiritual Community, there is a community of faith. Tension between the faith of an individual and that of a church sometimes leads to a rejection of the individual by the church. In the Spiritual Community this tension does not lead to such a separation. Tillich expresses this openness of the Spiritual Community in universal terms in the following passage:

The Spiritual Presence by which the individual is grasped in the act of faith transcends individual conditions, beliefs, and expressions of faith. It unites him with the God who can grasp men through all these conditions but who does not restrict himself to any one of them.²⁶

Similarly the Spiritual Community holds in unity the diverse qualities of love expressed through eros, philia, libido, in union with agape. Eros is the movement of lower power and meaning to the higher. Philia is the movement of equals towards union. Libido speaks of need and the movement towards that which can fulfill the need.²⁷ All have

²⁶Ibid., p. 155.

²⁷Systematic Theology, I, 280.

the note of desire and all have contingent characteristics. Agape is free of changeable, contingent qualities and is, therefore, universal. It is love which seeks the other in the ultimate unity of being with being in God. Within the Spiritual Community it is agape which unites the other qualities of life within itself and with one another. Agape is the answer to the diversities of men in their expression and participation within the Spiritual Community.²⁸ In spite of existential estrangement among the children of God -- from one another and from God -- there is participation in the Spiritual Community.

As Tillich so often points out, the unity which is found in the Spiritual Community is still fragmentary. The churches which participate in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community, still remain subject to and express the ambiguities of life in general. The life of the churches shows all the conflicts of power struggles and the "tragic-demonic" elements that point to their participation in life's ambiguities. But the essence of the churches is the Spiritual Community which, though experienced fragmentarily, is nonetheless their unambiguous centre. Tillich finds in these two strands an explanation of the terms "visible" and "invisible" when applied to the church. The "church invisible" is not a reality beside the visible

²⁸Systematic Theology, III, 157.

churches. "The invisible church is the Spiritual essence of the visible church; like everything Spiritual, it is hidden, but it determines the nature of the visible church."²⁹ The divine Spirit is the essential power which actualizes the Spiritual Community in the churches. This Spiritual Community, created by the Spirit, is the New Creation into which the Churches and the individual Christian are taken.

Protestant Principle and Attempts to
Institutionalize the Spirit

The Protestant Principle as "an expression of the conquest of religion by the Spiritual Presence"³⁰ stands as the attempt to preserve the prophetic Spirit in the churches. It is the principle that suggests for Tillich "the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality."³¹ The churches as the bearers of the Spiritual Community fight against the forces of profanization and demonization in all areas of life. But in doing so the churches themselves prove to be ambiguous and subject to the same forces as they oppose. This is the meaning and purpose of reformation. It is the fight

²⁹Ibid., p. 163.

³⁰Ibid., p. 245.

³¹Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (1948), p. 163.

against the demonic and the profane in the churches themselves. Whenever a church claims for itself the designation of 'the' church, profanization has taken place in that church. The church as the Spiritual Community is present in all churches, in all times, wherever Jesus the Christ is confessed as Lord.

The institutionalizing of the Spirit can be seen in several areas. It can be found in what Tillich refers to as the idolatrous attitude of the Christian Faith. Christianity makes the unconditional claim that God, who manifested himself in Jesus the Christ, is the true God, and the true subject of ultimate concern. This claim is made by Christianity out of the context of the central event on which it is based, namely, Jesus as the bearer of the new reality under man's existential predicament. The danger of institutionalizing the Spirit appears when the Church begins to take to itself the absolute character of the event on which it is based. The Church, because it is part of the world and subject to its ambiguities, must bear the judgment of the new reality which it manifests. Tillich finds the tendency of demonization in the churches in what he calls the narrowness of the churches. He feels the tragedy of the Roman Catholic Church has been exactly this, that it has been unwilling to submit itself to the same judgment by which it judged society and culture. Tillich considers the modern reform movement initiated within the

Roman Catholic Church, by Pope John, to be a partial movement against this type of narrowness.³² Within Protestantism, Tillich finds great narrowness in the fundamentalist approach, which attempts to separate itself from the secular world without attempting to take the latter into itself to transform it.

The institutionalizing of the Spirit is further evidenced for Tillich in the realm of what he calls the quasi-religions. As we have seen earlier in the chapter, Tillich believes the Spiritual Community is found in all religions and great movements. There is no real gap between the sacred and the secular realm. The unconditional character of religion as the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern cannot be narrowed to refer to a special function of life divorced from the rest of life. Tillich expresses this almost poetically:

The unconditional character of this concern implies that it refers to every moment of our life, to every space and every realm. The universe is God's sanctuary. Every work day is a day of the Lord, every supper a Lord's supper, every work the fulfillment of a divine task, every joy a joy in God. In all preliminary concerns, ultimate concern is present, consecrating them.³³

The secular and the sacred should interpenetrate one another as realms of life. In fact they do not; out of

³²Systematic Theology, III, 168.

³³Theology of Culture, p. 41.

their separation and opposition to one another arise the quasi-religions. The character of a quasi-religion may be expressed by saying that secularism is its base. The finite is cut off from its relationship to the infinite. However, even upon this finite base some elements arise as matters of great concern. When this happens we have an instance of a quasi-religion.

Marxism as a quasi-religion became the enemy and conqueror of Russian Christianity. Tillich points out that:

It [Russian Christianity] became a non-social, sacramental, and mystical type of religion, and after centuries it suffered the same fate as the other Eastern churches. It was conquered by another social movement of puritan character and fanatical faith, namely Marxism.³⁴

Marxism was the inner conquest of the Russian nation by a quasi-religion; it was the expression of an ultimate concern for justice and social order. Marxism was the secular form of the eschatological hope for the coming of the Kingdom. The almost fanatical "image worship" of the leaders of the revolution shows a consecration of persons and words in an expression of the unconditional concern motivating the movement.

The resistance to the institutionalizing of the Spirit by the Protestant Principle asserts the presence of the Spirit in all realms of life. Tillich points out that

³⁴Ibid., p. 183.

the institutionalization of religion takes place not only in religion as an institution, but also within the inner lives of individuals in what may be called ritual activities. The profanization which takes place in institutional religion in its prescribed ritual acts, its social pressures and its dogmas is taken into the personal religious life. This recognition of a basic ambiguity in religion is not used by Tillich as an argument against it. It is simply a recognition that the first ambiguity of religion arises because "life, transcending itself, at the same time remains within itself."³⁵

Communism exhibits what Tillich considers the success of a reductionist profanization of religion in contrast to the institutional form. Under Communist reductionism, religion is explained away on psychological grounds as an illusory basis for man's wish fulfillments. The ultimate ground of being to which religion points is reduced to the finite realization of finite social ends and goals. Communism is the most successful modern reduction of the transcendent symbols of religion into the secular organizations and symbols of contemporary mankind.

The Protestant Principle stands as the principle of judgment against the profane and demonic forces within the churches. As such it is the assertion of the freedom of

³⁵ Systematic Theology, III, 100.

the Spirit.³⁶ This assertion of the freedom of the Spirit can be seen in contemporary theology in references to a "religionless Christianity." The coming of the Christ was not for the establishment of a new religion. His coming was for the establishment of a new order, a new reality, i.e., "the New Being as community." The Spiritual Presence cannot be restricted to the churches.

Tillich feels that the freedom of the Spirit must be maintained against the expression of unlimited will to power which is found whenever there is a self-affirmed greatness in the realm of the holy. This issue of the Spirit's freedom against self-affirmed greatness and holiness appears again in the claim of a church to be "the church." The conquest of religion by the Spiritual Presence prevents such claims to absoluteness. Similarly, whenever an individual insists, for example, that other individuals must be converted to Christianity and the Christ in the same manner that he was converted, that individual is practising a form of Christian absolutism. The divine Spirit undercuts such a claim. "The Spiritual Presence excludes fanaticism, because in the presence of God no man can boast about his grasp of God. No one can grasp that by which he is grasped -- the Spiritual

³⁶Ibid., pp. 246-247.

Presence."³⁷ The Protestant Principle is, therefore, the principle of defense for the freedom of the Spirit. It is a principle that needs to be alive in all churches, in all religions and in society at large. It is for Tillich an expression of the permanent need to guard against the tragic expressions of profanization and demonization in religion. By itself, however, it can become too negative a force unless, as Tillich says, it is complemented by "the Catholic Substance," i.e., the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence. This insistence on Protestant Principle and Catholic Substance is seen in Tillich's appreciation of the sacramental element in religion. This leads to a freedom of the Spirit in the Spirit's manifestation through the media of the Word and Sacraments. First of all Tillich applies the Protestant Principle by saying that the Spiritual Presence is not bound to the churches through the media of the Word and Sacraments in the churches. The danger of sacramentalism is that there may be a visual distortion of a special manifestation of the New Being. The danger of the "media" of the word is in Tillich's phrase "a kind of 'sacramentalism of the pure doctrine,'"³⁸ that is, an insistence on obedience to the word of the Bible which in fact implies obedience to a particular interpretation of the Bible.

³⁷Ibid., p. 245.

³⁸Systematic Theology, II, 84.

Tillich points out that traditional theology has taught that the church is founded upon the Word and the Sacraments and that it is the special function of the church to administer the same. The Spiritual Presence is made effective to the community of the Church through the media of Word and Sacrament. The sacramental symbol designates a reality which becomes a bearer of the Holy under special circumstances. The elements in the Lord's Supper are symbolic materials. They are not "only" symbols, an emphasis which makes them mere signs pointing to the past; they are bearers of the Spiritual Presence.³⁹ "The Spirit 'uses' the powers of being in nature in order to 'enter' man's spirit. . . . A sacramental symbol is neither a thing nor a sign. It participates in the power of what it symbolizes, and therefore, it can be a medium of the Spirit."⁴⁰ Tillich's feeling for the sacramental element in religion is very strong. He finds the controversy over the number of sacraments to be a disregard for the Sacramental symbol in its largest sense, that is, in the sense of denoting everything in which the Spiritual Presence is experienced. In the churches, particular sacraments are significant; but these must not preclude other sacramental media.

Tillich traces the duality of Word and Sacrament to

³⁹Systematic Theology, III, 122.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 123.

"the primordial phenomenon that reality is communicated either by the silent presence of the object as object or by the vocal self-expression of a subject to a subject."⁴¹ The sacrament is, therefore, "older" than the Word although the latter is always implicit in the former.⁴² Whenever words communicate the Spiritual Presence they are called "The Word of God." The Bible may be called the Word of God in the sense that it reports the central manifestation of New Being in Jesus as the Christ. But for Tillich any other religious document or spoken word or literature which reports the Spiritual Presence to someone is also the Word of God.⁴³ Here again we find Tillich's insistence that the divine Spirit is not bound to certain media of expression in the churches alone.

Part of Tillich's answer to an emphasis on the Word over against the Sacraments as found in much of Protestantism and its converse -- an emphasis on Sacrament over against the word -- is found in his theory of the multi-dimensional unity of life. Since spirit is the depth of all dimensions of life and since the divine Spirit is known to man in his spirit, the Spiritual Presence must be mediated through both Word and Sacrament. Tillich cites the

⁴¹Ibid., p. 120.

⁴²Loc. cit.

⁴³Ibid., p. 125.

rediscovery of the unconscious and the importance of the sacramental mediation of the Spiritual Presence on this level.⁴⁴ The decisive test for both Word and Sacrament is their power to mediate the Spiritual Presence to man's spirit. Tillich, although he expresses great sympathy with the spirit-movements and their emphasis on the "inner word," nevertheless rejects their negative element. He feels that an emphasis on the Spirit's freedom outside the sphere of Word and Sacrament in the churches usually tends to divorce the Spirit from the churches: the sphere of Word and Sacrament. Tillich has too strong a sense of the Spirit's mediation through the sacramental symbols to accept without strong reservation the spirit-movements' rejection of these media of the Spiritual Presence. Tillich's answer to the problem of the institutionalizing of the Spirit is his formula of "Protestant Principle and Catholic Substance within the multidimensional unity of life."

The Spirit and "the Trinity"

Tillich distinguishes between the "Christian doctrine of the Trinity" and what he calls the trinitarian principles. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity must always be tied in with the Christological dogma.⁴⁵ It

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 122.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 285.

arises from the confession that Jesus is the Christ and that in him "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The trinitarian principles, on the other hand, are not answers to the questions of Christian doctrine, i.e., the relation of Christ to God, but are answers to "the question of the presuppositions of these doctrines in an idea of God."⁴⁶ The difference of approach may be expressed by saying that whereas the doctrine of the Trinity begins with the assertion that Jesus is the Christ, the trinitarian principles are derived from the assertion that God is the living God; God is Spirit. We discussed this assertion in Chapter I and noted that Tillich considers this the most inclusive symbol for the divine life. Spirit is the actualization of the principles of power and meaning in the Godhead. The first principle, "power," points to the abyss of the divine -- the impenetrable mystery of being. It is the depth of the divine and that which makes God God. The second principle is that of meaning and structure and is conveyed in the classical Greek term logos. This is the principle of self-manifestation in God. Without this second principle God would remain completely hidden. Logos is the principle which unites meaning and structure with creativity. Without this second principle God could not be known as the ground of all creation. Spirit is the third

⁴⁶Systematic Theology, I, 250.

principle: it both contains and unites the other two principles in itself, and expresses the telos or fulfillment of life. The end or fulfillment of life is life as spirit.

Tillich writes:

The third principle is in a way the whole (God is Spirit), and in a way it is a special principle (God has the Spirit as he has the logos). It is the Spirit in whom God 'goes out from' himself. . . . Through the Spirit the divine fulness is posited in the divine life as something definite, and at the same time it is reunited in the divine ground.⁴⁷

The problem of the doctrine of the Trinity arises out of a change in the function of the doctrine. The problem today is what to do with a doctrine that was originally intended to express the self-manifestation of God but has become what Tillich calls "an impenetrable mystery, put on the altar, to be adored."⁴⁸ Tillich cites two negative reactions within Protestantism in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. One reaction was that of indifference to the dogma. The other reaction was what Tillich calls Christocentric Unitarianism -- a kind of moral and liberal humanism. Christocentric Unitarianism rejected the idea of God as the divine ground. It also rejected Jesus as the Logos and the Spirit as the ecstatic experience of the Living God. It rejected completely the doctrine of the Trinity.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 251.

⁴⁸Systematic Theology, III, 291.

Tillich, in his attempt to recover a trinitarian doctrine for Protestantism, does not create a new doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, he attempts to clarify the doctrinal issues at stake within the framework of an understanding of the trinitarian principles at work in the idea of God. His own specific contribution is an enriching of the doctrine's symbolic content. Tillich is convinced that the doctrine must be retained but only if it is reinterpreted in such a way that it fulfills "its original function -- to express in embracing symbols the self-manifestation of the Divine Life to man."⁴⁹ The most direct and embracing of the trinitarian symbols is that of the Spirit, for it unites all the ontological elements and is directly correlated with spirit in man. Tillich lists three factors which in the history of religious experience have led to the development of the trinitarian principles:

First, the tension between the absolute and the concrete element in our ultimate concern; second, the symbolic application of the concept of life to the divine ground of being; and third, the threefold manifestation of God as creative power, as saving love, and as ecstatic transformation.⁵⁰

The trinitarian principles arise out of the attempt to speak meaningfully of the living God. Within the Christian doctrine of the Trinity the three principles are expressed

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 294.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 283.

by the symbols, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Tillich feels that it is important to guard against the popular distortion of the doctrine of the Trinity which sees it as a kind of logical nonsense of numbers and persons within the context of the formula of three in one and one in three. The understanding of the trinitarian principles is the attempt to understand God as the living God and to express the idea of God in finite ontological categories. This development cannot and is not restricted to the Christian Faith but is found in all forms of monotheism. It is found also in the mystery cults, "in which a god whose ultimacy is acknowledged becomes radically concrete for the initiated."⁵¹ In mystical monotheism Tillich finds development of the trinitarian principles in the distinction between the god Brahma and the principle of Brahman. Here a divine triad is formed in which "the latter represents the element of ultimacy in the most radical way; the former is a concrete god, united with Shiva and Vishnu in a divine triad."⁵² The trinitarian principles are attempts to explain the elements of ultimacy, concreteness and universality in the idea of God. In mystical monotheism the principle of ultimacy overcomes the principle of concreteness. In polytheism the principles are reversed and the principle of concreteness

⁵¹Systematic Theology, I, 228-229.

⁵²Ibid., p. 229.

overcomes the power of ultimacy. In monarchic monotheism there are elements both of polytheism's emphasis on the concrete and of monotheism's emphasis on ultimacy. The monarch god is always threatened by outside attack. In exclusive monotheism the concrete god is raised to ultimacy and universality without the loss of concreteness. Thus the God of Israel is the God of a particular people and the God of a particular nation, but he is also the God who rules finally over all gods and nations. For Tillich there is no possibility of a relapse to polytheism in exclusive monotheism, but there is a danger of a lack of expression of the concrete element in man's ultimate concern. It is the need for an adequate expression of the concrete element in exclusive monotheism that raises the need for a doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity in Christian thought, therefore, is the attempt to formulate under three symbols the specifically Christian interpretation of the trinitarian principles. The symbol of God the Father emphasizes the principle of ultimacy and power (the abysmal nature of the divine). The symbol of God the Son emphasizes the concreteness of God in the divine self-manifestation of the Logos in Jesus as the Christ. The symbol of the Spirit is the all-embracing and inclusive symbol for the unity of ultimacy and concreteness

in God.⁵³

Tillich, by relating the doctrine of the Trinity to the trinitarian principles has suggested an interpretation of the doctrine within a theology of Spirit rather than as "a corroboration of christological dogma." He writes:

Any discussion of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity must begin with the christological assertion that Jesus is the Christ. . . . The situation is different if we do not ask the question of the Christian doctrines but rather the question of the presuppositions of these doctrines in an idea of God. Then we must speak about the trinitarian principles, and we must begin with the Spirit rather than with the Logos.⁵⁴

The importance of this suggestion will be found to carry through in Tillich's approach to Christianity and the world religions and will serve his thesis on the participation of religions in the "Religion of the Concrete Spirit."

⁵³Ibid., pp. 250-251.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 250.

III

THE SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Tillich expresses the relation of the historical dimension to the Spirit by saying that "history, like life in general, stands under the negativities of existence and therefore under the ambiguities of life."¹ All life processes and their ambiguities are present in the dimension of history and raise the question of unambiguous life. History always implies the quest for the fulfillment of unambiguous life. "The drive toward universal and total centeredness, newness and fulfillment is a question and remains a question as long as there is history."² Although the Spirit is given as the answer to the ambiguities of life, this answer remains fragmentary. "The question implied in the ambiguities of life drives to a new question, namely, that of the direction in which life moves. This

¹Systematic Theology, III, 332. Even with the appearance of New Being in the concrete, historical life of Jesus of Nazareth, history still retains the marks of ambiguity and "goes on and shows all the characteristics of existential estrangement." See Systematic Theology, II, 120.

²Systematic Theology, III, 332.

is the question of history."³ The answer to this quest is the Christian theological symbol, the Kingdom of God. It is a symbol which points to the Spiritual Presence's impact on the dimensions of life and, by anticipation, beyond history in the symbol Eternal Life. This chapter will outline the relation between the symbols Spiritual Presence, Kingdom of God, and Eternal Life, under the title "The Spirit and the Kingdom of God."

It will be helpful before elaborating on the symbol Kingdom of God to discuss Tillich's approach to history, since "Kingdom" denotes the conquest of ambiguous life within history. Tillich differentiates between Natural History and Human History. Natural History indicates the dimension of history in all processes of nature. It points to history as the most inclusive dimension of life. It is this over-all inclusiveness of history that led Tillich to discuss it as a fifth part of his system.⁴ He writes that "it requires a special treatment because it is the most embracing dimension, presupposing the others and adding a new element to them."⁵ However, Natural History, which embraces all dimensions of life, becomes fully actualized

³Systematic Theology, II, 4.

⁴See Systematic Theology, I, 66-67, for an early discussion of his special treatment of history as a separate and fifth part of his system.

⁵Systematic Theology, III, 297.

only in mankind. This leads to a specific consideration of history as human history or history proper. It is only in man that history proper takes place under its actualization in the dimension of spirit. Any discussion of a doctrine of Life and the Spirit must include the historical dimension, and any answer to the ambiguities of life must be a historical answer. Tillich therefore gives to history a special study, but he does so within a context that sees history as human history in correlation with the dimension of spirit in man.

The symbol Kingdom of God is correlated with history as the answer which is given by revelation (within the historical dimension) to the ambiguities of life. In its inner-historical sense within human history it is related to the symbol Spiritual Presence, and will be dealt with in this paper under the heading, "The Kingdom of God Within History." In its trans-historical sense it is related to the symbol Eternal Life, and will be dealt with under the heading "The Kingdom of God as the End of History."⁶ The answer which revelation gives in the symbol Kingdom of God arises out of the following correlation of question and answer. The question of unambiguous life in the historical realm comes out of man's realization that the ends and fulfillments which he sets for himself remain limited. Aware

⁶Ibid., p. 298.

of his limited fulfillments man asks for an end which transcends his limited achievements. The answer which he receives is the Kingdom of God.

The symbol Kingdom of God has four main characteristics for Tillich.⁷ First, it is political. It designates a realm over which God rules, and it points to the centre of ultimate power in the symbol of kingship. It is the symbol of the rule of God not only over men and the world, but over the cosmic universe itself. In its final political meaning, it points to a new creation of the whole cosmos in which God is the all in all. In the second place, it is a social symbol and includes the ideas of justice and peace. But it is not a utopian world of peace on earth where there is a complete unity of mankind. Tillich thinks the symbol refutes such a utopian ideal. Utopianism entails the fulfillment of man within history in the relationship of man to man. Tillich stresses that the end of history is not to be found in history but in God. The symbol is social in the sense that it points to the holiness of what ought to be. "But even so the social element in the symbol is a permanent reminder that there no holiness without the holy of what ought to be, the unconditional moral imperative of justice."⁸ In the third place,

⁷Ibid., pp. 358-359.

⁸Ibid., p. 358.

the symbol preserves the permanent meaning and worth of the individual person. The fulfillment of history in the Kingdom of God is not the loss but the fulfillment of every human individual. Fourthly, the symbol of the Kingdom of God points to universality. The Kingdom of God goes beyond man to include the whole of creation. "This agrees with the multidimensional unity of life: fulfillment under one dimension implies fulfillment in all dimensions."⁹

The power of the symbol Kingdom of God to answer the question of the meaning of history is found in its immanent and transcendent character. If either one or the other is neglected, the symbol becomes distorted and inadequate. Tillich finds both an inner-historical or immanent element and a transcendent-universal element in the prophetic literature of Israel. The prophets foresee the political victory of Israel over her enemies and the establishment of the worship of Jahweh in Mount Zion. But they also foresee a universal worship of Jahweh by all nations. Furthermore, the peace of the nations foreshadows a similar creation of peace throughout the whole of nature. The inner-historical, political character of the symbol Kingdom of God was further balanced by the Apocalyptic symbolism of the end of the world in catastrophe and God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth. The prophetic hopes will be

⁹Ibid., p. 359.

fulfilled through God's intervention and the mediation of the Heavenly Man, and not through a natural, progressive fulfillment of history within history. Tillich points out that while Christianity adopted much of the transcendentalism of the apocalyptic prophecies it firmly rooted this emphasis in "the inner-historical appearance of Jesus as the Christ and the foundation of the church in the midst of the ambiguities of history."¹⁰

The Kingdom of God Within History

This title points to the Kingdom of God as the symbol for the manifestation of the Spiritual Presence in history. In Chapter II the manifestation of the Spiritual Presence within historical existence was discussed in terms of Jesus as the Christ and in terms of the Spiritual Community. The theme of the Spiritual Presence within History is taken up by Tillich under the heading of "The Dynamics of History and the New Being."¹¹ Here, he outlines the relation of the Spiritual Presence and the Kingdom of God within History in terms of the "History of Salvation" (Heilsgeschichte) and in terms of kairos.

Tillich uses the term heilsgeschichte with reservation:

¹⁰Ibid., p. 361.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 362-374.

If the term "history of salvation" is justified at all, it must point to a sequence of events in which saving power breaks into historical processes, prepared for by these processes so that it can be received, changing them to enable the saving power to be effective in history.¹²

He rejects any notion of salvation history that holds it to be suprahistorical, that is, a history above history. Such a view of the history of salvation would destroy the connection between world history and salvation history. If the saving power of the Spiritual Presence is to be effective for man, it must take place within the processes of world history. Salvation history must have a twofold character: it must be both sacred and secular. As sacred history it shows the breaking into history of the Divine Spirit and the self-transcending character of history in its striving for an ultimate end or fulfillment. As secular history, salvation history occupies a definite period of time and location and is subject to historical investigation. Saving history is always the presence of the Kingdom of God in history; it is the Divine Spirit present to man's spirit within historical existence.

Salvation history always points to revelation. It refers to the kairoi -- those moments in history when the Kingdom of God is manifested to man. All religions point to the experience of kairoi. But Christianity makes the

¹²Ibid., p. 363.

claim that in Jesus the Christ the final revelation has appeared. It asserts that the event of Jesus as the Christ is the great kairos. It is the centre of history and the final revelation of God to man. But it is not the centre of history in terms of chronological time. Rather, it is the centre of history in the sense that it is the criterion by which all that went before and all that comes after is judged. Tillich writes:

The word "final" in the phrase "final revelation" means more than last. Christianity has often affirmed, and certainly should affirm, that there is continuous revelation in the history of the church. In this sense the final revelation is not the last. Only if last means the last genuine revelation can final revelation be interpreted as the last revelation. . . . But final revelation means more than the last genuine revelation. It means the decisive, fulfilling, unsurpassable revelation, that which is the criterion of all others.¹³

For Tillich the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God in Jesus as the Christ does not refer to the beginning and end of the history of salvation in the sense of datable time.¹⁴ Salvation history begins whenever man asks for an answer to the ambiguities of his life.¹⁵ Salvation history ends whenever man receives the answer of Jesus the Christ who is the bearer of New Being. History in the sense of

¹³Systematic Theology, I, 132-133.

¹⁴Systematic Theology, III, 364.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 366-367.

finished time has not come to a final end. But in the sense of reaching a final aim and fulfillment it has qualitatively reached this final fulfillment in Jesus the Christ, who is the bearer of the new reality.

We now turn to Tillich's consideration of the relation of the Kingdom of God to the ambiguities of life in terms of power, social growth and individual participation in history. The ambiguity of power is seen in history in terms of political groups moving toward universal unity. Throughout history the churches have had to face the question of their relation to the ambiguities of power as representatives of the Kingdom of God and as bearers of the Spiritual Presence. Since Spirit has been defined by Tillich as the unity of power and meaning, he holds, therefore, that power is divine in its essential nature and is the resistance of being against nonbeing. The Kingdom of God is the symbol of the conquest of the ambiguities of power, empire and control by the Divine Spirit within history.¹⁶ The basic ambiguity of power is disintegration based on the split between subject and object. Within history-bearing groups this split can be seen when the objects of centred control become mere objects.¹⁷ Whenever the forces of disintegration have been arrested in political

¹⁶Ibid., p. 385.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 386.

groups, no matter how fragmentarily, a manifestation of the Kingdom of God and the power of the Spirit has taken place. Tillich cites the democratization of political attitudes as such a manifestation of the Kingdom of God. But democratic institutions and the symbol of democracy must not be allowed to replace the religious symbol of the Kingdom of God.¹⁸ The democratic principle must not become a political symbol for the Divine Spirit. Democracy can and does create mass conformism that has nothing to do with the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the spirit of man. Other political forms such as monarchical authoritarianism have also at times stood against the forces of disintegration. Tillich judges any political institution by the criterion of integration or disintegration, and offers this as the criterion by which the churches must judge the power of a political force. "In so far as the centering and liberating elements in a structure of political power are balanced, the Kingdom of God in history has conquered fragmentarily the ambiguities of control."¹⁹ The churches must always oppose the use of power when persons as subjects are placed in the position of being treated as mere objects, but it has no right to oppose the use of power for just ends. Tillich places the churches in the position of

¹⁸Ibid., p. 385.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 386.

finding a relation to power groups that rejects pacificism on the one hand and opposes militarism when that force strives for the achievement of unity through conquest by a particular group.²⁰ The Kingdom of God is not pacifism. But the churches as representatives of the Spiritual Community must practise pacificism in bringing the message of the power of God in Christ to bear upon men's lives. The use of force by the churches is not the power of the Kingdom of God at work, but a demonization of its representation of the Kingdom of God. The Spiritual Presence brings healing, not destruction. Wherever the Divine Spirit is present to man's spirit the Kingdom of God is at work and the ambiguities of life caused by the subject-object split are conquered though fragmentarily. The subject-object split on the national and communal level is expressed by Tillich in terms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. National and communal inclusiveness by its very nature implies that others must be excluded. The churches as representatives of the Spiritual Community overcome the exclusive nature of their character as religious communities and present a universal inclusiveness for mankind.²¹ The ambiguity of power in communities can be seen again in the need for centeredness. This centeredness can only be

²⁰Ibid., p. 387.

²¹Ibid., p. 262.

achieved by a ruling group which is in turn represented by an individual such as a king or president.²² The danger inherent in this attempt at centeredness is that the power of the group is actualized in the ruler or select governing body, and may become a tyranny of power. The answer to this problem is a theonomous principle whereby the ruler or rulers partially give up their subjectivity by becoming objects of their own rule and by giving in part their subjectivity to those who are ruled. This is the theonomous principle at work in the democratic ideal within culture. Wherever culture or history exhibits a theonomous character we have evidence of the Spiritual Presence within history.²³

The impact of the Kingdom of God is also to be found in social and political growth in the problem of tradition and revolution. This problem arises from the struggle between the old and new in history and gives rise to many of the injustices within history. This is specifically seen in the conflict between the older and younger generations and between conflicting national groups. The forces that give rise to this struggle within the dynamics of history cannot be avoided and by their very nature create situations where the old, represented by tradition, and the new, represented by revolution, are brought into

²²Ibid., p. 263.

²³Ibid., p. 266.

conflict. Wherever the force of revolution is rejected, the necessity of change towards the new is rejected in principle. This has often been done by the churches in the name of the Kingdom of God. On the other hand the churches have sometimes precipitated a "bloody" revolution in the name of the Kingdom to bring in by force the reign of God. Neither approach approximates the coming of the Kingdom. There must indeed be an element of revolution in the presence of the Kingdom in the sense of transformation of the old to the new in the New Being, which comes in the Christ. This new creation is the fulfillment of the old. The impact of the Kingdom of God is present whenever this split between tradition and revolution is at least fragmentarily overcome and both are acknowledged and held in unity.

Tillich writes:

The Kingdom of God is victorious over the ambiguities of historical growth only where it can be discerned that revolution is being built into tradition in such a way that, in spite of the tensions in every concrete situation and in relation to every particular problem, a creative solution in the direction of the ultimate aim of history is found.²⁴

There must be the creation of a rhythm within the dynamics of history in which every revolution towards the new will lead to new and lasting traditions. Within the churches this dynamic of growth and stability is seen in the

²⁴Ibid., p. 389.

necessary struggle between the prophetic witness and priestly tradition. Whenever the rhythm is balanced and a unity between revolution and tradition is achieved there is a manifestation of the Spiritual Presence. This creation of unity in tension can be understood in another way. It can refer to the Kingdom of God as present and the Kingdom of God as coming. The sacramental churches tend to emphasize the presence notion while the prophetic churches of the world tend to emphasize the notion of expectation. The emphasis on personal salvation and on social transformation must also be brought into some kind of unity. Whenever this unity is achieved there is evidence of the working of the Divine Spirit.

Therefore, it is a victory of the Kingdom of God in history if a sacramental church takes the principle of social transformation into its aim or if an activist church pronounces the Spiritual Presence under all social conditions, emphasizing the vertical line of salvation over against the horizontal line of historical activity.²⁵

The participation of the individual in the dynamics of history must also be mentioned. Although groups are the bearers of history and although history is politically orientated, the individual both politically and creatively contributes to the movement of history; and in this participation the individual is involved in the ambiguity of

²⁵Ibid., p. 391.

historical sacrifice.²⁶ Everyone's destiny is influenced by historical conditions, and no one can reach the transcendent Kingdom of God without participating in the inner-historical struggle of the Kingdom of God. The more mature one's active participation is, the more one is involved in historical sacrifice and, therefore, in the Kingdom of God. The historical sacrifice that must be made if one is to participate in history should involve a definite element of fulfillment. There must be an aim that drives not only towards group and national progress but also to the fulfillment of the individual lives in the group. Such aims have been expressed through the ages in terms of honour, the glory of a nation, the advance of mankind, the glory of God or Eternal Life. Tillich points to a victory of the Kingdom of God wherever historical sacrifice and personal fulfillment are united. The symbol of the Kingdom of God, therefore, points to the impact of the Spiritual Presence within the dynamics of history in which the ambiguities of power, social growth and individual participation in history are overcome fragmentarily.

The Kingdom of God as the End of History

The title points to the transcendent side of the Kingdom of God expressed by the symbol Eternal Life. Both

²⁶Ibid., p. 396.

symbols have been included in this survey of Tillich's interpretation of the Divine Spirit because of his grouping of the three symbols as mutually inclusive. All three symbols point to the conquest of the ambiguities of life "but because of the different symbolic material they use, it is preferable to apply them in different directions of meaning" ²⁷ Eternal Life is the symbol for the conquest of the ambiguities of life beyond history and as such it is the creation of the Spiritual Presence.

We have dealt with the inner-historical manifestations of the Kingdom of God which show the uniting of opposing forces within the dynamics of history under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. The Kingdom of God in this sense reveals the inner aim of history within the dynamics of history. But the inner aim of history points to a consideration of the final aim or the end of history. This ultimate end of history is expressed by the symbol Eternal Life and is the subject of eschatology, the doctrine of the last things. The Greek word eschatos conveys two points of meaning. It points to the last in terms of space and time and it points to the last in terms of the ultimate and most perfect. Eschatology, therefore, deals with the last things in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. ²⁸

²⁷Ibid., p. 109.

²⁸Ibid., p. 394.

Tillich approaches the doctrine of eschatology in a qualitative sense in order to interpret the eschatological and apocalyptic imagery of the Bible. In doing so he speaks of eschatology in the singular: the eschaton. By speaking of the eschaton Tillich brings the doctrine of the last things down to the basic question of the relation of the temporal to the eternal. The symbol Eternal Life speaks of the transition of the temporal to the eternal just as the symbol of Creation speaks of the transition of the eternal to the temporal. The symbol Eternal Life uses the mode of the future to indicate man's final telos. But the symbol also refers to what is termed the eternal "now."²⁹ In the moment man receives the New Being in Jesus the Christ, he becomes a new creation and enters into salvation. Past and future meet in this centre and qualitative end of history. The eschaton is experienced now, for in the experience of the Christ we stand already in the presence of the Eternal. But experience of the eternal "now" by the individual does not diminish the seriousness of the sense of the end of history and the end of the universe. Eternal Life as the fulfillment and end of man's individual salvation must also include the answer to the end of history and the universe.³⁰ Tillich sees the mass destruc-

²⁹Ibid., p. 395.

³⁰Ibid., p. 396.

tive power that has been created in this century militating against writing off the seriousness of the apocalyptic imagery of a final catastrophe. The doctrine of universal salvation has always stood against a preoccupation with the salvation of the few and against the neglect of the transformation of the whole of creation; a transformation which is symbolized in the imagery of the New Heaven and a new Earth created by God out of the catastrophic end of the old.

Three possible answers are enumerated by Tillich in defining the content of Eternal Life as the transcendent side of the Kingdom of God.³¹ The first answer is that there is no answer; Eternal Life is a mystery that cannot be approached. This neglects the need to say something about the concrete symbols "life" and "kingdom." The second answer is that of supranaturalism: Eternal Life is the fulfillment of all the hopes of this life; it is this life idealized and fulfilled without the ambiguities of finitude and estrangement. Supranaturalism of this sort leads to a devaluation of history and deprives it of ultimate meaning. The third answer sees in history the actualization of New Being through the Divine Spirit in the man Jesus. History takes on ultimate meaning, for in the historical Christ-event salvation and life eternal are given to man and by anticipation to the whole of creation. The

³¹Ibid., pp. 396-397.

end of history is eternal life and eternal life is participation in the divine life under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. In Tillich's strong emphasis on the fulfillment of history, including both natural history and history proper, the beginning, the present and the end of history are tied together. One can say that the beginning includes already the end. Tillich writes: "Creation is creation for the end: in the 'ground,' the 'aim' is present."³²

The symbol Eternal Life is also considered by Tillich in terms of ultimate judgment. Tillich's definition of ultimate judgment is as follows:

In the light of our understanding of the end of history as ever present and as the permanent elevation of history into eternity the symbol of ultimate judgment receives the following meaning: here and now, in the permanent transition of the temporal to the eternal, the negative is defeated in its claim to be positive, a claim it supports by using the positive and mixing ambiguously with it.³³

Tillich's strong feeling for universal salvation must be understood in terms of this definition. Nothing that has being can be rejected by God since everything that has being is an expression of God, who is being-itself. But that which is mixed with non-being can be rejected. Tillich attempts to translate this difficult area of ultimate judgment as the negation of the negative with what he

³²Ibid., p. 398.

³³Ibid., pp. 398-399.

calls "the bold metaphor eternal memory." Eternity is the fulfillment of time: it is the telos of created finitude and as such it symbolizes the transition of the temporal to the eternal. Eternity as eternal memory retains the remembered thing in a unity that includes past, present, future. But "the negative" is not remembered at all. Salvation through Christ leads to eternal life in the sense that we are united with the ultimately new -- that which is positive without ambiguity. The New Being is the manifestation of the Kingdom of God and of Eternal Life. To receive the Christ is to receive eternal life.

Although the Kingdom of God points to Eternal Life as the telos of all history, it is for man as the bearer of spirit that eschatology has particular significance in the note of ultimate judgment and of eternal life. Man alone is aware of his temporality and of the ambiguities of life. His life is not a matter of necessity or complete determinism. Man can exercise choice for good or evil. He can accept or turn away from his ultimate end in the telos of Eternal Life. He can live out in larger or smaller measure the potentialities of his life. The symbol of ultimate judgment is, therefore, a serious exposure of man's life as saved or lost. The church has generally rejected the universalistic doctrine of the salvation of all things. Such a view is felt to discount the seriousness of the possibility of utter lostness in the threat of being lost, as

against the hope of being saved. Tillich prefers to approach the symbol of ultimate judgment in terms of "essentialization."³⁴ He does not mean by essentialization a return to what a thing essentially was, for this would remove its reality in existence and return it to potentiality. Tillich means, rather, the elevation of the positive within existence to eternity and, conversely, the negation of the negative in the transition of the temporal to the eternal. He writes that "the term 'essentialization' can also mean that the new which has been actualized in time and space adds something to essential being, uniting it with the positive which is created within existence, thus producing the ultimately new, the 'New Being,'"³⁵ The seriousness of the symbol of ultimate judgment is seen in every decision of life. Every decision and act of our life has bearing on our participation in eternal life. Tillich writes:

Participation in the eternal life depends on a creative synthesis of a being's essential nature with what it has made of it in its temporal existence. In so far as the negative has maintained possession of it, it is exposed in its negativity and excluded from eternal memory. Whereas, in so far as the essential has conquered existential distortion its standing is higher in eternal life.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., p. 400.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 400-401.

³⁶Ibid., p. 401.

Tillich thus tends to accept the doctrine of universal salvation while maintaining the seriousness of ultimate judgment in the life of every man. Everything that is, has being, and so must come under divine love. This excludes from the symbol "hell" the idea of eternal damnation. But it does not exclude the note of divine judgment against the negative aspects of man's life. Tillich rejects the doctrine of a twofold eternal destiny, that is, eternal life or eternal damnation. No individual can be said to be unambiguously on one side of the divine judgment or the other. "The doctrine of the ambiguity of all human goodness and of the dependence of salvation on the divine grace alone either leads us back to the doctrine of double predestination or leads us forward to the doctrine of universal essentialization."³⁷ Tillich is thus able to answer the question of the destiny of distorted forms of life. In terms of essentialization even the least actualized being participates in the essences of other beings. The elevation of the positive to Eternal Life even in the least actualized being is thus affirmed in unity with all being.

The symbol Eternal Life points, therefore, to the nonfragmentary victory of the divine Spirit over the ambiguities of life. The symbol Spiritual Presence points to the manifestation of the divine Spirit to man's spirit and

³⁷Ibid., p. 408.

the fragmentary creation of unambiguous life in the three functions of morality, culture and religion. The symbol Eternal Life designates the total conquest of life's ambiguities. It is "identical with the Kingdom of God in its fulfilment . . . and this under all dimensions of life, or, to use another metaphor, in all degrees of being."³⁸

Eternal Life means unambiguous self-integration, unambiguous self-creativity and unambiguous self-transcendence. The polar elements in the structure of being are held in perfect balance and united in "the divine centeredness." Unambiguous self-integration points to the balance of the polar elements individualisation and participation. Unambiguous self-creativity points to the balance of the polar elements dynamics and form. Unambiguous self-transcendence points to the balance of the polar elements freedom and destiny.

Tillich uses the concept "blessedness" at this point to answer the question "How can the fulfilment of the eternal be united with the element of negation without which no life is thinkable?"³⁹ Man experiences "blessedness" fragmentarily when he is grasped by the divine Spirit. Even though man remains cognizant of unhappiness and despair he nonetheless experiences a "transcendent

³⁸Ibid., p. 401.

³⁹Ibid., p. 403.

happiness." Eternal blessedness points to "the Divine Life . . . [as] the eternal conquest of the negative."⁴⁰ In Eternal Life man participates in the blessedness of the Divine Life; not only man, but the whole of creation. The Spiritual Presence overcoming the ambiguities of life fragmentarily leads to man's participation in eternal blessedness -- the tales of Eternal Life.

Two further terms are considered by Tillich in outlining the individual's participation in Eternal Life: "immortality" and "resurrection." He takes a strong stand against what he considers a superstitious view of the meaning of Eternal Life in the symbol of immortality. He asserts that any understanding of the symbol immortality in terms of a continuation of temporal life in a bodiless state as "life hereafter" must be rejected.⁴¹ The symbol of immortality points to a creative act of God whereby the finite is taken into the infinite. Tillich discusses the problem of a legitimate understanding of the symbol immortality in terms of a confusion in the use of the symbol. If immortality is used as a symbol it can have positive meaning. If it is used as a concept it leads to a distortion of the symbol. Immortality as a symbol expresses man's awareness of his own finiteness in the face of the

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 405.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 410.

ultimacy of God. It expresses his awareness of God, who in the words of Paul will "clothe our mortality with immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:33). But when understood as a concept "immortality becomes characteristic of the part of man called soul, and the question of the experiential ground for certainty of eternal life is changed into an inquiry into the nature of the soul as a particular object."⁴² If the symbol immortality is used in Christian preaching care must be taken to avoid this confusion of concept and symbol. Tillich feels this danger is better avoided by using the symbol Eternal Life without reference to immortality and to use it with the Pauline emphasis on Resurrection in terms of the Spiritual body. The phrase "Spiritual body" is interpreted by Tillich as a double negation.⁴³ It points to the goodness of all creation and rejects the idea of a loss of personal identity. Body, of course, does not refer to flesh. Resurrection involves a spiritual body and refers back to the Divine Spirit as present and as transforming man's spirit. "Resurrection says mainly that the Kingdom of God includes all dimensions of being. The whole personality participates in

⁴²Ibid., p. 411.

⁴³Ibid., p. 412. The double negation expressed by the paradoxical combination of words "Spiritual body" negates a dualism which rejects matter as evil and negates its opposite: an extreme materialism which foresees "flesh and blood" inheriting the Kingdom of God.

Eternal Life."⁴⁴ The Spiritual Body is the whole of man's total self as a personality, including his self-conscious self transformed and elevated to Eternal Life by the Spiritual Presence. Resurrection speaks of the centered self raised into transcendent and unambiguous union with the divine ground of being. As such it is a symbol of Eternal Life as the transcendent and unambiguous experience of God's Spirit present to man's spirit. Eternal Life is the symbol of the fulfillment of the inner aim or telos of everything that is. It is the fulfillment of history above history, and it is the final answer to the question of the ambiguities of life expressed in life's limited ends and limited fulfillments. It is the expression of the eschatological hope of the end or final fulfillment. But it is an end which takes us back to the beginning -- to the ultimate ground of all being, to God. Eternal Life is life in God who is eternal. The symbol Eternal Life brings us back to the inclusive nature of the relation of the three symbols of unambiguous life -- Spiritual Presence, Kingdom of God and Eternal Life. Jesus the Christ is the bearer of the new eon. In Him the Kingdom of God has come and the eschatological hope is fulfilled in principle. The New Being in Jesus as the Christ is the creation of the Spirit. All those who participate in Christ become new creatures

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 412-413.

by the power of the Spirit. In this sense the Eschatological hope is fulfilled already and the end is given in the Christ.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important considerations of Tillich's thought on the Divine Spirit is his insistence on the freedom of the Spirit. The Spiritual Presence can in no way be restricted to the media of church, word, or sacrament for its manifestation. The Spirit is manifested in secular society as well as in sacred society. Wherever the ambiguities of life are overcome, the Spiritual Presence has come to bear upon man's spirit within the areas of culture, morality and religion. The church is the spiritual community of people who acknowledge the presence of a new reality in their lives, that is, the power of New Being as found in Jesus who is the Christ. Participation in New Being is not limited to the churches. New Being is the creation of the Spiritual Presence wherever men express ultimate concerns and ambiguities are overcome. Religion is not, for Tillich, a compartment of man's life, but rather it is what he calls the "depth" of man's life in all dimensions. Tillich draws attention to the impact of the Divine Spirit on man's spirit, when he writes:

Although he who is the foundation of the church was himself of the Spirit, and although the Spirit as it was present in him, is the greatest manifestation of Spiritual Presence, the Spirit is not

bound to the Christian Church or any one of them. The Spirit is free to work in the spirits of men in every human situation, and it urges men to let Him do so; God as Spirit is always present to the spirit of man.¹

Such an interpretation destroys any sense of a final barrier between the Sacred and the Secular, between the churches within Christendom, and between Christianity and world religions.

The full import of Tillich's doctrine of the Spirit comes to light when his views on Christianity and the world religions are examined. We noted earlier that in the closing years of Tillich's life, he indicated his interest in world religions, first by a visit to Japan in which he made contact with Buddhist and Shinto priests and scholars,² and second by undertaking a joint seminar with Mircea Eliade. This seminar ended with Tillich's lecture on the "Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian."³ The lecture outlines concisely Tillich's approach, interpretation and suggestions for dialogue among the world religions. Some of these important suggestions will be commented on in the following pages and will relate to his doctrine of the Spirit.

Tillich speaks often of the inner telos of history.

¹The Eternal Now, p. 87.

²The Future of Religions, p. 31.

³Ibid., pp. 80-94.

Using the phrase in the present context suggests that the inner telos of his doctrine of the Spirit is a meeting of Christianity with the world religions. The meeting will take place in the form of a mutual dialogue, undertaken in the power and freedom of the Spirit. Tillich's approach to the world religions is based on several factors. In the first place he was convinced that the confrontation of all world religions with the quasi-religions of Socialism, Communism and extreme Nationalism, would prompt them to enter into dialogue. In the second place, his interest in some form of interrelation between the religions was implicit in his definition of religion. The moment he defined religion as "the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of life,"⁴ he admitted to some form of acceptance of all world religions whether theistic or nontheistic. Tillich expresses the form of his acceptance in terms of "a dialectical union of acceptance and rejection, with all the tensions, uncertainties, and changes which such dialectics implies."⁵ Tillich sees such a dialectical union (of acceptance and rejection) at work in

⁴Paul Tillich, Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions (1963), p. 82.

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

the early church in the idea that the universal presence of the logos was to be found in all religions and cultures. He comments on this convergent line between early Christianity and the pagan religions when he writes: "In the light of these ideas Augustine could say that true religion had existed always and was called Christian only after the appearance of the Christ."⁶ Tillich thought of Christianity as all-inclusive, but never radically-exclusive. It is universally inclusive in the sense that it has an ultimate criterion in the Christ-event which judges both itself and all religions.⁷ The Spiritual Presence manifested in the Christ cannot be restricted to Christianity. The Divine Spirit manifests itself in all religions wherever ultimate concern is expressed and ambiguities are overcome. Tillich calls into question what he considers to be a form of absolutism in Barth's theological position. He writes:

According to him, [Barth] the Christian Church, the embodiment of Christianity, is based on the only revelation that has ever occurred, namely, that in Jesus Christ. All human religions are fascinating but futile attempts of man to reach God, and the relation to them, therefore, is no problem; the Christian judgment of them is unambiguous rejection of their claim to be based on revelation.⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁷Ibid., p. 33. Tillich refers to Paul's assertion that all men -- Jews and Pagans -- are in need of and receive salvation which comes not from a new religion but from the event of Jesus, the Christ. This event judges all religions.

⁸Ibid., pp. 44-45.

While Tillich stresses the universal-inclusiveness of Christianity, he does not consider Christian universalism to be syncretistic. Whatever elements are received from other religions must be subjected to the ultimate criterion of the New Being in Jesus the Christ. Tillich, in developing his own approach to the relation between Christianity and the world religions follows this pattern: he moves within a polarity of universality and concreteness.⁹ This polarity will be seen most forcefully in his proposal for "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit." Before dealing directly with this proposal we should outline in more detail the elements in Tillich's approach to world religions.

One of Tillich's basic convictions is his belief that Christianity and the participating religions will not be weakened but strengthened in any genuine efforts at dialogue. The implications of Tillich's approach will force a reappraisal of many questions about the purpose of Christian missions. It challenges the view that Christianity is a superior religion. Tillich's plea is "not conversion, but dialogue."¹⁰ All religions, including Christianity, stand under the ultimate criterion of the Christ

⁹The polarity of universality and concreteness has already been discussed in terms of the universality of revelatory events and the concreteness of the great kairos, the Christ.

¹⁰Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions, p. 95.

event. The importance which Tillich placed on the need for dialogue between the religions becomes all the more significant when one realizes the change which such a consideration effected in his thinking toward the end of his life. Indeed, he suggests the possibility and need to write a new systematic theology based on a study of the history of religions. He notes that his own Systematic Theology was written against the perspective of an "apologetic discussion against and with the secular."¹¹ In any case he viewed the future of theology as taking two directions: first, as a discussion with the secular; and, second, as a dialogue between the world religions. Tillich lists five presuppositions which he considers essential for any study of, or dialogue with world religions, on the part of Christians.¹² The first assumption is that all religions share in revelatory experiences. The second assumption is that revelation, when it is received, is subject to distortion due to the ambiguity of man's life in all its dimensions. The third assumption is that man's reception of revelation must be subject to the critical judgments which appear in the form of the mystical, the prophetic and the secular. The fourth assumption is that in addition to the acceptance of general revelation, the "possibility" of a

¹¹The Future of Religions, p. 91.

¹²Ibid., pp. 81-82.

central revelation of universal significance must be allowed. The fifth assumption states that the sacred and the secular are interrelated. The sacred is the critical depth of the secular, and conversely the secular is a judgment of the sacred. These five presuppositions point to a parting of the way with those who deny revelatory experiences to the non-Christian religions. They also form a criticism of any theology of the secular which fails to find the sacred as the depth of the secular, or which views the sacred as having been completely absorbed by the secular.

Tillich, on the basis of the above points, designates his specific approach "a dynamic-typological" one.¹³ He seeks to outline the common elements that appear in varying degrees in all religions. It is the predominance of certain elements over others that contributes to the particular characteristic of a religion. The classification of these elements does not suggest a progressivistic interpretation of religion or a search for the truly religious. Tillich only suggests that certain elements are present whenever the Holy is experienced. Three such elements are listed by Tillich. These are the sacramental, the mystical, and the prophetic. The sacramental element is based on the experience of the Holy within the finite.

¹³ Ibid., p. 86.

This is what Tillich calls "the universal religious basis."¹⁴ As such it is the concrete expression of the Holy. The second element is the mystical movement. Mysticism points to a critical judgment of the concrete expression of the Holy. It is an expression of resistance against the demonization of the Holy by which the Holy becomes an object to be handled. Mysticism does not deny the concrete expression of the Holy, but it sees such concreteness as secondary to a more direct apprehension of the Ultimate One. The third prophetic element points to the ethical element in the experience of the Holy. It is the "ought-to-be" character of religious experience. The prophetic element stands against any demonic distortion of the Holy, in which holiness is believed to preclude justice. The predominance of one of these elements over the others can be seen to characterize the different religious types.¹⁵ Tillich's aim in relating a study of the history of religions to systematic theology, was to achieve a sense of

¹⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁵Systematic Theology, III, 141-144. Tillich gives an outline of these elements in various religious types, and also adds an early note of caution about typological considerations. Only through participation can one hope to understand the elements in other religions. The main elements in all religions can be experienced to some degree in one's own religious milieu. This partial participation is possible because of the identity of the dimension of the Spirit in every person. The experience of the Holy is a manifestation of the Spiritual Presence to man's spirit, transcending the bounds of any one religion.

balance between the positive valuation of universal revelation in the experience of the Holy, and the critical valuations of such revelation. This is exactly what he tried to achieve by proposing a unity of the three elements in what he termed "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit." The future of religions is not a movement towards a kind of universal Christian consciousness, which stands at the apex of the evolutionary scale. Such a movement was proposed by Teilhard de Chardin, and although Tillich expressed an affinity with much of Teilhard de Chardin's thought,¹⁶ he could not share his optimistic appraisal of future religions moving toward a universal Christian consciousness.¹⁷ The future of religions is to be found in a unity of the sacramental, the mystical and the prophetic elements. This unity is the meaning conveyed by the phrase "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit." It is, for Tillich, the inner telos of the history of religions. The dynamic character of this telos of the religions is to be found as a past and present reality, as well as a future expectation. Tillich believed that an approximation of "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit" has taken place whenever distortions of the religions, whether sacramental, mystical or prophetic,

¹⁶Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man (1964), especially pp. 209-213, 223-231, and the conclusion.

have been resisted. Tillich writes:

We can see the whole history of religions in this sense as a fight for the Religion of the Concrete Spirit, a fight of God against religion within religion. And this phrase, the fight of God within religion against religion, could become the key for understanding the otherwise extremely chaotic, or at least seemingly chaotic, history of religions.¹⁸

Tillich's proposal for a "Religion of the Concrete Spirit" is an attempt to find a balance between a positive valuation of universal revelation and a critical valuation of revelation. It is an attempt to find a balance between the sacramental, mystical and prophetic elements that comprise all religions. While a study of the history of religions can show a predominance of one or more of the three elements in particular religions, it is in Christianity that the ultimate criterion of this unity is given. That ultimate criterion is the event of Jesus the Christ.¹⁹ In Jesus the Christ, Tillich finds an unambiguous unity of the universal and concrete elements. All religions, Christianity included, are judged by this criterion. "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit," therefore, points to what Tillich terms religion above religion. It designates the manifestation of the Spiritual Presence in many kairoi in the religions, but uniquely so in the great kairos of the

¹⁸The Future of Religions, p. 88.

¹⁹Systematic Theology, I, 134.

Christ. Thus, the uniqueness of the Christ event does not preclude other revelation in the past or in the future. Tillich writes: "I would dare to say . . . as a Protestant theologian, that I believe that there is no higher . . . synthesis of these three elements than in Paul's doctrine of the Spirit."²⁰ Paul's doctrine of the Spirit provides Tillich with a concrete expression of the Spiritual Presence creating a synthesis of the three elements in an ecstasy of love and knowledge. Tillich's strong approval for Paul's doctrine of the Spirit points to another emphasis in "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit," namely, the creation of a theonomous relationship between the Sacred and the Secular. This relationship means that the autonomous rational structures of the moral, cognitive, legal and aesthetic functions of life point to the ultimate meaning of life. "The Religion of the Concrete Spirit" fights against a secularity which attempts to absorb the sacred completely. It values the secular as rational structure when theonomous forces in this structure point beyond themselves to the Ultimate in their inner being and act as a critical judgment on the "irrationality of the Holy."²¹

Tillich's whole trend of thought developed in two directions. First, as a Christian, he undertook a reinter-

²⁰The Future of Religions, p. 88.

²¹Ibid., pp. 89-90.

pretation of the Christian message. His aim in this undertaking was to make the Christian Faith relevant and meaningful for the people who had found this faith irrelevant or irrational.²² He was concerned about the secular attack on many Christian beliefs and he tried to provide a critical alternative to secular theology. He recognised the problematic nature of many of the Christian symbols against the background of a scientific and technological culture. Thus he attempted to reinterpret the "symbols of faith through expressions of our own culture."²³ Underlying all Tillich's apologetic attempts is his conviction that man's future is irrevocably tied to the religious basis, and that denial of religion as the depth of life would lead to a great upsurge of the quasi-religions.

The second direction in which Tillich's thought moved is expressed by the phrase "the future of religions." He believed that the answer, in part, to the threat which all religions face in the growth of secular autonomy and the quasi-religions, is to be found in dialogue between the religions. This need for encounter between the religions is the implicit and explicit telos of his doctrine of the Spirit, in which he insists on the manifestation of the Spiritual Presence in all religions. Dialogue on a serious

²²Systematic Theology, III, 4.

²³Ibid., p. 5.

level could only take place when one was ready to admit common elements in all religions. Tillich was unafraid to venture in this direction. His professed position was one of "openness to spiritual freedom both from one's own foundation and for one's own foundation."²⁴ Whatever boundaries existed between the religions could be crossed. They were not absolute boundaries. The common elements by which the religions approximated to the Religion of the Concrete Spirit precluded such exclusiveness for Tillich. Only one boundary was considered final by him: "Nothing finite can cross the frontier from finitude to infinity."²⁵ But Tillich did believe that the boundary between Infinite and the finite could be crossed from the direction of the Infinite and that all religions represent the crossing of this boundary from the direction of the Infinite.

Out of Tillich's insistence on the freedom of the Spirit, he, as a Christian, found it possible to live "on the boundary." He was hopeful that the future would bring a new boundary between the world religions. This boundary would be lived out in the freedom of the Spirit, as a "fragmentary manifestation of theonomy or of the Religion of the Concrete Spirit."²⁶

²⁴The Future of Religions, p. 94.

²⁵Ibid., p. 63.

²⁶Ibid., p. 91.

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