historicity of miracles (a concession to both modern science and philosophy), but insisted upon the reality of "God's mighty acts." They denied propositional revelation and revealed truths (a concession to modern philosophy), but insisted on speaking of a genuine revelation of God in Christ. In this they undermined their most basic presupposition. Second, Bultmann said, they refused to recognize that the mythical, obsolete, first-century world-view in which the gospel was couched formed no part of the gospel itself, and that therefore the message of the New Testament must be demythologized, i.e., stripped of its first-century setting, and placed in the context of the modern, scientific world-view, if it is to speak meaningfully to 20th Century men.

However, although many of Barth's former disciples, believing that Bultmann was applying Barth's first principle more consistently than Barth himself, went over to the Bultmannian camp; and, although by 1950 Bultmann was king of the German theological world; yet it was not long before it was discovered that Bultmann had himself included a fatal inconsistency in his system. He insisted that God has no objective reality at all, but claimed that his does not mean that God is not real. Both God and Revelation are real! They are real, Bultmann said, in the subjective sense; i.e., they are real for faith! However, his disciples gradually came to the realization that, if God is not objectively real, then a crucial question must be asked. "If God is real only for faith, then is he real, does he exist, apart from faith?" "And, if he does not exist apart from faith, then does he exist at all, apart from our mental concepts of him?" "Or is he merely a projection of our minds, an expression of a religious "frame of desire"?

Such questions as these, which simply would not down, pointed up the seeds of self-destruction inherent in Rudolf Bultmann's view; and occasioned the subsequent shattering and diffusion of the Bultmannian empire.

But now, even more pressing, more immediate factors began to come into play. The criticisms of religious language made by the Logical Positivists (for instance, by Alfred Julius Ayer, in his essay, "God is Meaningless") began to find proponents in theological circles (for example, Paul M. van Buren is an advocate of linguistic analysis [or the analytical philosophy, as Logical Positivism is frequently referred to].) In addition, the appearance, in 1953, of Dietrich Bonhöffer's letters and papers written while awaiting execution in a Nazi concentration camp; and the publication, in 1962, of Bishop John A. T. Robinson's Honest to God; accelerated the pace of the already swiftly-developing dissolution.

Just six years ago, in April, 1960, Martin E. Marty, an associate editor of Christian Century, stated the contemporary importance of Bonhöffer:

If we look to today's seminary generation to see what direction theology is taking, what is the model, who are the sources, one name appears with greater frequency than almost any other. The name of Dietrich Bonhöffer. . . . The leaders of the ecumenical movement have pondered Bonhöffer's thought and the younger men in particular have joyfully accepted the theological task which he left to them. So it is that in student retreats, in seminarians' seminars, in summer workshops and campus Christian gatherings his insistent question is debated and discussed. . . . the question of the relation of Christian faith to the world we live in.

Bonhöffer maintains that we live in a "world come of age." The process of religion's disappearance is irreversible. Therefore the question, "What is Christianity and what is Christ for us today?" becomes very pressing. The religious context of Christianity throughout the world is being pulled out from under it. The time is past, Bonhöffer says, when men can be satisfied with words, theological or pious; when religion itself, in all its varied forms, is passing. In this situation, he issues a call for a secular or "religionless" Christianity. To be a Christian today, Bonhöffer states,