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A B S T R A C T

The Practice of the Imitation of Christ  
with special reference to the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

by Peter James Hedderwick Adam

This thesis is a theological investigation of the Imitation of Christ. It is a study of the Imitation of Christ as a theological theme as it occurs in Christian theology.

The theme of the Imitation of Christ is investigated in two areas, that of Christian theology in general in the first and larger section of the thesis, and that of the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the second section.

In the first section, the Imitation of Christ is studied in the following ways. The various strands of the Imitation tradition are analysed, the Imitation of Christ is studied as an instance of the human practice of Imitation, the Christological issues are investigated, as also is the relationship between Imitation and Christian theology.

In the second section Bonhoeffer's notion of the Imitation of Christ is studied in the light of the issues raised in the first section. Thus Bonhoeffer's place in the Imitation tradition is assessed, and more light shed on the nature of the Imitation of Christ.

The Practice of the Imitation of Christ  
with special reference to the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

by

Peter James Hedderwick Adam

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Ph.D.

University of Durham  
Department of Theology

1981



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P. J. H. Adam

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Acknowledgments.

I wish to record my gratitude to those who have helped me in various ways during the time of the production of this thesis.

I am most deeply indebted to my supervisor, Professor Stephen Sykes, for his encouragement, kindness, and stimulating comments.

I am grateful to St John's College for hospitality and friendship. I am especially grateful to past and present colleagues, including John Cockerton, Ruth Etchells, Bruce Kaye, and Michael Vasey.

My gratitude is also due to many other friends in England and Australia, who have supported me in various ways.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose and style of this thesis.

This thesis is an attempt to answer the question "What is the Imitation of Christ?" It takes the form of a theological investigation of the Imitation of Christ in two areas, that of Christian theology in general, and that of the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The particular character of this investigation is perhaps most clearly described by way of contrast with some alternative methods of treating the subject which were discarded at earlier stages of this research.

The project began as a study of the Imitation of Christ in "Neo-orthodoxy", speedily resolving itself on grounds of length into a study of Bonhoeffer. A study of the Imitation of Christ in Bonhoeffer could have produced a valuable contribution to the Bonhoeffer debate, and may perhaps have provided a new way of understanding his theology. However before this theme could be investigated in Bonhoeffer's theology, it was felt necessary to write a brief account of the Imitation tradition. It was at this stage that I began to realise not only the extent of the Imitation tradition but also its theological richness, and this suggested new possibilities for this research project. One, which was soon abandoned, was to write a history of the Imitation tradition. The time and space available were not sufficient for this exercise. Another possibility was that of a



theological treatment of the theme of the Imitation of Christ, and I decided to pursue this in terms of Christian theology in general and Bonhoeffer's theology in particular.

In the event, this has not resulted in an historical study of the theology of Imitation, but rather in an investigation of the theological shape of the continuing Imitation tradition. For it became evident that the different instances of Imitation in the history of Christian theology exhibited a striking family resemblance in the kind of theological issues that were raised. Despite considerable variety of expression, there was such continuity that it was possible to think of an Imitation tradition. It is this tradition which is the subject of investigation in this thesis.

The discovery of this one Imitation tradition has resulted in a way of using the material which deserves comment. My method is theological rather than historical: though I use quotations from various theologians and writers, the quotations are used as contemporary voices, as material for my theological argument, and not in an attempt to describe their particular theologies. So ideas and words of various theologians are abstracted from their historical setting and employed in the context of my discussion: there is no attempt to do justice to the thought of any author except Bonhoeffer. A result of this method is a certain amount of repetition, because the same quotation is used to illustrate more than one point.

The existence of this one tradition has also meant that I have not attempted to analyse the Imitation of Christ in terms of different schools of theology, because, as I hope will become evident, this one tradition of Imitation is represented in the variety of strands of Christian theology. I attempt to illustrate the unity of the Imitation tradition by using quotations from diverse theological sources

in close proximity in the course of my argument.

The distinctiveness of the method that I employ is clearly seen by way of contrast with other current literature on the Imitation of Christ. E. J. Tinsley's The Imitation of God in Christ(1) is a study of the Biblical basis for a spirituality of Imitation, and is comprised of a survey of the Biblical material. P. N. Hillyer's The Imitatio Christi in the Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld is more an historical study, concluding a survey of Imitation of Christ in the history of Christian thought, and an historical study of Charles de Foucauld. I. C. Gobry's Le Modèle en Morale is a study of the role of the model in human behaviour, with explicit attention to Christ as model. Imitating Christ, edited by E. Malatesta, a translation of Dictionnaire de Spiritualité articles, includes brief exegetical and historical notes, and brief comments on the practice of the Imitation of Christ, but is a survey rather than a study. I am indebted to each of these, and they have contributed to the discussions of this thesis, but I employ a different method.

What then of the relationship between the two sections of this thesis?

The Imitation of Christ in Christian theology is the subject of the first and larger section of this thesis. In it I analyse the theological phenomenon of the Imitation of Christ from a variety of perspectives. Chapter Two is an investigation of the various strands of the Imitation tradition, and in Chapter Three we study the Imitation of Christ as an instance of the human practice of Imitation. Chapter Four is a study of some characteristic features of Christ as Exemplar, and in Chapter Five the subject is the Imitation of Christ and Christian theology.

The second and smaller section of this thesis is a study of

the Imitation of Christ in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It comprises two chapters: Chapter Six which is a detailed exegetical study of the Imitation material in Bonhoeffer's writings, and Chapter Seven in which the notion of the Imitation of Christ in Bonhoeffer's thought is further investigated.

The connection between the two sections of the thesis lies in the way in which they are complementary attempts to discover the nature of the Imitation of Christ. The first section describes the Imitation of Christ as it occurs in Christian theological writing, gives a theological understanding of it, and also provides the theological context for the study of Bonhoeffer's use of the theme. This theological context is not a check-list or a precise and authoritative statement by which Bonhoeffer's thought can be evaluated, but an awareness of the theological shape of Imitation which enables a satisfactory analysis of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology. The first section, then provides the general context for the particular study of the second section. In this section we have a careful study of Bonhoeffer's Imitation of Christ theology which makes use of the theological analysis of Imitation and thus demonstrates the validity of that analysis. Bonhoeffer's place in the Imitation tradition is illuminated, and a greater understanding of the nature of the Imitation of Christ is discovered by a study of the writings of this particular theologian.

The two sections of the thesis are also complementary in that the danger of studying the "Imitation tradition" by means of quotations abstracted from their original settings is that the "tradition" may be merely the product of the writer's own theological presuppositions. It is necessary to test the "tradition" by one significant exponent of Imitation theology, and Bonhoeffer provides a useful and productive

test case.

My claim to originality is three-fold: I analyse the Imitation of Christ as a theological theme with unparalleled exactness, I use this analysis to elucidate Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation, and by this two-fold investigation I illuminate the nature of the Imitation of Christ.

I must now explain the basis on which material is considered relevant to the subject of the Imitation of Christ, and comment on the place of A' Kempis' De Imitatione Christi.

#### Choice of Imitation Material.

Because the subject of this thesis is the Imitation of Christ, it must consider more material than is provided by the word "imitation" and its cognates. For there are a number of expressions which indicate or imply the presence of the motif of Imitation of Christ, and to limit our study to "imitation" and its cognates would not do justice to the subject under discussion.

The Imitation motif is clearly present in the use of "imitate" and its cognates, and in the idea of doing something, or being, "like Christ". It is implied in references to Christ's life or action as example, paradigm, or model. A reference to the appropriateness of imitation is also implied in questions like What would Jesus do?, or What would Jesus have done? So the activity or attitude of Christ can be used as an ethical or religious legitimation. The assumption here is that he is the model for our imitation. The motif of Imitation is also present in some instances of the portrayal of Christ as the Ideal (the one who possesses certain qualities) or as the Hero (the one who has passed through some ordeal or trial, who is engaged in some

praiseworthy activity, or who has opened up new possibilities for others). The main purpose of this kind of portrayal is usually that of eliciting a response of wonder and admiration and of stirring the imagination. It can also be the case that the portrayal is intended to stimulate some analogous action or attitude which will reflect, however feebly or remotely, the qualities and virtues exemplified in the Ideal or Hero. A parallel theological form of this notion is that of Christ as the paradigmatic or archetypal man, the form of the new or real humanity. An appeal to Imitation need not be made in the context of this language, but the basis for such an appeal is present.

Imitation of Christ can also be used as a post eventum description of a situation even if it has not provided a motivation for the action being described. An account of a martyrdom may provide an instance of this. As the actions, attitude and words of the martyr are recounted, parallels with the suffering and death of Christ are observed (and may be reflected in verbal similarities with the Gospels). Thus the situation is interpreted in terms of an Imitation of Christ.

There may also be a suggestion of the idea of imitation in the words as or because in a sentence like "as (or because) Christ loved, so you ought to love". The first part of such a sentence may only intend a basis for the appeal of the second part: but it may also intend to describe the style of the response expected. There is certainly the possibility of a reference to imitation in such a construction, and it may be intended as the main significance of the sanction. Similarly, the wish that someone exhibits, for example, the patience of Christ may well intend to convey the idea of Christ as the model as well as giver of patience.

The idea of Christ as forerunner, the one who opens the way

may imply the idea of the model to be copied both in the path and style of his movement, as well as describing the one who made the journey possible. Here the Hero clearly expects his disciples to follow him on the same journey. E. J. Tinsley, in The Imitation of God in Christ, suggests that the idea of "the Way" is fundamental to the notion of Imitation (2). The discipleship language of following comes from the same provenance of ideas. Being a disciple is more than being an imitator (it also involves obedience and faith, and a growth in theological understanding), but it usually includes some idea of imitation, either as a separate and discrete element of response, or as a way of interpreting other elements of response.

The basis for an exhortation to Imitation is also found in the theological area of the Image. If Christ is in the image of God, and mankind is to be restored in the image of its Creator, then the idea of Christians as conformed to the image of Christ is an integral part of this process. The basis for appeal to imitation is then clear, even if the appeal is not made on any particular occasion. The idea of "Deification" similarly provides a basis for an appeal to imitate Christ. For the Christian's model of comprehensible divinity is Christ, and so Christ provides a model of divine activities and attitudes.

I have attempted to demonstrate that a study of the Imitation of Christ cannot content itself with a study of the word "imitation" and its cognates. It is necessary to include a variety of expressions which connote imitation in some way. These include statements about Christ which open the possibility and appropriateness of imitation, even if the sanction is not applied in the particular context under consideration. It is also necessary to include material where the notion of Imitation of Christ is employed as an evaluation, even if the subject has not consciously been engaged in imitating Christ.

So also statements about Christ as Ideal, Hero, Forerunner, Image of God are appropriate for consideration, as are the ideas of Discipleship and Deification. Though it must be admitted that there is a danger of including material which is not strictly relevant to the Imitation of Christ, the alternative approach of studying "imitation" and its cognates would not do justice to the subject of the Imitation of Christ. This principle of selection will be used in both sections of this thesis, both in the study of Imitation of Christ in general, and in the study of the Imitation of Christ in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It is of special importance in studying Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, for, as we shall see, he develops a new vocabulary of Imitation. So material used in discussions in this thesis will reflect this decision.

### De Imitatione Christi

In view of the common association of the subject of the Imitation of Christ with Thomas A' Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, it is worth commenting on the relationship between the two. For though that document has influenced the practice of Western Christianity, and affected its theology of Imitation, the Imitation of Christ tradition is wider and more varied than the spirituality of that document. My concern is with the Imitation of Christ, and not just with the document De Imitatione Christi.

What then is the relationship between De Imitatione Christi and the Imitation of Christ? They are commonly equated because of the ubiquity of De Imitatione Christi in the later Western tradition. De Imitatione Christi is found in both Catholic and Protestant piety. Its origin was in the Devotio Moderna of the Brethren of the Common

Life, and it spread through that movement, and provided a spirituality for lay people and religious alike (3). It was used by Ignatius Loyola and in common Catholic piety. It was accepted into Protestantism, albeit occasionally in a truncated version. John Wesley edited and distributed it, Matthew Arnold approved of it, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer had a copy of it with him in prison. Both in its Catholic original and in Protestant reinterpretation it has been so widespread that it has coloured the attitude of Western Christendom to the Imitation of Christ.

However this identification of De Imitatione Christi with the Imitation of Christ, though widespread, is incorrect. A close study of the document and the doctrine reveals that the two should not be equated. De Imitatione Christi was written in the Fifteenth Century, and reflects the New Devotion. Its piety corresponds with only a small part of the rich and varied Imitation tradition of the Church both before and after the writing of the document, as we shall see.

Furthermore a close study of De Imitatione Christi indicates that its subject is not the Imitation of Christ. For the document itself has no general title. De Imitatione Christi is the incipit of the first of the four books which make up the document, and may only indicate the subject of the first chapter of the first book. So it is wrong to assume that the phrase De Imitatione Christi was intended to be the title of the whole document, or to indicate its subject (contra Spaapen (4)). In fact a study of the contents of the document shows that it is a collection of relatively unconnected material, and that each chapter has its own subject. The only book with a common theme is book four, which concentrates on the Eucharist (5). Of the one hundred and fourteen chapters which comprise the document, only six

are devoted to the theme of Imitation, and there are six brief references in other chapters (6). The document originally had no general title; it was at first called Ecclesiastical Music, or Harmony of the Inner Life, and only later did the incipit of the first chapter become the title of the whole document (7). So the Imitation of Christ is not the subject of De Imitatione Christi.

However although the equation of the Imitation of Christ with De Imitatione Christi may be incorrect, the document has influenced the Western Imitation tradition because the piety of the document has commonly been associated with the doctrine. The piety of the document is that of the Brethren of the Common Life, and it has distinctive characteristics. It is a piety of the passive virtues of humility, death of self, and the negation of the excesses of affection, company, the world, and conversation (8). It summons to a life of solitude, obedience, self-denial, and suffering (9). Its concentration on the inner life is reflected in its individualistic approach to the Sacrament (10). It expects nothing of the world other than temptation and tribulation (11).

The kind of Imitation of Christ enjoined by the document reflects and expresses this same piety. Most of the references to Imitation of Christ are concerned with suffering. There is an antithesis between the Imitation of Christ and the vanities of the World (12). The disciple is to follow Christ, to imitate his manners, life, and death, and to endeavour to conform his whole life to him. The noble love of Jesus inspires great deeds and arouses a desire for more perfection (13). It is the work of Grace to exhort men to become like the Son of God by virtues, to reshape the inner man according to the image of God (14). Conformity to Christ is conformity to his cross, his way of suffering. "He went before, bearing his Cross, and died

for thee on the Cross: that thou mightest also bear thy Cross, and desire to die on the Cross with him" (15). This is the "Royal way of the Holy Cross", it is to drink the cup of his passion (16). It is total self-denial after the example of the oblation of Christ (17). Nothing is kept back from sacrifice, the disciple is to be stripped of all that is his, and naked to follow Jesus naked (18). The result of this is a change of character:

Then all vain imaginations, evil perturbations,  
and superfluous cares shall fly away. Then  
also immoderate fear shall leave thee, and  
inordinate love shall die (19).

To imitate Christ is to withdraw with Jesus from the crowd and to suffer rejection by men (20). It is in the inner life that God is to be met. To imitate Christ is also to bear one's miseries calmly and to submit humbly in obedience, in brokenness of will (21). Understanding the truth of God is vain and impossible unless there is an endeavour to conform one's whole life to him. The example of Christ is an encouragement and an enlightenment to the weak (22).

So the piety of De Imitatione Christi, including its brief comments on the Imitation of Christ, has affected the Imitation of Christ tradition. It has led to the association of the notion of Imitation of Christ with a piety that is introspective and individualistic, which is in retreat from the world and from human company, and which expects only temptation or persecution from other people. It is a piety which concentrates on suffering, rejection, and the annihilation of the self. It rejects aids to religion in favour of pure trust in God, and is suspicious of intellectualism.

It is the purpose of this thesis to discover the nature of the Imitation of Christ. One of the means by which this is achieved is by rejecting inadequate descriptions of the Imitation of Christ. De Imitatione Christi does include a notion of Imitation, but it only

represents a part of the Imitation tradition. In our study of the Imitation tradition, and in particular in our study of Bonhoeffer we will discover that the Imitation of Christ may also be expressed in more positive terms.

So the study of the Imitation of Christ must extend beyond the boundaries of the imitation word-group and of the piety of De Imitatione Christi. In our study of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation we will employ the same criteria for the selection of material relevant to Imitation.

In this first chapter I have described the purpose and method of this thesis and explained the way in which sources will be used and the criterion for the selection of material, that of its relevance to the subject of the Imitation of Christ. I have also shown why a study of Imitation cannot restrict itself to the document De Imitatione Christi.

In the next chapter we study and analyse the phenomenon of the Imitation of Christ within the writings of the Christian tradition.

## SECTION ONE : THE IMITATION OF CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE PHENOMENON OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

Introduction.

In this chapter we analyse the Imitation of Christ tradition within the writings of Christianity. As we discovered in the last chapter, material relevant to this analysis is not confined to a word study of imitation or a study of De Imitatione Christi. Our inquiry is into the Imitation of Christ as a theological theme, and our aim in this chapter is to discover the width of the Imitation tradition.

The division of the chapter is three-fold; ethical, religious, and mystical Imitation. This division is useful because the practice of Imitation can involve action in each of these areas, because some instances of Imitation theology concentrate in one area rather than the others, and because each area has its own particular features and problems. However the boundaries between ethics, religion and mysticism are rarely clear, and in any case many instances of Imitation fall into more than one of these categories. Indeed I will argue in Chapter Five that Imitation of Christ is an activity that is ethical, religious, and mystical. For the purpose of this chapter, however, we will work with this division of the material, though the fact that the divisions

are called "strands of the tradition", rather than different traditions, reflects and coheres with the argument for the unity of the Imitation tradition to be made in Chapter Five.

As was stated in the last chapter, quotations are used as material for the phenomenology of the Imitation tradition, and do not attempt to be typical or adequate representation of their authors' thought. Repetition of material will also occur because of the thematic method of this thesis. Material from Bonhoeffer is not included because his theology of Imitation will be discussed in the second section of this thesis.

Although the title of the first part of this chapter is Ethical Imitation, for convenience I include material that is better described by the more general term behaviour because it does not raise ethical issues.

### 1. Ethical Imitation.

The material of this part of the chapter is arranged under the following headings: (a) Examples of Ethical Imitation, (b) Imitation of Christ's actions and attitudes, (c) Imitation in actions or attitudes, (d) The practice of Imitation as a test of Christianity, (e) Imitation and Suffering, (f) Imitation and Service, (g) Christ the Ideal of Humanity. In (a) we will discover the kind of Imitation with which this part of the thesis is concerned. In sections (b) and (c) we study the issue of whether Christ's actions or his attitudes ought to be imitated, and the related issue of whether Imitation ought to be expressed in actions or in attitudes. This is a matter of debate in the Imitation tradition. Sections (d), (e), (f) are concerned with different

uses of Imitation as a test of Christianity, in suffering and service, and they illustrate the variety of contexts in which Imitation in daily behaviour may be employed. Section (g) is a more idealistic use of Christ as exemplar, and provides a bridge to the next part of the chapter.

(a) Examples of Ethical Imitation.

The tradition of Ethical Imitation finds its origin in the New Testament. In the gospels, the ideal of service is commended by the example of Christ (1), and the idea of "following" includes some idea of imitation (2). The Lukan version of the serving saying occurs in the context of the Last Supper (3), and in John 13 the idea of humble service is portrayed and commended (4). Mutual love within the group of the disciples is also commended after the example of Christ (5). In the Epistles the Imitation of Christ is to be expressed in terms of love (6), generosity (7), pleasing one's neighbour rather than oneself (8), unity of heart and humility (9), forgiveness (10), and meekness and gentleness (11). It is interesting to note that most of these references do not point to specific actions in the life of Christ for imitation, but look to general statements about the action and character of Christ. They are also mostly concerned with relationships within the Christian community, and not with those outside.

A description of Ethical Imitation in later theology is found in the writings of John Chrysostom. He employs the theme of the Ethical Imitation of Christ under the idea of Christ as the good teacher (12). The actions of Christ are those of a patient teacher who paces himself to his children and condescends to their weakness. His lived obedience is also an encouragement to the weak (13). So the teacher commands, and then instructs by his example. The disciple

learns gentleness and patience, prayer for his enemies, to do good to his enemies, poverty, the way to pray, humility, and consent to the Father's will (14). The purpose of this exercise is two-fold: to lift disciples above their human nature and make them like God, and to train them to be compassionate teachers in their turn (15).

(b) Imitation of Christ's Actions or Attitudes.

Whereas, as we have seen, John Chrysostom refers to particular actions of Christ as worthy of imitation, an alternative method of imitation derives its inspiration from the attitudes of Christ, rather than his actions. R. L. Ottley, for instance, understands that an education in ethics needs a human model, and that in Christianity Christ is this model (16). He points to the dependence, obedience and love which characterise the attitude of the Son to the Father. He indicates that 'active morality' is the keynote in ministering love to humanity (17). This is to be expressed in justice, forgiveness, compassion in attitudes to others, and in temperance, fortitude (including resentment of evil) and moral courage (18).

Whereas Chrysostom used specific instances from the life of Christ as the basis for an ethical appeal, Ottley has interpreted the character and attitudes of Christ, and used that character as the basis for the Christian call. C. M. Sheldon in In His Steps: What would Jesus do? employs a different technique. Here the method is to imagine what Jesus would do in the current situation, and then do it. So, for example, Norman, editor of a newspaper, decides not to print a report of a prize-fight, and to cease accepting advertisements for whisky and tobacco because he imagines that Christ would not do these things (19). Sheldon also uses a theological statement about Christ as the basis for

an action with ethical consequences as, for example, when two men rent a building in the slums and live in it in imitation of the Christ<sup>who</sup> left his Father's house and came to Bethlehem and Nazareth (20). So it can be seen that a variety of styles can be used to produce ethical expressions of the Imitation of Christ. Charles de Foucauld's understanding of the Imitation of Christ is similar to that of Charles Sheldon in this respect. He too is concerned to ask the question 'What would Jesus do?' and then imitate that action, and he also makes use of the Hidden Years idea in imitating Christ in his obscure poverty (21).

So these examples of the ethical notion of Imitation of Christ evidence variety both in the actions and attitudes being encouraged, and in the methods used to interpret Christ and to determine what actions and attitudes ought to be imitated.

The idea of the ethical imitation of Christ in the writings of Karl Barth includes both an appeal to the character of Christ, and also an appeal to particular actions for imitation. So, for Barth, Christ is "the true and normal form of human nature" (22). The Christian is called to a life of love in response to God's love. God's love is both motive and form of that response:

[He] loves ... he is called to follow as a man the movement in which God Himself is engaged; to do as a man, and therefore in the form of a reflection or analogy, that which God does originally and properly (23).

The word analogy is important. To imitate is to behave analogously. By this word Barth points both to the similarity and dissimilarity between Christ and his actions and Christians and their actions. The model for the Christian response (correspondence) to God is Jesus Christ: "... Jesus Christ is the electing God ... also elected man " (24). This reflection of Jesus Christ in the Church finds expression in the events of everyday life:

... it takes place ... as the life, choices, thought, speech and activity of the men united here, follow the life movement of Jesus Christ as their model, either well or badly imitating, reflecting, illustrating and attesting it (25).

So, for example, Christians are to imitate Christ's love for his enemies (26), and the humility of faith exemplified in Christ:

For in this way it (faith) imitates Jesus Christ in whom it believes, it corresponds to him, it has a similarity with the One who 'for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich' (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Similarity with Him in the high mystery of the condescension in which as the Lord He became a servant, in which as a child He lay in a crib in the stall at Bethlehem, in which in Jordan He entered the way of penitence, in which He was hungry and thirsty and had nowhere to lay His head, in which He washed the feet of His disciples, in which He prayed alone in Gethsemane, in which He was rejected by Israel and judged and condemned by the Gentiles, in which He hung in opprobrium on the Cross of Golgotha. Faith is a weak and distant but definite echo or reflection of all this. ... an analogy to Jesus Christ in the form of that humility ... a profoundly imperfect correspondence. ... it is inevitable that the divine humility in which Jesus Christ is the righteous man should be the pattern which we who believe in Him should follow (27).

So for Barth, Christians are those whose lives are formed by the grace of God in Christ, whose lives reflect the life of Christ, and so whose lives are analogous to the actions and attitudes of the Christ of the Gospels. It is important to notice that Barth is opposed to a programme "in which we try to shape our lives by the example of the life of Jesus as sketched in the Gospels and the commandments which He gave to His own people and to all men generally" (28). So specific instances of the imitation of Christ derive from a theological response to the work of God in Christ, not from a programme of planned imitation of the life of Christ. Barth then includes specific instances of imitation, but only if they derive from a theological understanding of the significance of Christ.

By way of contrast, John Oman, in Grace and Personality, is opposed to imitation of specific incidents in the life of Christ: he interprets love as the meaning of Christ's life, and claims that true imitation of Christ lies in the exercise of that same love. He is opposed to the imitation of Christ's life and activities because he rejects the idea of an external authority, because of the limited material available, because of the difficulty of finding analogous situations, and because rules do not provide a final answer (29). Instead, he claims:

The influence, therefore, of Christ's example is not to be directly our pattern, but to inspire and succour the faith which sees love to be life's final meaning and last word of power, and so to enable us to discern for ourselves its guidance and to set our hope unwaveringly on its victory (30).

Oman supports the notion of ethical imitation, but not of mimicry or repetition of the actions of Jesus. He provides an ethical interpretation of Christ (love) which is then the key to discipleship.

A slightly different emphasis is found in the writings of William Law. His A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection is a study of the Imitation of Christ, and is basic and prior to his more well-known Serious Call. In Chapter Thirteen of A Practical Treatise, which is entitled "All Christians are required to imitate the Life and Example of Jesus Christ", Law asserts:

When it is said that we are to imitate the life of Christ, it is not meant that we are called to the same manner of Life, or the same sort of Actions, for this cannot be, but it is certain that we are called to the same Spirit and Temper, which was the Spirit and Temper of our Blessed Saviour's Life and Actions. We are to be like him in Heart and Mind, to act by the same Rule, to look towards the same End, and to govern our lives by the same Spirit (31).

This is a similar attitude to that of Oman. But Law is also happy to appeal to specific actions of Christ in order to encourage Christians to

the same actions. So, for example, in A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, Law appeals to the example of Christ in his habit of rising early to pray and of spending whole nights in prayer; and he appeals to the example of Christ and the apostles to support the idea of singing psalms (32). So although Law claims that he is opposed to an appeal to imitate specific actions of Christ, he uses that appeal when it is convenient to do so.

There are then a variety of styles of Imitation. It is possible to refer to specific incidents in the life of Christ as material for imitation, to his attitudes or to both. Imitation of actions runs the danger of being mere mimicry, but imitation of attitudes must relate in some way to the actions of Christ's life if there is to be a credible claim to be imitating Christ.

(c) Imitation in Action or Attitude.

A similar issue is whether the practice of Imitation should be expressed in the imitator's actions, or in his attitudes. G. C. Berkouwer describes this issue in terms of "external" (actions) and "internal" (attitudes) imitation (33).

An unashamed exponent of "external" imitation is Francis of Assisi. Of course he is not attempting to deny "internal" imitation. Perhaps it would be correct to say that such a division is alien to his spirituality. Moorman claims that his ideal was to be "conformed in every act with that of our Blessed Lord" (34). So his absolute poverty was in imitation of the poor Christ, and the same motive is used to support the ideas of fasting, almsgiving, brief sermons, persecutions, kindness towards enemies, washing the feet of others, suffering, and

love (35). The desire to imitate Christ also led Francis to pursue martyrdom (36). He believed that it was only through suffering that he could be fully transformed into Christ, and his reception of the stigmata should perhaps be seen as the answer to that quest (37). This literalistic attitude to the actions of Christ corresponds to his literalistic attitude to the commands of Christ. The problem is not that there is no "internal" imitation in Francis. The problem is that particular expressions of "external" imitation are inextricably bound up with it. Literalism believes and does too much, not too little.

But though it is easy to dismiss imitation of the actions of Christ as literalistic, this also has a positive value. For attitudes must find expression in actions to be recognisably present, both in the life of Christ and in the life of the Christian. It is also true that some imitative actions though not in themselves of value, have a significance because of their symbolic value in terms of public identification with an exemplar. We will discuss this further in the context of Religious Imitation.

A more serious problem in the case of "internal" qualities is that they must be practised in some way to have any reality. The internal needs external expression, both in the case of the exemplar, and in the case of those who imitate. For the assertion of the attitude of Christ needs to be tested against his actions. Is the notion of love adequate to cope with the variety and complexity of Jesus' actions, for example? If there is an attitude, it should find its expression in actions. But all "external" actions must be taken into account. Do all the actions of Christ illustrate the single attitude of love? Similarly, to engage in "internal" imitation in the sense of fashioning mind, temper and will is pointless unless it finds "external" expression

in actions. For the Imitation of Christ must be expressed in practice for it to have any reality.

This emphasis on the actions of imitation will be developed theologically in Chapter Five. It is now developed in terms of a test of the presence of Christianity.

(d) The practice of Imitation as a Test of Christianity.

Another use of the ethical or behavioural Imitation of Christ is that of a test for the presence of real Christianity. The presence or absence of the ethics of Christianity is an obvious test of the reality of Christian commitment: it is the test of "fruit" or "works", without which claim of faith is found wanting. But the presence or absence of the ethical practice of the Imitation of Christ provides a particularly effective and telling test of the reality of the Christian claim. So, for example, in De Imitatione Christi:

Jesus hath now many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of his Cross. He has many desirous of consolation, but few of tribulation. He finds many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoice with him, few are willing to endure any thing for him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion (38).

Here the emphasis is more on behaviour (suffering) than ethics, but for the writer conformity to Christ is a moral issue (39).

Erasmus, that effective critic of the Church of his day, also made pointed use of the Imitation of Christ in ethics and behaviour to test the presence of real Christianity. In The Handbook of the Militant Christian, he attempts to pursue real Christianity in terms of the obedience of the inner man. Against the mere outward form of Christianity he commends the inner reality and he identifies this inner

reality in part by the ethical Imitation of Christ. Of those who pray for a healthy body from St Roch, he says "It would be perfect if they, in disease and misfortune, make their real joy consist in this, that they have conformed their lives to Christ the Head" (40). Again he says of pilgrimage "If it is to a man's credit that his body walks in Christ's footsteps, it is more to his credit that his mind has followed the way of Christ" (41). To leaders he says "And in governing let your guide be Christ rather than your predecessor in office" (42). To those who venerate the Cross he says "The true value of the Cross, however, is in profiting from its many examples. You cannot say that a person loves Christ if he does not follow His example" (43). His desire is that his readers may be humble after the example of Christ, and that their "transformation" and "perfect manhood" may be hastened (44). So his "sixth rule" is that "if we would be holy, we must go to the sole archetype of godliness, Christ Himself." A rule that is, he says "... observed by too few of those who claim to be followers of Christ" (45).

Erasmus' satirical use of the Imitation of Christ is directed in part against those who imitate in outward form and not in inward reality. Kierkegaard, another effective critic of his own contemporary Christianity, makes a similar use of the Imitation of Christ in attacking those who have doctrine, but not life. Again it is the practice of the Imitation of Christ which is the sign of the presence of true Christianity. Whereas Erasmus, in the context of Catholic practice, looks for the inner reality of the Imitation of Christ in addition to the outward show, Kierkegaard, in the context of Lutheran orthodoxy, looks for the outward practice of Imitation to complement belief. Both use the Imitation of Christ as a way of criticising established religion, and it proves an effective tool in their hands. So in Judge for Yourself,

Kierkegaard writes: "And therefore imitation must be introduced. To the professor corresponds Christianity as objective teaching, as mere doctrine" (46). Not only the State Church but also the neo-Pietistic Community of Brethren fail to achieve the external Imitation of Christ (47). For "Christianity is not doctrine. Christianity is a believing and a very particular kind of existing corresponding to it - imitation" (48). Doctrine is not the only escape used from active imitation: "the only kind of adoration God requires is imitation. Man is willing to do only one thing - adore the prototypes" (49). So for all, Imitation is the test of true Christianity: " 'Imitation', 'the following of Christ', this precisely is the point where the human race winces, here it is principally that the difficulty lies, here is where the question really is decided whether one will accept Christianity or not" (50).

This concentration on the outward exterior reality of Christianity marks a development in Kierkegaard's thinking (51). It is reflected in a concentration on Ethics, on Suffering, and on the scandal of Christ. These three are expressed in Christianity in the Imitation of Christ. The ethical practice of Christianity is Imitation: "Earnestness lies specifically in the ethical ... The issue is heaven or hell - and this is the reason for wanting to imitate him ..." (52). Another behavioural test for the presence of Christianity is the test of suffering after the example of Christ: "To suffer for the doctrine - ... in such a way to follow the Pattern that one suffers for being a Christian!" and "Christ is the Pattern, and to this corresponds imitation. There is only one true way of being a Christian - to be a disciple. The 'disciple' has this mark among others, that he suffers for the doctrine" (53). Christians must suffer, as Christ

suffered, as a scandal to the world: "that in all things they may become like their master, Christ, and receive the blessing he promises all who suffer persecution for his name's sake" (54). Kierkegaard attacks not only the Christianity of his own day, but also the Christianity of any age, by the test of the Imitation of Christ (55). For the Imitation of Christ is the sign of the true practice of Christianity. "For the proof of Christianity really consists in 'following'" (56). A Kempis, Erasmus, and Kierkegaard provide good examples of the use of the Imitation of Christ in ethics and behaviour as a test of the presence of true Christianity.

This section also includes material which is better described as behaviour rather than as ethics. For example, although martyrdom may involve ethical decisions, it is not necessarily in itself a moral act. But it is a kind of behaviour which is appropriate to the Imitation of Christ. This kind of material is included under the heading of Ethical Imitation for the sake of convenience. The subject of suffering will also arise in the section on Mystical Imitation later in this chapter.

#### (e) Imitation and Suffering.

We now study that part of the tradition of the Imitation of Christ which concentrates on the via crucis and expresses itself in terms of self-denial, suffering and death. The genesis of this tradition is found in such sayings as Mark 8:34 "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". The destiny of the disciple is determined by the destiny of the Christ: his cup and baptism are theirs (57). The meaning and content of the

command is difficult to determine (58) and so a tradition of flexibility has grown up, in which the response of self-denial, suffering, or death has been determined by the context and character of the disciple as much as by the meaning of the text. There is such a concentration on the via crucis in the Gospels that it has been suggested that one of the purposes of the Gospels, and especially of Luke - Acts, is to present Jesus as the Model Martyr (59). It is easy to see the appropriateness of such a motif in an ambience of persecution. Perhaps in the trial narratives Christ is, in contrast to Peter, a good witness in suffering and persecution (60). The notion of Christ as Model Martyr is most clearly seen in 1 Peter 2:18-25. In the context of unjust suffering (= persecution?) there is an appeal to the example of Christ. The style of his response to unjust suffering is prescriptive for his followers "... to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly". So also in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, the Church is described as having become "imitators of us and of the Lord" in that they received the word "in much affliction ...". In Revelation, Jesus Christ is described as "the faithful witness", the one who has conquered in tribulation (61), and in Hebrews 12:1-3 there is a call to consider and run after the one who endured the cross and the hostility of sinners.

Even when there is no persecution, there is the call to self-denial after the example of Christ. The context of the appeal to the example of Christ in Philipians 2 is that of Church conflict, and there is a contrast drawn between selfishness, conceit and self-interest on the one hand, and the selflessness and self-denial of Christ on the

other (62). Similarly in Romans 15:1-3, also in a context of conflict within the Church, there is an appeal to the example of Christ who "did not please himself". In 2 Corinthians 8:9 an exhortation to liberality is supported by the example of Christ's self-giving: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich".

The call to self-denial, suffering and death is an appeal to close conformity with Christ. So the desire to "share his sufferings" is a desire to become "like him in his death" (63). So it is possible to detect a link between realistic participation in Christ's sufferings and transformation to the death of Christ, an Imitation of Christ (64). The appeal to self-denial may point to the Incarnation, life, or death of Christ, or to particular actions in his life. Self-denial is integral to discipleship, is a real conformity to Christ, and is often the subject of an appeal to follow Christ. It may result in ethical discipline, suffering, persecution, or death. This will depend in part at least, on the context of the imitator. There is, in the "movement" of Christ himself, a similar variety of expressions of self-denial.

It was perhaps because of the historical situation of Ignatius of Antioch, and also because of the impact of the Imitation tradition, that he viewed imitation in terms of suffering and death after the example of Christ. "Let me imitate the Passion of my God" is a desire to be Christian not in name only but in fact (65). The reality of the suffering of Christians was important for Ignatius' anti-Docetic polemic. For if the imitators of Christ suffer, then Christ really suffered (66). Ignatius can be accused of an obsession with martyrdom, which may be an unfortunate effect of an emphasis on the imitation of Christ. But

certainly he can suggest other ways in which Christ can be imitated, for example in deeds and silence, in obedience, and in unity (67).

It is interesting to compare Ignatius' notion of the imitation of Christ in martyrdom, and his desire for death, with the attitude of Polycarp of Smyrna reflected in the Martyrdom. The author endeavours to show that his was a martyrdom "conformable to the gospel". The two signs of this conformity are waiting to be betrayed (not courting death) and doing this out of a concern for others. This is martyrdom which is an imitation of Christ (68). The author also points to those incidental features which were common to the martyrdom of Christ and of Polycarp. Polycarp was betrayed by one of his own house, and his betrayer is thus referred to as Judas: the name of the chief of police was in fact Herod. Polycarp was pursued "as a robber", and was brought into the city on an ass on the Sabbath. He was however burnt rather than crucified: this does not disqualify him from being counted as an imitator of Christ (69). So where details are analogous to the martyrdom of Christ, the similarity is indicated: but dissimilarity does not disqualify the martyr from the title of imitator. Conformity to the gospel is found in care for others and patient endurance. Martyrs are to be loved as "disciples and imitators of the Lord", and Christians may follow in their footsteps (70). It is interesting to note here a well developed theology of martyrdom as an imitation of Christ: the martyrs are not to be worshipped as Christ is worshipped, though they are honoured in burial-place and anniversary, and loved for their witness (71). M. Hadas suggests that the language of Christian martyrdom (beginning with the martyrdom of Polycarp) is derived from the martyrdom of Eleazor in 4 Maccabees, which is itself influenced by the story of the death of Socrates (72). But even if the language is derived in some sections, there is theological awareness in the martyrdom of Polycarp of the relative

significance of Polycarp and the Lord Christ, and also of what kind of martyrdom is appropriate for an imitator of Christ.

The Motif of self-denial, suffering, and martyrdom is also found as we have seen in the spirituality of Francis of Assisi. To follow Christ is to walk in his footsteps and poverty, to walk in humility, to follow the good Shepherd in suffering and death. The example of Jesus encourages the disciple to fast, embrace poverty, endure persecution and the Cross. Francis is open to any form of imitation that pleases Christ and follows his footsteps and poverty, and produces a piety that emphasized self-denial and suffering in austerity, poverty and humility (73). His burning desire for martyrdom was for a fitting climax to a life of self-offering. According to Celano, Francis felt that his last infirmity was harder than any martyrdom (74), so in a sense, his desire for martyrdom was not frustrated. So his life of imitation of Christ in poverty, suffering, self-denial, and obedience was fulfilled in his death (75). So the desire for martyrdom has returned, and Francis' view of the life of Christ, utter poverty, suffering, self-denial and obedience, governs his spirituality. The stigmata are a sign of what is already present, a likeness of the crucified Christ.

De Imitatione Christi speaks of a different world, but of the same spirituality. There is no martyrdom, but there is the task of daily self-denial and self-mortification. Although, as has been stated, the Imitation of Christ is not a major theme of this document, references to it express ideas of self-denial after the example of Christ. Conformity to Christ is conformity to his Cross, the way of suffering. The disciple must bear his cross, and die on the cross. The way of suffering is the King's way of the holy cross. The disciple must deny himself, forsake all, drink the cup of Christ's passion. As Christ hung naked on the cross, so he must be stripped bare of all self-interest: he

is naked to follow Jesus naked. This is an imitation in personal attitudes - the end of all vain fancies, unrighteous anxieties, superfluous cares, immoderate fears, and inordinate love. To imitate Christ is to withdraw from the crowd, to bear one's miseries calmly, to submit in humility and in brokenness of will (76). Self-control, self-negation, self-isolation, and self-denial are the marks of this piety. Here is the most individualistic, personal, and moral form of the ideal of self-denial after the example of Christ. It is not self-denial to help others, it is pure self-denial and suffering after the example of Christ.

Luther shares with A'Kempis the ideas of imitation of the sufferings of Christ, of Christ's self-denial, but the context of this notion in his theology is in conscious contrast to that of A'Kempis. His is a theology of the cross of a very different kind. For Luther, following in Christ's footsteps is faith, the way of the cross is not man's way to God, but God's way to man. For A'Kempis, the cross is a sign of an ethic, for Luther, the means of God's gift (77). Luther is certain that Christ is example, but to know Christ is to recognise him firstly as gift and secondly as example (78). For Luther, Christ is an example of self-denial and suffering, but he is also an example of faith in response to suffering, and an example of loving care for others (79). Imitation is a response, not a means of salvation, so the imitator can be overwhelmed by the example without being in despair, and is set free to serve others. This is a very different theological use of the motif of imitative self-denial to that found in De Imitatione Christi.

Yet, as Kierkegaard discovered, Lutheranism neglected the imitation of Christ in favour of a Christianity of doctrine. Kierkegaard's appeal to the imitation of Christ was an appeal for suffering as the evidence of true Christianity:

'Imitation', 'the following of Christ', this precisely is the point where the human race winces, here it is principally that the difficulty lies, here is where the question really is decided whether one will accept Christianity or not ..... it is <sup>the</sup> part of the true Christian to suffer for the doctrine. To suffer for the doctrine - in such a measure only to serve one master, in such a way to follow the Pattern that one suffers for being a Christian!... 'Imitation' must again be introduced ..... 'Luther did not do away with the following of Christ, nor with the voluntary imitation ... they transformed the Lutheran passion into a doctrine... Imitation must be introduced, to exert pressure in the direction of humility.... The 'disciple' has this mark among others, that he suffers for the doctrine' (80).

Kierkegaard moves from a notion of the passive acceptance of suffering to an active willingness to suffer, yet it remains inappropriate for a Christian to have himself put to death (81). But his notion of imitation is individualistic and self-centred, which is perhaps the result of asking the question "What is the mark of a true Christian?" The idea of imitation of Christ in terms of service to neighbours has been lost. Perhaps it is a mistake to see self-denial and suffering as an end in itself. Has Kierkegaard made a mistake about the example of Christ in this regard? For suffering which is a witness to the truth is part of Christianity, but is not adequate as an expression of man's responsibility for his neighbour. On the other hand, Kierkegaard does not fall into the snare of thinking that any suffering can be described as an imitation of Christ. "To suffer in likeness with Christ does not mean to encounter the unavoidable with patience, but it means to suffer ill at the hands of men because as a Christian or by being a Christian one desires and strives after the good, so that one could avoid the suffering by ceasing to will the good" (82). Suffering after the likeness of Christ may involve both of these, but at least Kierkegaard does not have that religious obsession with all suffering which is the danger of the imitator of the suffering Christ.

The model of Christ's self-denial may result in self-negation, self-defeat, or personal annihilation. This is perhaps best understood as Kenosis, in terms of the self-emptying of Christ in Philippians 2 (83). This self-emptying may be active, in that it persists in self-denial, in self-immolation, or passive if it becomes submissively helpless. An aspect of Russian spirituality has been styled "Kenotic" by G. P. Fedotov (84). He claims that this is a peculiar Russian type of spirituality, marked by humility and non-heroic suffering. For example, Theodosius wore uncouth clothing and worked with slaves, thus attaining social deprecation after the example of Christ. His religious inspiration derived from contemplation of the human nature of Christ, of his descent to earth (85). So poverty, humility and love express a Christ-like character (86). This weakness, this poverty, appears to be foolishness, as did Christ in his Kenosis. Fedotov claims that there is something distinctive too about this humility, which marks it as Russian and Kenotic rather than Byzantine and hierarchic. His humility abases itself not only before God and the rich, but also before the poor, after the example of Christ (87). A later radical manifestation of Kenoticism, which flourished in the Sixteenth Century and has continued in Russian religious thought, is that of holy foolishness (88). A holy fool may feign madness or immorality; his purpose will be to avoid pride, to humiliate himself. He will witness to the disjunction between this world and the New Age, and may perform prophetic actions. So this Kenoticism is as much a ministry to others as it is a search for salvation. N. Gorodetzky has illustrated how this Kenoticism became a national ideal in Russia in the Nineteenth Century and produced characters like Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's The Idiot. The path of

humiliation is the way of submission, weakness and tears (89).

A comparable tradition is found in the "Hidden life of Jesus" spirituality of the French School (90). This concentrates on the weakness of Jesus, his failure, his poverty and misunderstanding, his solitariness and obscurity. A variation on this pays particular attention to the "hidden years" at Nazareth, marked by obscurity, labour and submission. The imitation of the Christ of those hidden years, the copying of Nazareth, was a feature of the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld. He later came to a wider understanding of the meaning of the Imitation of Christ (91).

This concentration on Kenotic imitation of Christ, of absolute and conscious self-denial can be compared with a more secular and unintentional imitation of Christ's suffering in Beckett's Waiting for Godot. The context is one of futile suffering, the world is one of "reasons unknown" (92). Whereas Christ "crucified quick", the tedium of prolonged and meaningless suffering is the lot of Estragon.

Vladimir: But you can't go barefoot.  
 Estragon: Christ did.  
 Vladimir: Christ! What's Christ got to do with it?  
 You're not going to compare yourself to  
 Christ!  
 Estragon: All my life I've compared myself to him.  
 Vladimir: But where he was it was warm, it was dry.  
 Estragon: Yes. And they crucified quick (93).

This last example indicates that the notion of the Imitation of Christ easily passes outside the context of Church, and in doing so, inevitably changes in meaning. The power of the story of Christ is such that it is attractive in contexts other than the Christian Church.

So there is considerable variety in the expression of self-denial, suffering and death in Imitation of Christ. It is a precarious activity, for the cross can so easily be misunderstood and misused (94).

Yet this element in the Imitation of Christ tradition is an inescapable part of it, if also one of the most vulnerable.

This study of the Imitation of Christ in suffering has concentrated on the ethical aspects of suffering, and on suffering in behaviour. The element of mystical suffering after the example of Christ will be studied below, and the issue of suffering after the example of Christ will recur in our study of Bonhoeffer.

The next subject in this study of Ethical Imitation is Imitation and Service. This strand of the tradition is in contrast to the more introvert notions of Imitation, and will also be developed further in the discussion of Bonhoeffer's theology.

(f) Imitation and Service.

W. A. Whitehouse, in his *Essay in the Christological understanding of Diakonia* points to some of the distinctive features of Christ the model of service (95). Behind this aspect of Imitation of Christ lie the two important texts of Mark 10:43-5 and John 13:1-17, the first describing true greatness in the kingdom as service and slavery after the example of the Son of man who came to serve and give his life, and the second includes an acted parable of service, the washing of the disciples' feet. Whitehouse comments that for Christ the humble role of diakonos involved degradation and destruction (96). In linking the idea of diakonos with death, the ideal of total self-giving in service is embodied in Christ. But the Cross is the beginning as well as the end of the road: those who imitate the service of Christ know his ministry to them, those who wash the feet of others have themselves been cleansed by Christ. The service of others will of course be mundane as well as spiritual (97):

Whitehouse quotes the words of Luther in his Treatise on Christian liberty:

As our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, so we ought freely to help our neighbour through our body and its works, and each should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all; that is, that we may be truly Christians...[So the Christian is] a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all (98).

For, according to Luther, the story of Christ, including the miracles, is full of examples of loving action which should prompt Christians to similar deeds of mercy (99). So also Barth, following the model of the Servant-Lord, writes of the imitation of Christ's diaconal service of mankind, both on the higher level of ideas and on the lower level of the ordinary needs of humanity (100). This service is motivated by and expressed in love, the love of 1 Corinthians 13, the love of Christ (101).

A different context for this Imitation in Service is found in Liberation Theology. So for Leonardo Boff, for example, Christ is the example and prototype-archetype of what we ought to be; he is our destined image, the fulness of divine and human communication. He is the archetype of the most perfect individuation, the archetype of God. He realised the "christic" structure in an absolute manner, and thus is the paradigm of what will happen to all human beings and to the whole creation. The following of Jesus means putting utopia into practice: not in "mere imitation" but allowing for the differences in situation. Liberation will involve the same journey for us as it did for Jesus: conflict, sacrificing love, hope, faith, cross and resurrection. Liberation is political, social, economic, and religious, and to follow Jesus means to follow through with his work, and attain his fulfillment (102). So liberation is complete liberation,

and Christ is the liberator. For Gutiérrez, conversion to Christ means "a radical transformation ... thinking, feeling, and living like Christ ..." (103). For Sobrino, the resurrection of Jesus is the paradigm of liberation, and the mission inaugurated by the resurrection is the transforming praxis of the following of Jesus. Following is a line of action similar to that of Jesus, and structurally akin to it. It is directed towards the public sector, and will experience the same conflicts as those Jesus faced (104).

Liberation theology prefers the term "following" to "imitation" because the latter allows for the difference in situation between Jesus and the Church. It uses discipleship, following, because it is concerned with the practice of Christology, not its statement, and because the centre of Christianity is in life, not in worship or theology. Following Jesus speaks of hope, conflict, determination and sacrifice, of death for others, so the appeal to the example of Christ is seen as particularly relevant to Liberation Theology (105). It is easy to see the appeal of the notion of the Imitation of Christ to Liberation Theology, and that context proves illuminating and instructive. The idea of the Imitation of Christ in political action will recur in our study of Bonhoeffer.

Another instance of this style of Imitation is the portrayal of Christ as the model Teacher in the style of his teaching. So William Law claimed "... he lived as infallibly as he taught, and it is as irregular, to vary from his Example, as it is false, to dissent from his Doctrines" (106). The model of Christ the Teacher is as concerned with the style of his teaching as with its content.

John Chrysostom's primary concern in pedagogy was morality, and he viewed Christ as a patient teacher:

Do you not see that many of Christ's actions were done to be an example to us? A master paces himself to the falterings of little children as they learn to read. So too with Christ ... For ... knowledge gained through experience is the most efficacious ... This is why our Saviour, having come to form us in the practice of all virtues, while telling us what we must do, begins Himself by doing it. ... He shows us how we are to practice humility. How does he show us? Having taken a towel, He washed the feet of His disciples ... It is no longer by His words but by His acts that He teaches us (107).

Similarly James Stalker, in Imago Christi, looks at the example of Christ in ministry as well as in many other areas. Christ is the model Reformer of the Church, Student of Scripture, Philanthropist, Winner of Souls, Preacher, Teacher and Controversialist (108). Stalker is concerned with the methods of Jesus' ministry as a model for Christian ministry.

So these instances of the Imitation of Christ in Service include at least three strands; service in terms of ordinary care, service in terms of political action, and service in terms of Christian ministry. The relationship between these three is a recurrent issue within the Church, and it is important to notice that each of them appeals to the example of Christ. This question of the nature of Service in Imitation of Christ will be studied further in our discussion of Bonhoeffer and the Imitation of Christ, and in particular, the nature of political service.

Again in this section we have used material in which the ethical element is not plainly dominant, for instance the material on Christian ministry. It is included here for the sake of convenience.

(g) Christ the Ideal of Humanity.

Our last section in this study of the Imitation of Christ in ethics is concerned with the topic of Christ as the Ideal of Humanity. It is also possible to understand Christ as the Ideal in religious terms, and discussion of that will occur later in this chapter. Our subject here is Christ as ideal man in contexts which are not specifically religious, and our material is drawn from J. R. Seeley, Jung, and Bruce Barton.

J. R. Seeley, in Ecce Homo, includes a notion of Christ as ideal in terms of his life of Enthusiasm, which Seeley appears to understand in terms of human behaviour, not of divine power. So here is a portrayal of Christ as ideal which does not depend on a theistic context (109). Christ practised his own principle of seeking the welfare of others, and his goodness is ten times more powerful in becoming Enthusiasm. For moral warmth does not cleanse: "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic" (110). And Christ is the bringer of Enthusiasm. So our attitude to others is of enthusiastic kindness. This Enthusiasm is the presence of the Holy Spirit, and its pattern is in Jesus Christ, it exists in him in a pre-eminent degree, and is passed on from generation to generation, and so revived in power (111). So Christ is the exemplar of perfect moral virtue in his relation to his fellow-men, and all men of good-will can exercise the same Enthusiasm.

Another kind of idea of Christ as perfect humanity is found in Jung's notion of Christ as an archetype (112). For "the life of Christ is archetypal to a high degree", so "what happens in the life of Christ happens always and everywhere". For Jung asks the rhetorical question: "Are we to understand the imitation of Christ in the sense that we should copy his life ... or in the deeper sense that we are to

live our own proper lives as truly as he lived his in its individual uniqueness." So then it is our duty to realise our own deepest convictions with the same courage and self-sacrifice shown by Jesus. Self-realisation or individuation however, is painful, and results in crucifixion as surely in our case as it did in the case of Jesus (113). Jesus is the archetype of wholeness for those who recognise him as such; he is "an exemplar who dwells in every Christian as his integral personality", while others find self-realisation in being Jews, pagans, or Buddhists (114). There can be more than one archetype, because "archetypes are not determined as regard their content, but only as regard their form" which is "irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent" (115). The idea of the archetype of wholeness is amoral; self-realisation (after the example of Christ) involves the coming to terms with all elements of the personality, evil and good (116). The suffering of Christ is a symbolic parallel to our suffering, and illustrates the general principle that one should embrace one's destiny rather than ignore it (117). Jung's idea of the imitation of Christ is easily criticised from the perspective of Christianity because it does not come to terms with the specific morality reflected and expressed in Christ, but allows for the transfer of Christ's example of self-realisation to any context. This conflict between self-realisation and the example of Christ is further discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. But Jung's notion of the imitation of Christ is a good example of how this notion may be used outside a specifically Christian context. In terms of Christ as exemplifying whole humanity, it is a view which concentrates on his response to himself, rather than to God or his neighbour.

On a different level, and in a different context, Bruce Barton, in The Man Nobody Knows, produced another analysis of the exemplary

manhood of Christ. Christ was the leader: he had personal magnetism, an overwhelming faith in his task, the ability to choose men, unending patience. He was the Outdoor Man; physically strong, so healthy that he created health in others, <sup>was</sup> appealing to women, and of tremendous courage. He was the Sociable Man; went to Weddings, was a popular guest, liked crowds, brought joy and cheer to all, with the message of a good-natured God. Indeed, he can be described as the Founder of Modern Business, because of the success of his organisation, his advertising, his methods. He knew his Father's Business, and made it work (118). For Barton, then, Christ is the paradigm of the perfect man, the successful Business Man who begins with nothing, and created a world-wide concern.

Barton's view of Christ exhibits one of the recurrent problems of the practice of the Imitation of Christ, that of producing as model a Christ who conforms to the expectations of the imitator. This issue will be discussed in Chapter Four in terms of the problems raised by the distance of Christ from his modern-day imitators.

For this study of Christ as Ideal we have chosen examples which do not employ transcendent categories, as examples which do will be studied under Religious Imitation of Christ. However the existence of non-transcendent pictures of Christ as model raises the issue of Imitation and reductionist Christology. This will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The subject of Christ as model for all men, whether religious or not, is studied again in the second section of this thesis, in the light of Bonhoeffer's theology.

This concludes our study of the Imitation of Christ in ethics and in behaviour. In it we have discussed various instances of

Imitation, and studied questions of imitation of Christ's actions or attitudes and of the practice of imitation in action or attitude. We have studied the use of Imitation as a test of the presence of Christianity, and the subjects of Imitation and suffering, and Imitation and service, and the notion of Christ as the Ideal of Humanity. We have studied a variety of styles of Imitation, and identified issues which will recur in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology.

## 2. Religious Imitation.

For the purpose of this study, the category of Religious Imitation includes imitation of the religious life of Christ, and imitation in religious activities. The meaning of this category will become clearer during the course of this study, though it must be admitted that it is at this point that our division of the material into the categories of ethics, religion and mysticism is at its most vulnerable.

However some division of the material is helpful, and the division we have employed does at least illustrate that the Imitation tradition includes instances which are clearly ethical and not religious, or mystical and not ethical, or religious and not ethical. The most difficult instances of Imitation to place in this arrangement are those which consist of actions in which the ethical element is not plainly dominant. We have included some of these instances (e.g. Christian ministry after the example of Christ ) in the first section of this Chapter, under the heading of Ethical Imitation: other instances

of a more formal and liturgical nature occur in this section, under the heading of Religious Imitation.

Our material is arranged under five headings: (a) Christ as model Son, (b) Imitation of the "Movement" of Christ, (c) Christ the Image of God, (d) Christ the receiver of the Spirit, and (e) Imitation in religious actions.

The first four of these derive from the fact that they correspond to four elements of Christology which have their analogy in Christian experience. The fifth is included here for the sake of convenience, and its relevance lies in the fact that it includes actions which are not primarily ethical content, and which have religious significance.

#### (a) Christ as Model Son.

Under this sub-heading we study that style of Imitation which takes as its model the stance of Christ the Son in the Son-Father relationship. The material includes two dimensions of this stance, the passive dimension of dependence and submission, and the active dimension of obedience and offering.

The roots of this Imitation tradition of Christ as the model Son are in the New Testament. The Synoptic Gospels provide two relevant events, the Temptation narrative, and the Garden of Gethsemane. Both of these record a decisive point in the life of Christ, and in both it is Christ's attitude to the Father which is of interest. It is as Christ decides to obey God that his attitude to himself and to the world falls into place. It is likely that at least part of the intention of these narratives is to encourage Christians in temptation or persecution to render the same obedience to the Father after the

example of Christ (119).

There is more material in the Fourth Gospel, as it has an explicit interest in the relationship between Jesus and the Father. The structure Father-Son-Disciples (-World) is an important feature of the theology of the Gospel, and provides occasion for the Imitation motif. So "as the Father has sent me even so I send you" (120)

raises the possibility that the disciples will respond to their sending by Christ as he responded to his sending by the Father. E. J. Tinsley has brought together the relevant material on Imitation of Christ in this Gospel (121). He illustrates the parallelism Father-Son, Jesus-Disciple in the following areas.

1. Dependence. The Son does what he sees the Father doing, apart from Jesus the disciples can do nothing; the Son speaks words from the Father, and the disciples are given their words by Jesus (122).

2. Mission. As the Father sent the Son, so the Son sends the disciples; as he who receives the Son receives the one who sent him, so he who receives the one sent by Jesus also receives him (123). 3. Love (in

Obedience) Jesus has kept the Father's commandments and abides in his love (124). 4. Union. The Father abides in the Son, and the Son

abides in the disciples, and the Son abides in the Father, and the disciples are to abide in the Son (125). The word which summarizes the Son's attitude to the Father is obedience. The obedient Son is an example to his disciples, the sons of God.

The same emphasis on the exemplary obedience of Christ is found elsewhere in the New Testament (126). The well known appeal to the example of Christ in Philippians 2:4-11 is an appeal for obedience as much as it is an appeal for humility. For the next section (vv.12 ff.) takes up the notion of obedience from v.8. So the movement of the passage is "be humble ... as Christ was humble and obedient ... be obedient" (127). So W. D. Davies says: "Christ is for him (Paul)

both the New Torah and also the example of a perfect obedience to that new Torah" (128). Obedience to the Torah is obedience to God.

Similarly in 1 Peter 2:21-25, another classic Imitation text, it is clear that underlying the suffering of Christ and of the Christian is the sanction of the will of God. It is because Christ suffers patiently in doing right, in doing God's will, that he is an example for Christians. The doing of God's will is primary, suffering is a secondary consequence (129). So there is in the New Testament the basis for an appeal to imitate Christ's attitude to the Father.

The notion of the dependence of Christ on the Father is developed by Schleiermacher, and his idea of the imitation of Christ derives from this notion. For Schleiermacher, God-consciousness, dependence, was the decisive feature of Jesus' character. The relationship between Jesus and the Father is central to Schleiermacher's theology, and is the key to Jesus' significance for mankind. It is his God-consciousness which he communicates to men, and so redeems them. It is this which is the significance of Jesus as Example, not the details of his earthly life (130). For the influence of a pattern or teacher is external, and cannot deal with the consciousness of sin (131). Instead, Christians relate their God-consciousness to Jesus, and thus grow by an ever-active susceptibility to his influence (132). Jesus' Urbildlichkeit (ideality), and Vorbildlichkeit (the communication of that ideality), constitute respectively his greatness and his appropriateness as Redeemer (133). So Niebuhr describes his theology as "Christo-morphic" (134). "An advance in the likeness of Christ" (135) is both the means and the end of Christian growth. Here is a notable example of the religious Imitation of Christ, not least because of the centrality of the notion of Imitation to Schleiermacher's theology. It is, at centre, redemption by

participation in Christ's God-consciousness, his sense of dependence on God.

Schleiermacher's emphasis on "dependence" as the key to the relationship of Christ to the Father has the problem of attempting to convey the character of Christ by a single notion. In this context, the result of that emphasis can be seen in that "dependence" then becomes the key to Christian experience (as Christians are imitators of Christ). This results in a restricted understanding of Christianity, as Schleiermacher's use of Imitation is restricted to religious experience. So TeSelle points to Schleiermacher's lack of concern with the particularities of Christ's life, and a restrictive emphasis on the inward life (136). This lack of attention to the detail and action of Christ's life may result in a lack of specific acts of imitation, as we have seen. Again this is the result of an undue emphasis on religious experience in Schleiermacher's theology, which has influenced his notion of Imitation, but also restricted it. Nevertheless, in his positive emphasis on the religious experience of dependence, Schleiermacher is a notable exponent of the religious Imitation of Christ.

The stance of the Son in the Son-Father relationship is developed in a more varied way in the theology of Karl Barth. Of relevance here is the material in which Christ is portrayed as a model in his relationship to his Father. So, for Barth, Christ is the model of right relationship with the Creator, he is the Man (137), he exists to fulfil the will of God, he exists for God, for the service of God, at his disposal (138). Christ is not only the model of creaturehood, he is also the paradigm of exalted man, of man under grace: "This exaltation of Christ is the type and dynamic basis [exemplarisch vorgebildet und dynamisch begründet] for what will take

place and is to be known as the exaltation of man in his reconciliation with God" (139). As Exalted Man, Christ is the "type" of all election (as well as the means) (140), and also the model of the response of man to the Justification of God, faith:

Faith itself, therefore, becomes a poverty, a repetition of this divine downward movement, a human reflection of the existence of the One ... it is an analogy to Jesus Christ ... it will always be similar only in the greatest dissimilarity ... it is in fact a concrete correspondence to the One in whom it believes (141).

It is by grace alone that he becomes Christ, and that we become Christians, so in Jesus is "the destiny of human nature, its exaltation to fellowship with God, and the manner of its participation in this exaltation by the free grace of God" (142). So Willis can claim that the two decisive motifs operative in Christ are humiliation and dependence, that these form the descriptive centre of God's action, and are also crucial for Barth's theological ethics (143). So also human love is a reflection of divine love. "God gives us to participate in the love in which as Father He loves the Son and as Son the Father, making our actions a reflection of His eternal love ..." (144). Here then are a variety of ways in which Christ is a paradigm for humanity. It is worthy of note that Christ is both active and passive model. He is an example of the activity of love, faith, submission, and obedience to the Father. He is also an example of elected man, of the receiver of grace, of exaltation. Barth has a detailed and developed understanding of this aspect of the Imitation tradition.

In Schleiermacher we found an instance of concentration on the passive quality of dependence on the part of the exemplar, and in Barth both passive qualities such as the receiving of grace, and active qualities such as love and service. A theology which concentrates on the activities of Christ in seeking God and in offering

himself to God is found in the writings of Abbot Marmion, such as in Christ the Ideal of the Monk, Christ the Ideal of the Priest, and Christ in His Mysteries. Marmion lays great emphasis on the Imitation of Christ, and applies it particularly to the Monastic and Priestly life. In Christ the Ideal of the Monk he begins with the idea of the search for God, and refers to Christ as the perfect Model of this seeking after God. For Christ came to do the Father's will, and always did that which pleased him (145):

If, as God, Jesus is the term of our seeking, as Man, He is the unique Exemplar ... (146). Therefore all is summed up in constant union with Jesus, in ceaselessly contemplating Him in order to imitate Him, and in doing, at all times, for love, as He did: quia diligo Patrem - the things that please the Father:- Quae PLACITA sunt ei facio semper. This is the secret of perfection (147).

Marmion also views Christ as the model of the priest. The priest, as Christ, is chosen by God (148). Priesthood is a reflection of the priesthood of Christ: the priest takes the place of Christ; "id quod Christus fecit, imitatur" (149). So priests imitate the mysteries, not only in the celebration of the sacrifice, but also in the presentation to God of their whole lives (150).

These examples of Christ as the model in his relationship to the Father represent some of the possibilities of this theme. Others include the ideas of Christ as model recipient of grace and pursuer of goodness (151), Christ the model of faith in God (152), and Christ the model of hope in God (153). The example of Christ is usually applied in two ways, in the Christian's response to the Father, and in the Christian's response to the Son, though Ignatius of Antioch applies it in the realm of response to the church and to the bishop: "Defer to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ did to the Father in the days of his flesh, and as the Apostles did to

Christ, to the Father, and to the Spirit" (154). So the example of Christ's attitude to the Father can be understood and applied in a number of different ways.

This element of the Imitation of Christ tradition is developed in a new way by Bonhoeffer, as will be evident in the second section of this thesis.

(b) Imitation of the Movement of Christ.

The second area of interest in religious imitation is that of imitation and participation in the "movement" or "destiny" of Christ. This "movement" is usually understood in terms of the Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ, though it may also include the Incarnation, the earthly pilgrimage of Christ, and the Ascension and Heavenly Session. Imitation of the "movement" of Christ views both Christ and the imitator as involved in a pilgrimage. It can also find expression in terms of mysticism: our concern here is with its religious manifestation.

E. J. Tinsley claims that the theology of the Way in Old and New Testaments provides the fundamental structure of the Imitation of God in Christ (155). The Way of Israel is the path along which God has guided, and to which the Torah bears witness. God's people are summoned to walk in God's Way, and are promised a restoration through the Way (156). Christianity was first known as the Way, and Tinsley includes the ὁδὸς statements of the Gospels as descriptive of the Way of the Christ, a way of suffering, death, and resurrection. Disciples are called to follow in Christ's Way, to follow after him (157). Following in the Way of Christ is both a religious and an ethical experience, and there is, in the Sacraments, a "mimesis of

paradigmatic events" (158) in which Christians participate in the saving acts of Christ (159). So this theology of the Way is the same as that which I have called imitation of the movement of Christ. It is the experiential realisation of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and the attempt to live in conformity to that shape of life. Whereas our first example of religious imitation paid attention to Christ's attitude and obedience to the Father, this example points to those decisive actions of Christ which shape Christian life. As was mentioned above, there is a diversity of emphasis on the events of Christ's life, and it is easy to see that an imitation of the Incarnation, or the Death, or the Resurrection and Ascension will produce very different kinds of spirituality.

So for example, in De Imitatione Christi, the imitator of Christ is a follower of the Christ who went in suffering to the Cross of suffering. If this is the part of the "movement" of Christ which is emphasized for emulation, then a concentration on self-denial and suffering will result. All the servants of the Cross conform themselves to the Crucified, they travel the King's way of the Holy Cross, they bear their Cross and desire to die on the Cross, because they follow one who bore his Cross, and died on it (160). Christ's action of offering himself on the Cross to the Father is the model for the life of the disciple (161), and self-denial and suffering the contempt of the world is the lot of the servant as of his Master (162). This view of the imitation of Christ is in most respects the same as that of imitating Christ's attitude to the Father, as described above. The differences lie in the notion of journey or pilgrimage, and in the inescapability of the suffering, the power of the "movement" to fashion the lives of the followers. Here it is not so much a moment-by-moment

attitude of Jesus to the Father, rather a realisation that the disciple is already involved in the destiny of the suffering Saviour. So here there is less emphasis on the exercise of the will, and more on the understanding of divine plan and context.

Luther follows a similar theme to that of A' Kempis, though he includes within the suffering of Christ the humility of the incarnate life, focussing, however on the cross. This "Theology of the Cross" then includes a concentration on the humbling of Christ as the focus of the "movement", and a parallel concentration on suffering and humility in Christian experience, and especially in the notion of Christ as example (163). So for Luther: "The incarnation is completed in the cross of Christ ... Christ's emptying is continued in Christians. Christ's attitude and activity is their example" (164). Christians are conformed to Christ when they put on the form of a servant, when the cross is not merely a fact of history, but is erected in the midst of their lives (165). So a more "kenotic" view of the "movement" of Christ, and a concentration on the Cross as the focus of the "movement" results in an imitation in weakness, humiliation and suffering, unrelieved by glory. Bonhoeffer's "Kenotic" view of Imitation will be studied in Chapters Six and Seven.

However a different atmosphere is evoked when there is as much emphasis on the resurrection as the crucifixion in the "movement", as a model for the Christian life. The Imitation of Christ is an important theme in the theology of John Calvin, and imitation of the "movement" of Christ plays its part. At first sight Calvin appears to point only to the suffering Christ (166), but if we go beyond the word "imitation" to its theology, then it is apparent that for Calvin the resurrection as well as the death of Christ form a paradigm for the

Christian life. For self-denial is a form of communion with the dying of Christ: the death of Christ is "a living force which men can encounter as a present powerful factor in the shaping of their character and destiny" (167). But Christian experience is also a participation in Christ's resurrection: regenerate life is already conformed to the celestial life of Christ and is a figure of it (168). Conformity to Christ (of which imitation is a result) is a product of that union that exists between the Head and the members of the body: "It is because Christ lives and is powerful within us that we become conformed to His image" (169). For "participation in the death of Christ is never experienced apart from participation in His resurrection" (170). So for Calvin the resurrection is as powerful a model for the Christian life as is the death, and indeed is inseparable from it. Nevertheless the full power of the resurrection will only be experienced in heaven, so at the present time Christian experience reflects more of the cross of Christ than his resurrection. For the destiny or movement of Christians follows the destiny or movement of Christ; first death, then resurrection. So the transformation of the image is gradual. Yet the Resurrection must be kept in mind. "Let us learn that when the death of Christ is mentioned, we ought always to take in view at once the whole of the three days, that His death and burial may lead us to a blessed triumph and a new life" (171). So in that theology of the Imitation of Christ which sees the "movement" of Christ as paradigmatic for Christian experience, the content and emphasis in the "movement" is of decisive importance for the kind of spirituality which is produced.

Barth has a similar emphasis to Calvin in this respect, though expressed in a different way. Barth's terms are "humiliation" (in which he includes the Incarnation), and "exaltation". But he is

opposed to the idea of two successive "states" of humiliation and exaltation. There is instead an interconnection, which is that "the exaltation of the Son of Man begins and is completed already in and with the happening of the humiliation of the Son of God; and conversely that the exaltation of the Son of Man includes in itself the humiliation of the Son of God, so that Jesus Christ is already exalted in His humiliation and humiliated in His exaltation" (172). So humiliation and exaltation are the two aspects of one movement, not successive states in one movement. Perhaps Calvin achieves the same effect by insisting that "His resurrection is included in His death" (173). Certainly Calvin and Barth can be contrasted with A' Kempis and Luther in their expectation of glory or exaltation in that present experience which is shaped by the "movement" of Christ.

Barth also raises the question of the nature of the relationship between the "movement" of Christ and the human response of imitation, or, in his terms, the relationship between the history of Jesus Christ and the humanity of man, between the extra nos and in nobis of salvation. "How can that which He was and did extra nos become an event in nobis?" (174). Barth rejects two "artificial" solutions, the christomonist and the anthropomonist views. First the christomonist: "On this view the in nobis, the liberation of man himself, is simply an appendage, a mere reflection, of the act of liberation accomplished by Jesus Christ in His history, and hence extra nos." In this view "The question of a human activity corresponding to the divine activity ... is answered by its dismissal as irrelevant" (175). Second the anthropomonist: "On this view it is Jesus Christ, and what took place in His history, extra nos, which is regarded as a mere predicate

and instrument, cipher and symbol, of that which truly and properly took place only in nobis, the subject being none other than man himself." In this view "... the history of Jesus Christ perhaps serves as stimulation, instruction, or aid. Perhaps (but only perhaps) it is even indispensable as an example. But the first moving cause ... is man himself ..." (176). Against these two artificial solutions, Barth places his own view and answer to the question:

The history of Jesus Christ is different from all other histories. ... It is a fruitful history which newly shapes every human life. Having taken place extra nos, it also works in nobis, introducing a new being of every man ... [He] creates in the history of every man the beginning of his new history ... on the path from Bethlehem to Golgotha which Jesus Christ traversed for man as very Son of God and therefore as very Son of Man, the new beginning of his life was posited ... [a man] can and should live his new Christian life which corresponds to, because it follows, the divine transformation of his heart and person which took place there and then (177).

I have cited this discussion because it is an important issue in this area of Imitation theology and Barth points up the powerful effect of the paradigmatic model, the history of or "movement" of Christ. The three views which Barth outlines are also worthy of note because each of them includes the language of Imitation (reflection, example, corresponds and transformation) yet there is real theological diversity between them. This is a warning of the danger of dismissing any view as "merely imitative" without careful investigation of its theology. For there is a great difference between the view of Christ as a necessary example and that of the history of Christ as a divine transformation of the human condition. This same passage will be used again in Chapter Five as material for the study of the topic of Grace and Imitation.

Joseph Sittler expresses a similar view of the "movement"

of Christ as the effective paradigm of Christian living with an illuminating vocabulary (178). The Christian life is engendered by a deed, and that deed is God's deed in Christ: "God's 'loving will-to-restoration' has taken the form of a servant in Christ, and 'having swept down into the nadir of the human situation in time and place, sweeps on, and through, and beyond it'" (179). The Christian life is determined by God, and is "a re-enactment from below on the part of men of the shape of the revelatory drama of God's holy will in Jesus Christ." It is the "same shape of grace", a recapitulation of Christ's descent, death, and ascension in the life of the Church (180). So also Edward Schillebeeckx: "going after Jesus' means first and foremost sharing his lot, his destiny, with him... the disciples at the same time 'enact here and now' what had been accomplished in Jesus' own life" (181). Or, as Augustine wrote in the Enchiridion:

Whatever was done, therefore, in the crucifixion of Christ, his burial, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension into heaven, his being seated at the Father's right hand - all these things were done thus, that they might not only signify their mystical meanings, but also serve as a model for the Christian life which we lead here on the earth (182).

Another significant version of the idea of the movement of Christ as the basis for the Imitation of Christ is Irenaeus' doctrine of Recapitulation, including as it does a statement of the movement of Christ through different stages of human development. Jaroslav Pelikan says of it: "Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation can be read as the most profound theological vindication in the second and third centuries of the universal Christian ideal of the imitation of Christ" (183). Irenaeus' doctrine will be described and discussed in Chapter Four.

The idea of participation in the movement of Christ will be studied again in the section on Bonhoeffer's theology.

(c) Christ the Image of God.

This version of Religious Imitation parallels our previous study of Christ the Ideal of Humanity, but whereas that strand did not necessarily demand a religious context of thought, this strand of course does. Its subject is Christ as the ideal man; man as he ought to be, and as God will make him.

The notion of Christ as image is an important one for Imitation theology, for it links the Imitation of Christ with ideas of Salvation as re-creation and of the transforming power of the Spirit. These ideas will be developed in Chapter Five.

The subject then is that of Christ as the image of God, into whose likeness Christians are being transformed. This is certainly an element in New Testament theology. Christ is the image of God, and as men bear the image of the man of dust, so they will bear the image of the man from heaven (184). This participation involves a gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ *which* is achieved by the Spirit (185). It is worked out in the context of moral behaviour (186), but will only finally be achieved at the end, when lowliness is exchanged for glory, and the transformation will be complete (187).

Augustine, for whom the notion of Image is important, connects Image and Imitation in a productive way. But the connection between Image and Imitation is complicated by the particular views that Augustine has of Image. For man to be transformed into the Image has a two-fold meaning for Augustine. On the one hand it means transformation into the Image of the Son. This means the immortality of the body, a likeness to the Son: "... since he alone in the Trinity has taken upon him a body in which he died and rose again ..." (188). This resurrection hope is anticipated in the

practice of the imitation of Christ: "When we remodel ourselves to avoid being modelled on the world's pattern, then we are shaped into the likeness of God's son" (189). On the other hand, transformation into the Image means a likeness to God the Trinity: "But if we think of that image of which it is written: 'let us make man in our image and likeness', not 'in my image' or 'in thy image' - we must believe that man was made in the image of the Trinity . . . . Accordingly we may better interpret in the sense of this image the words quoted from John: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is '" (190). This two-fold understanding of the nature of the Image of God in man renders a discussion of the Imitation of Christ more complicated. For while Imitation of Christ can be connected to the former notion of Image, its connection with the latter is more precarious (191). It would no doubt be dangerous to attempt to characterise these two notions of image, because it is not always clear of which Image Augustine is writing at any instant: it may be that the conformity to the image of Christ is a "moral" experience, and that conformity to the image of the Trinity is a "religious" experience (192). Whether this is correct or not, it is clear that Imitation of God (or of the Trinity) is not identical to the Imitation of Christ. The significance of the imitation of God will be discussed below.

The next issue that arises in this discussion of Christ as the image in the context of religious imitation is the attitude of Orthodoxy, within which the theology of the εἰκὼν plays such an important part. Lossky claims that there is no imitation theology in the Eastern Church because of its "image theology" of life in Christ (193). However I. Hausherr illustrates that there is evidence for the practice and theology of the Imitation of Christ in the

Eastern tradition, with references to Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, John Climacus, et al. (194). But not only is there this evidence of the presence of the Imitation tradition, it is also the case that there . . . was a careful discussion which relates to the practice of imitation in the context of image theology. In the context of the iconoclastic controversy, the iconophiles, following John of Damascus, differentiated between three kinds of icon: the "natural" icon of the Father, Christ; the icon "by imitation", man; and the "artistic" icons (195). The doctrine of man as the imitative icon of God opens up the possibility of an imitation spirituality. The iconoclasts included in their argument against icons the "ethical argument". "We should represent Christ and the saints, so the iconoclasts urged, not through wood and paint, but by our lives; instead of setting our reliance on material reproductions, we ought to imitate the virtues of Christ and so transform ourselves into living icons" (196). The iconophiles reply was that living icons are more precious, but do not exclude painted icons (197). However, although there is evidence here of an interest in Imitation which is connected with the idea of man as the icon of God, this is strictly not a theology of man as the imitator of Christ the image of God. For there may be here, as suggested above in the case of Augustine, a distinction between the imitation of God and the imitation of Christ. Hillyer suggests that the Eastern tradition is actually concerned with the imitation of God, not of Christ (198). Perhaps Lossky's claim could be understood as a denial of the Imitation of Christ, but not a denial of the imitation of God, though Hausherr's evidence does not support this. But there is no reason to suggest, as he does, that an image theology precludes imitation of Christ. Indeed it could be said that a theology of the imitation of God which does not

include an idea of the imitation of Christ is suspect, for in Christ the life and character of God is accessible to man (199). Indeed, it is a theology of image which forms a major theological support for the notion of the imitation of Christ. As regards the general question of Imitation and Orthodoxy, we have also referred to the Russian model of Kenotic Imitation.

Calvin, to whom the notion of image is important, includes in his theology of the Imitation of Christ an appeal to the image of God in Christ: "... so that Christ, by communicating his Father's benefits, might express the true image of his glory ... the invisible Father is to be sought solely in this image" (200). By Christ the image of God in man is restored, by conformity to the image of Christ: "For now we begin to bear the image of Christ, and are every day more and more transformed into it, but the image consists in spiritual regeneration. But then it will be fully restored both in body and soul ..." (201). So religious conformity to the image of God in Christ begins now, and will be completed at the end. According to Torrance, Calvin identifies the image of God in Christians with Paul's "inner man" which is created after the image and likeness of Christ (202). Christ in his human life is the pattern of true Christian living and in his resurrection is a living image (imago viva) of the resurrection his people will achieve (203). Another way of saying that Christ is the image of God is to say that he is the "second Adam", so: "Christ ... is called the second Adam because He restores us to true and substantial integrity" (204). So the religious experience of transformation into the image of Christ, of conformation to that image is expressed in terms of moral qualities, moderation, order and harmony after the example of Christ and this is indicative of the original pattern of man's life in Adam (205). We see how

clearly this resembles our previous topic of Christ as the ideal of humanity: "Now we see how Christ is the most perfect image of God: if we are conformed to it, we are so restored that with true piety, righteousness, purity and intelligence we bear God's image" (206), though of course for Calvin there is no ideal of humanity without the action of, and response to, God. So in man's conformity to the image of God in Christ salvation is effected. Calvin also connects imitation with the "movement of Christ", as was noted above. The link between imitation of Christ the image of God and the "movement of Christ" is that "Christ's image does involve his suffering, his humility, his marvellous works, his death and glorious resurrection, and certainly his possession of the life-giving Spirit, since in all these Christ shows forth the glory of his Father" (207). So for Calvin, the idea of Christ as the image of God, and of man as restored to the image of Christ and of God, does not preclude the call for the Imitation of Christ. Indeed, those ideas are the basis of that call. In Calvin then is a clear statement of imitation of the image of God in Christ.

Schleiermacher's notion of Christ as example of man related to God has already been discussed. Another equally valid way of describing his view of Christ in the context of religious imitation is that of image, that image related to God to which men should conform. So Te\_Selle characterises Schleiermacher's ideas as Archetypal Christology and in particular as a "Second Adam" Christology (208). So Schleiermacher attributes ideality, (Urbildlichkeit), and exemplary (vorbildliche) dignity to Christ (209). The beginning of the life of Jesus is the "completed creation of human nature", there is an "original impartation to the Second Adam" (210). The archetypal nature of Christ means that he is the Second Adam, whose distinction lies in that "from

the outset He has an absolutely potent God-consciousness" (211). Christians are conformed to Christ who is the archetype because of his supreme God-consciousness. It can be seen that Schleiermacher combines here the idea of Christ's relationship to the Father with that of the archetype, as Calvin combined the ideas of Christ's "movement" with that of Christ as image.

So Barth, whose unitary view of the "movement" of Christ in humiliation/exaltation as a paradigm for Christian experience was noted above, also expresses Christ as model in terms of image. The beauty of Jesus Christ is the likeness of the essence of God. He is the first born of a new humanity, the second Adam, in whose exaltation our own has taken place, whose history is the Word of God addressed to the world. In the obedience of death he empties himself of the divine form (212). So hope is in the image and likeness of God<sup>in</sup> Christ and in his community; for Christ: "... restores in human nature that which originally corresponds to Him, is like Him, and is constituted in Him" (213), and because the members of the community:

... follow the life movement of Jesus Christ as their model, either well or badly imitating, reflecting, illustrating and attesting it. ... He Himself as its model is first present and alive in it, evoking, ordering and guiding its movements by His own, and ... He Himself is also secondarily, or in reflection, illustrated and attested by the movements and in the being and activity of His community (214).

For "... He reflects Himself in it, that it is created and ordained to be His likeness. As it beholds Him 'with open face' (2 Cor. 3:18) it is changed, not into an alter Christus, but necessarily into an image of the unrepeatably one Christ" (215). So also for Barth, the notion of the imitation of Christ is linked to the idea of Christ as the image of God.

The notion of Christ as the Image of God and thus the sign

of the true form of man is an important one for the theology of the Imitation of Christ, and will recur several times in this thesis, and form part of the discussion of Bonhoeffer's thought.

(d) Christ as the Receiver of the Spirit.

The focus of our attention here is on Christ's experience of the Spirit as a model for Christian experience of the Spirit. So for T. A. Smail, Christ "... is the Receiver of the Spirit, the original prototype to whom the Father has given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34)" (216). As Christ received the Spirit and power at his baptism, so, at Pentecost the Church is endued with the same Spirit (217). It is indeed possible to extend this theology of the imitation of Christ's experience of the Spirit in a number of directions. So, for example, it is possible to see as exemplary for Christians, Christ's reception of and obedience to the Spirit, his teaching, preaching and miracles by the power of the Spirit, his wisdom and discernment, his knowledge of the Father, and his self-offering on the Cross. So J. D. G. Dunn, in Jesus and the Spirit, analyses the religious experience of Jesus as, in part, an experience of Spirit which gave shape to the early Christian experience of the Spirit. Tinsley and Lampe see this motif in Luke-Acts (218). This approach of looking at the continuous life of Christ with the Spirit is more productive than concentrating on the baptism of Jesus as a paradigm of Christian imitation and experience of the Spirit (219).

It is possible to object to this view of Imitation on the grounds that Christ is the giver, not the receiver of the Spirit, and that a Spirit-Christology is inadequate. But the idea of Christ as the giver of the Spirit does not preclude the idea of him as an

exemplary receiver of the same, any more than the idea of Jesus as Lord precludes the idea of Jesus as Servant. And although the Early Church found that a Spirit-Christology was inadequate (220), that is not to say that the idea is incorrect. Whatever other Christological claims are made, it may still be true to say <sup>that</sup> Jesus was the model Spirit-man. There is no necessary reduction in Christology implied by an appeal to the Imitation of Christ.

But even when a direct appeal to experience the Spirit after the example of Christ is not present, the same result is achieved in statements of the work of the Spirit producing Christ-likeness, transforming into the image of Christ. This is what Dunn calls the "Jesus-character" of Christian experience, and indeed he uses this test of religious experience: "Only that power which reproduces the image of Jesus Christ is to be recognized as the power of God" (221). The classic text is 2 Corinthians 3:18, of which Smail says: "In this verse we can identify an original prototype from which a reflected image is in process of being made. The prototype is 'the glory of the Lord (doxa Kuriou)', and the copy is the 'likeness' (eikon) into which 'we are being changed', so that the glory which is original to him, is refracted and reflected in us" (222). So too for Dunn, the Spirit transforms believers into the image of Yahweh, Jesus (223). The Spirit, then, is the Spirit of Jesus, not only because he comes through the agency and work of Christ, but also because he conveys his character. So again, the ethical result of the Imitation of Christ is in evidence, and again the link between Spirit and Image connects two ways of thinking about the Religious Imitation of Christ.

(e) Imitation in Religious Actions.

Our last category of Religious Imitation is that of imitation of Christ in religious actions. Whereas under Ethical Imitation we noted instances of imitation which were not primarily ethical, but fell under the more general category of behaviour, such as the endurance of persecution and martyrdom, here we consider more formal and liturgical acts of imitation of Christ.

Imitation of Christ in acts of behaviour which are not primarily ethical, such as martyrdom, pilgrimages in the steps of Christ, and the liturgical examples we will soon consider have an important role in the Imitation tradition. Their importance lies in their symbolic value as a public or private act of witness of determination to follow the example of Christ. They represent the transmission and continuation of Christian culture, and are a statement of commitment to a way of life which reflects the character of Christ. This feature of the Imitation tradition will be discussed again in Chapter Three.

Liturgical or Sacramental Imitation of Christ consists of public meditation on the life of Christ as a way of participating in that life, actions or rites intended as a kind of following of Christ. For example, the public meditation on the Mysteries of Christ, the mystical following of the via crucis through spoken word or in procession to the Stations of the Cross is a kind of spiritual pilgrimage which is an expression of the desire to follow Christ so as to know him (224). The Pedilavium, the washing of feet after the example of Christ is a practice which has been popular at various times, and is a public, liturgical, even sacramental act of humility and service in imitation of Christ (225).

Tinsley suggests that the background to the sacramental-

-mystical thought of the New Testament and especially to Hebrews is the idea of the following of Christ, and that sacraments can be understood as mimetic actions (226). As far as Baptism is concerned, its connection with the Imitation of Christ can be described in various ways. The connection between the death and resurrection of Christ and the action and effect of Baptism is such that some idea of participatory imitation is appropriate. As Christ died and was raised again, so the baptised person "dies" and "is raised" to walk in newness of resurrection life. This connection is symbolised in baptism by immersion. Baptism is baptism into the death of Christ, and should result in newness of life. So Barrett paraphrases Romans 6:5: "through the image (or imitation) of his death we have come to be joined to his death" (227). Baptism symbolises and effects the change of aeons rendered by the death and resurrection of Christ, and so is a participatory imitation of the movement of Christ (228). Baptism can be connected with the seal of the Spirit in such a way that in Baptism the image of God is restored to man by the image of Christ in the power of the Spirit (229). To speak of Baptism as "the likeness of his death" (Romans 6:5) is to ascribe to it a place in the likeness-image-transformation language of the New Testament, and thus to connect it with the basis for an appeal to the imitation of Christ (230). The response to dying and rising with Christ in Baptism is the life of death to sin and life in righteousness, of which Christ is the paradigm (231).

The mimetic nature of the Eucharist consists in the repetition of the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. This again is participatory imitation in which the rite is a means of "remembrance" (232). The nature of the imitation of Christ in the Eucharist is a point of issue between Hooker and the Puritans. Hooker argues that a

strict imitation of Christ in all details is not appropriate, so therefore kneeling at the Eucharist is not excluded by the example of Christ and that the words of administration may differ from those used by Christ (233). The self-offering of Christ on the cross is a model for the self-offering of Christians in the Eucharist (234), and indeed for the offering of the Eucharist (235). So the Sacramental and Liturgical Imitation of Christ is an important strand in the Imitation tradition, and distinctive because of its corporate context and expression.

We have noticed previously that James Stalker considers Christian ministry to be an imitation of Christ (236), and that Marmion looked to Christ as the model of Monk and Priest (237). William Law appeals to the example of Christ, as we have also seen, in support of the practice of early morning prayer and the singing of psalms (238).

With these examples we conclude our discussion of Imitation in religious action. The question of Imitation and sacraments will be discussed again in Chapter Five.

This also concludes our study of Religious Imitation of Christ, and we now turn to the subject of Mystical Imitation.

### 3. Mystical Imitation.

Mystical Imitation is that direct apprehension of God's presence which is understood in terms of an imitation of Christ. It may occur in the context of some form of physical behaviour which is

a religious imitation of Christ, or it may occur without reference to outward circumstances. Three elements are characteristic of mystical imitation, and we have seen them before in other contexts. They are the "movement" of Christ, conformation to Christ, and suffering.

The mystical participation in the "movement" of Christ is a direct experience of the imitation of Christ. For example, Bonaventura, whose life of St. Francis emphasized his conformity with Christ (239), has a clear view of the imitation of Christ as an element in mystic ascent. The three ways are Purgation, Illumination, and Perfection, and the imitation of Christ in meditation, prayer and contemplation is part of Illumination (240). So the ascent to God, in The Soul's Journey into God, is likened to the ascent of the mount of Transfiguration, an experience of being led by Christ (241). His devotion on The Tree of Life begins: "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross. The true worshipper of God and disciple of Christ, who desires to conform perfectly to the Saviour of all men crucified for him, should, above all, strive with an earnest endeavour of soul to carry about continuously, both in his soul and in his flesh, the cross of Christ, until he can truly feel in himself what the Apostle said above" (242). Indeed the whole of the ascent to God can be described as an Imitation of Christ (243).

Richard of St. Victor writes of the ascent to God in terms of a following of Christ up the mount of Transfiguration. Christ is the "guide of the journey and leader of the ascent" (244), that is, the guide to the mystical experience of God. Though it is also true that this ascent may also be made without Christ as guide: Christ's humanity, and therefore the imitation of Christ, remains in the background (245).

This issue of whether or not the imitation of Christ is an

appropriate model for the whole of the soul's ascent to God is important for mystical theology. For example, whereas Theresa of Avila emphasizes the humanity of Christ, imitation of the mysteries of Christ, and the highest stage of the mystical life as contemplation of both the human and divine natures of Christ (246), for John of the Cross, the imitation of Christ is only the first stage in the ascent, in purification of the senses: In John's thought, the eventual "dark night" means the dismissal of images and forms, of anything less than pure Divinity (247). This issue will be discussed in Chapter Five, in a study of Imitation as a response to the Humanity of Christ, for it is basically a question of the significance of Christ's humanity.

Another form of the mystical following of Christ which occurs in the context of imaginative meditation is a kind of spiritual pilgrimage in the steps of Christ. The purpose of this is both for mystical communion with Christ through his "Mysteries", and also the reformation of life. A most notable example of this is the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola. The Exercises are mainly the record of Ignatius' own experience during his retreat at Manresa: his companion books were the Gospels and A'Kempis' De Imitatione Christi (248). The Exercises are meant to last for about a month, and the following of the Mysteries of Christ begins in the Second Week, which is a form of the Illuminative way (249). The movement of Christ which is the subject of contemplation begins at the Incarnation, includes most of the events of Christ's life, and concentrates on the events of Passion Week in considerable detail. These are included in the Second and Third Weeks. The Fourth Week includes a review of the Mysteries of Christ's life, and a contemplation on the Resurrection, Christ's appearances, and the Ascension. The desire is for an interior

knowledge of Christ in order to love him better and follow him more closely (250). This spiritual pilgrimage in the form of meditation on the Mysteries of the life of Christ is a popular form of religious devotion, and can well be described in terms of mental or spiritual imitation (251).

This spiritual imitation or following of Christ also finds expression through a physical journey to the Holy Land to follow in the steps of the Master. So Origen describes his visit to the Holy Land as a "search after the footsteps of Jesus and His disciples and the prophets" (252). While there is an awareness that such a pilgrimage is not necessary (253), and while Erasmus asserts that: "... if it is to a man's credit that his body walks in Christ's footsteps, it is more to his credit that his mind has followed the way of Christ" (254), this does not render the practice of pilgrimage to the Holy Land inappropriate. It may indeed be an expression of a desire to enter more fully into the Imitation of Christ. This example of pilgrimage has been used before. It was there understood in terms of its symbolic value and as a witness of an intention to follow Christ. Here the idea of pilgrimage is understood in terms of a physical aid to a mystical experience.

The idea of conformation to Christ in mystical theology is of course related to the idea of conformation to Christ which we have already described, but is the mystical version of it. The most notable instance is that of Francis of Assisi. His experience of the stigmata occurred while he was contemplating Christ's sufferings. After seeing a vision of an angel who had the likeness of a crucified man he knew that he was about to be transformed into the likeness of the crucified Christ: "for there began to appear in the hands and feet of St. Francis the marks of nails as he had just seen in the body of

Jesus crucified" (255). This mystical experience was not isolated from his daily life: it was the expression of the ideal for which he lived and hoped to die, "to be conformed in every act with that of our Blessed Lord" (256). So Francis was "the incomparable mystic of Calvary", "the knight of the Crucified One" (257).

This is of course, conformation to the crucified Christ, and expresses the element of suffering, which recurs in mystical theology, not least when following of the "movement" of Christ involves the via crucis. The three elements of "movement", conformation, and suffering are found together in, for example, Suso in his prayer for the imprint of Christ in his heart, his mental picturing of the Way of the Cross, his emphasis on the transformation of man in the Deity, on Christlikeness. In The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom the servant must be clothed in Christ's armour to experience the sufferings of Christ. He must not be afraid of imitating the sufferings of Christ (258). In the Theologia Germanica, the author concentrates on "Christiformity", on deification in terms of the imitation of Christ. The righteous man must, after Christ, descend into hell before he can ascend into the heaven of perfection - the mystical following of the movement of Christ (259). So also for Tenler, to follow in the footsteps of Christ is "to enter into the divine Model in suffering with him and imitating him" (260). There is variation in the mystical experience of the "movement" of Christ which depends on which aspects of that movement are being followed. Francis of Assisi, as we have seen concentrates on one moment, the crucifixion, whereas Ignatius of Loyola follows the movement of Christ from Incarnation to Ascension.

These examples conclude our study of the Mystical Imitation of Christ. It is the shortest of the three studies because it is a strand of Imitation which has a uniform character, as we have seen.

It does raise the question of the significance of the humanity of Christ, and this will be discussed in Chapter Five.

In this Chapter I have attempted to answer the question What is the Imitation of Christ? by studying it as a phenomenon within Christianity. In doing so I have demonstrated that the Imitation of Christ extends beyond the occurrences of "imitation" and its cognates, and beyond the spirituality of De Imitatione Christi. The extent of the material described was intended to show the many-faceted nature of the Imitation of Christ, including the areas of ethics and behaviour, religion, and mysticism. In describing this variety in terms of strands of a tradition, I have made the initial assumption that the Imitation of Christ is in fact one tradition. Arguments for the unity of the Imitation tradition as an ethical, religious, and mystical whole, will be found in Chapter Five. This phenomenology of Imitation is only part of an answer to the question of the nature of the Imitation of Christ, and many aspects of the Imitation tradition mentioned in this Chapter will be developed at other points in this thesis, both in terms of the Imitation tradition in general and in terms of the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Our investigation of the Imitation of Christ will continue in the next chapter by means of a study of the Imitation of Christ as an instance of the general human practice of imitation.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE IMITATION OF CHRIST AND THE GENERAL PRACTICE OF IMITATION

Introduction.

In the previous chapter we explored the theological theme of the Imitation of Christ, and attempted to unravel the various strands which make up the Imitation tradition. Our discovery was of a multi-faceted activity of ethical, religious and mystical dimensions. In this chapter we continue our study of the nature of the Imitation of Christ in a different setting, that of imitation in general as a human phenomenon. Our context now is not the Christian tradition of the Imitation of Christ, but the wider context of the human practice of imitation.

The relevance of this exercise to our study of the nature of the Imitation of Christ lies in the fact that the practice of the Imitation of Christ is, on the face of it, one particular instance of the general human phenomenon of imitation, albeit with its own distinctive characteristics. For the Imitation of Christ is the activity of human beings in imitating an exemplar, and is thus like other instances of imitation. It is important to study the Imitation of Christ in the context of general human imitation if we are to appreciate both the distinctive features of the Imitation of Christ, and also the extent to which many of the problems of that tradition are in fact endemic to other instances of imitation, and are therefore most profitably studied in that wider context.

As well as investigating those features of imitation which the Imitation of Christ shares with other instances of imitation, we also note some characteristic features of the Imitation of Christ. This theme will be developed further in Chapter Four, in which our study will be of some important characteristics of Christ as Exemplar.

The general outline of this Chapter is the same as that of the previous chapter, that of ethical, religious, and mystical imitation. Our subject is that of the Imitation of Christ as an instance of the human practice of imitation.

Under the heading of ethical imitation we will study the following subjects: (a) Imitation, its prevalence and use, (b) Conscious and Unconscious Imitation, (c) The Function of the Model, (d) Insights of Psychology, (e) Three Objections to Imitation. In section (a) we investigate the human practice of imitation in order to demonstrate that imitation is not an unusual occurrence. In section (b) we use the categories of conscious and unconscious imitation in order to explain some features of the Imitation of Christ tradition. In section (c) we study the purpose and role of the model in imitation in general, and relate this to the Imitation of Christ. In section (d) we summarise the insights of Psychology on imitation in general, and apply them to the Imitation of Christ. Imitation in any form is commonly regarded as suspect, and in section (e) we study three common objections to imitation each of which is relevant to the Imitation of Christ.

Under the heading of religious imitation we will investigate (a) the Imitation of God in various religions including Judaism and Christianity, and (b) the subject of the imitation of holy men. We study the Imitation of God because the Imitation of Christ has to do with the imitation of a divine figure, and the imitation of holy men

because the Imitation of Christ is related in some way to the imitation of the saints.

Under the heading of mystical imitation, our inquiry will be of some examples of this in the religious life of man.

The purpose of this investigation is to illuminate the nature of the Imitation of Christ by studying it in the general context of human imitation.

## 1. Imitation in Ethics and Behaviour.

### (a) Imitation, its Prevalence and Use.

Imitation is a significant part of the ethical decision-making and behaviour patterns of mankind. It was part of the world in which Christianity was founded: the presence of encomiastic literature and aretology indicates in part the use of the example of human models(1). For the Homeric Greeks, imitation of the gods was a sign of hubris: men should model themselves on the heroes, not on gods (2). So also within the Stoic tradition, imitation of the Sage provides a goal for rational decision-making (3). "Though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought to live as one who wishes to be a Socrates"; "What would Socrates have done in such a case, or Zeno?" (4). So imitation of the hero provided a mode of ethical decision-making for the morally earnest individual. It is interesting to note that within the question "What would Socrates have done?" lies the realization that not every circumstance of the imitator finds an exact parallel in the life of the model, and that there is an appeal to the creative

imagination: imagine what Socrates would have done consistent with his normal pattern of life, and then apply that to your own condition and circumstance. This use of imagination is a characteristic feature of the practice of imitation in general, is found in the Imitation of Christ tradition, and will be discussed further below.

(b) Conscious and Unconscious Imitation.

Imitation is not only found in antiquity: indeed Ivan Gobry, in his study Le Modèle en Morale, claims that it is so much part of human behaviour as to be called an "instinct" (5). So there is what can be called "unconscious imitation", especially in social situations of sympathy and dependence. There is also, Gobry notes, the imitation of intention, of choice, what can be described as "conscious imitation" (6). The unconscious Imitation of Christ was discussed in Chapter One, and contributes to the phenomenon of actions which may be described by observers, if not by the subject, as an imitation of Christ. This subject was raised in Chapter One in terms of a post eventum description, and will be discussed further under Insights of Psychology. However it is important to remember that the exercise of conscious and responsible choice is that which distinguishes human behaviour from that of the ape. For, as Epictetus observed, saurian behaviour is marked by indiscriminating and non-reflective imitation of that which fortune brings along (7). While imitation is an instinct, voluntary imitation is one of man's most responsible and difficult activities. The rejection of imitation as "mere aping" shows a misunderstanding of the nature and complexity of the exercise of choice, both in the context of the Imitation of Christ and of other models.

(c) The Function of the Model.

So, if conscious imitation is a mark of human activity, the choice of the model is all-important. K. Jaspers analyses the best of human endeavour in terms of response to the four paradigmatic individuals of the world, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and Jesus (8). For Jaspers, they have a human and philosophical significance, not a religious significance. What they have in common, what makes them paradigmatic, is that they are strong yet sympathetic in personality, they create new possibilities for mankind, and demand a transforming response, they faced the reality of death, and preached sympathy and love (9). "The core of their reality is an experience of the fundamental human salvation, and a discovery of the human task" (10). However Jaspers also notes that "they are beacons by which to gain an orientation, not models to imitate" (11). So the function of the paradigmatic individual or the hero in human society is not so much to prescribe patterns of behaviour as to enlarge and extend the vision of human possibility and potential. This is also part of the function of Jesus within the Christian tradition, and in that respect his function is comparable with other heroes in human society.

Another function of the human example in ethical discourse is that <sup>an</sup> example points to the possibility of fulfillment of a precept, and has a visual and tangible impact which makes virtue attractive.

So for Feuerbach, in The Essence of Christianity;

The law does not give me the power to fulfil the law; no! it is hard and merciless; it only commands, without troubling itself whether I can fulfil it, or how I am to fulfil it; it leaves me to myself, without counsel or aid. But he who presents himself to me as an example lights up my path, takes me by the hand, and imparts to me his own strength. ... The law is dead; but example animates, inspires carries men involuntarily along with it (12).

(It is, however, not impossible to imagine a sympathetic lawgiver, and a forbidding example!) Feuerbach claims that example "appeals to a powerful instinct ... involuntary imagination. Example operates on the feelings and imagination" (13). Feuerbach points to the encouraging and enlivening function of example.

So also Kant, whose objection to the use of examples in morality will be discussed below, asserts the usefulness of examples in practical encouragement i.e. they put beyond doubt the feasibility of what the law commands, they make visible that which the practical rule expresses more generally, but they can never authorise us to set aside the true original which lies in reason, and to guide ourselves by examples (14). This is clearly intended as a comment on the Imitation of Christ, but it is capable of wider application. So Kant's view of the value of examples is that they point to the possibility of an action, and that they make visible the general rule. A notable instance of the latter is the example of foot-washing in John 13 (15). This positive statement of Kant's on the function of example is a valuable contribution to the notion of imitation.

Finally, N. E. Miller and J. Dollard, in Social Learning and Imitation, investigate the rôle of Imitation in human behaviour (16). One of their concerns is to investigate how culture is transmitted from one generation to another. This is the human context in which the Imitation of Christ in terms of the continuation of Christian ethical culture occurs. Miller and Dollard also indicate that theories of imitation are determined by the style of psychology by which the study is pursued. The tendency to imitate may be regarded as innate, the product of conditioned response, or as learned by reward (17). The psychology of imitation will be discussed further below.

So far in this chapter we have noted various features of the

human practice of imitation, such as the function of human models to promote good behaviour, the presence of instinctive or unconscious imitation, the necessity for responsibility in imitation, the function of example in pointing to feasibility and in particularising the general rule, and the rôle of imitation in social learning. We have noted too the relevance of this study of human behaviour to the practice of the Imitation of Christ. Because imitation is a part of human behaviour, it has come under the scrutiny of psychology as has been noted above, and it is to the psychological study of imitation that we now turn.

(d) Insights of Psychology.

P. N. Hillyer, in his thesis The Imitatio Christi in the Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld, analyses the psychological perspectives on imitation, with, of course, particular attention to the Imitation of Christ (18). He identifies five mechanisms put forward to explain the phenomenon of imitation, and suggests that "identification" has most potential for a positive assessment of the Imitation of Christ. He traces the developments in theories of "identification" from Freud onwards, and discusses the various understandings of the relationship between imitation and "identification". The discussion of this relationship is in the most part a discussion about what we have called conscious and unconscious imitation; though the connection between them is difficult to identify, it is clear that both aspects play an important part in human relationships, as indeed they are both part of the practice of the Imitation of Christ.

One of the important issues in the practice of imitation is the choice of model. Freud's discussion of the rôle of parents

suggests that they provide an automatic model because of their function as parents: there is also in Freud the possibility of choosing a model on the basis of admiration or respect (19). Again, the Imitation of Christ functions in both these perspectives; his example is absorbed unconsciously by those who live in the ambience of Christian culture, and his example is consciously accepted or rejected by those within and outside the Christian culture. Jung's observations point to the tension between imitation and self-fulfillment, and to the real possibility of the self-production or postulation of a greater totality which is in fact a symbol of the self (20). Both of these occurrences are found within the practice of the Imitation of Christ.

Other features of the psychologists' observations to which Hillyer draws attention and which are obviously relevant to the Imitation of Christ, are Freud's comments on "community superego", the model to which a community is committed, derived from its great leaders (the ecclesial experience of the Imitation of Christ will be discussed in Chapter Five, and will arise again in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology), and Erikson's comments on the possibility of deriving identity from a group other than the one to which one naturally belongs. This of course lays considerable weight on the exercise of choice (i.e. it is not deterministic), and connects with the Christian tradition at the common ground between conversion and Imitation (21). Hillyer also notes the strong stress in his authors on the motive of fear, and suggests that the motive of love has a greater part to play in the Imitation of Christ, though he notes the close and complicated connection between fear and love, in that the threat of the cessation of love produces fear (22). Nevertheless, love is a strong motive for the Imitation of Christ. Imitation as a response of love rather

than fear is best understood in the context of the doctrine of Grace. The subject of Grace and Imitation will be studied in Chapter Five.

So we have seen that the detailed observation of human imitation illuminates the nature of the Imitation of Christ by pointing to the place of creativity in imitation, the existence of unconscious imitation, the function of imitation in conveying a culture, the varied uses of examples, the choice of the model, and community imitation. Another important issue in psychological discussion is the rôle and nature of the authority of the model: this will be discussed below.

(e) Three Objections to Imitation.

Many of the problems associated with the Imitation of Christ, and many of the objections against it that are used as the basis for dismissing it, are difficulties that are associated with any form of imitation. Imitation is a vulnerable activity, in part because it involves the difficult task of evaluation, and in part because it often involves the adoption of new modes of behaviour. These problems are common to human imitation, and not peculiar to the Imitation of Christ. It is important to take this into account in any attempt to understand the Imitation of Christ, for the identification of general problems leads to the possibility of comparisons which may be illuminating, and because the practice of the Imitation of Christ will appear more vulnerable, more problematic than it is, if it is made to bear the burden of the general problems of imitation. It is not that the problems disappear by dispersal to other forms of imitation, but they are then not seen to be problems peculiar to the Imitation of Christ.

So it is illuminating to consider the Imitation of Christ

in the context of human imitation when dealing with difficulties and objections. We have already noted Epictetus' comment about aping as a non-reflective and irresponsible form of imitation, a danger possible in any instance of imitation.

(i) Imitation and Creativity.

John Oman bases some of his objections to the practice of the Imitation of Christ on a general reluctance to see the value of any kind of imitation: "No imitative life, nevertheless, is inspired, and no inspired life is imitative". This is his generalisation about the place of imitation in human life; he continues "and the mere imitation of Christ is so far from being an exception that it is beset by special limitations" (23). So the imitation of Christ shares the general problems of imitation. Oman continues with the same particular concern about the Imitation of Christ within the context of imitation in general: "... no one ever does encounter the same conditions as another; and, even if we could successfully apply His example to our situation, the exactest imitation would only be lifeless, unedifying mimicry. ... [if His life were] echoed to the letter, therefore, the soul of it would still be wanting, and would no more be His example than a death-mask is a living face" (24).

Oman then is opposed to imitation in general, and to the Imitation of Christ in particular, because the imitative life cannot be inspired, and therefore imitation is lifeless mimicry. This is a common objection to imitation, and is made in the field of art as well as in the field of human behaviour (25). This is an understandable reaction to unreflective mimicry, and is a sentiment that is characteristic of the Twentieth Century, in which human creativity is highly

valued. Yet on the other hand, it is possible to indicate ways in which imitation need not necessarily be as deadening an experience as at first it appears. For example in art, creativity is not only found in absolute freedom from tradition, and indeed is well expressed in dialogue with the tradition. Creativity can cope with structures, with the restriction of a particular medium, even if it stretches those structures or its particular medium to new forms. So in imitation, it is the creative use of the model in circumstances which are observedly different which is not lifeless mimicry, but an exploring of different human dimensions. For use of the model need not restrict possibilities of behaviour. Indeed it is the true function of a model to enlarge the vision of human potential, to suggest an alternative life-style; it is <sup>in</sup> the response to this challenge that creativity can be expressed. It is precisely because "no one ever does encounter the same conditions as another" that there is creative possibility in imitation. As A. S. Cua comments in Morality and the Paradigmatic Individuals; "... since the context of these [paradigmatic] individuals' lives cannot be our own, there is still room for moral creativity of agents within a moral practice" (26). The fact that imitation does on occasion limit itself to un-reflective mimicry does not mean that imitation is in itself bad: it must not be judged by its bad examples. Oman himself does allow for the inspirational value of examples when mimicry is avoided (27).

So imitation in general is not necessarily non-creative. The Imitation of Christ in particular calls for the exercise of that creativity which we have referred to above to an especial degree. For the person and circumstances of Christ are markedly different to his present-day imitators, in that particular claims are made for his character, and because of his historical and cultural distance. (These

issues are among the subjects of Chapter Four). Creative imagination is necessary if imitation is to be attempted. But creativity is also demanded in the Christian context because the Christian is also responding to other demands, e.g. to be filled with the Spirit, to obey the Father, to submit to Church leaders, and also is attempting to imitate Christ in the context of a fellowship, and of saints whom he is also called to imitate. So, for a variety of reasons, the Imitation of Christ is particularly conducive to the exercise of inspired and creative imagination. There will be more discussion below of characteristic features of the use of Christ as the model for imitation. Of significance here is that an objection against the Imitation of Christ is most helpfully met by considering it in the context of that objection being made against the general practice of imitation.

(ii) Imitation and Self-expression.

Another objection against the practice of imitation that is characteristic of the Twentieth Century is that it precludes self-expression. Lionel Trilling notes the rise in significance of the notion of "to thine own self be true" to the extent that it has become one of the main ambitions of Western man (28). It may be found in the idea that true happiness will only be found in self-expression, or that, at a more fundamental level, true wholeness is found in self-integrity, in being true to oneself. Trilling quotes Schiller: "Every individual human being, one may say, carries within him, potentially and prescriptively, an ideal man, the archetype of a human being, and it is his life's task to be, through all his changing manifestations, in harmony with the unchanging unity of this ideal" (29). It is easy to see that this aim of self-expression must be opposed to any idea of imitation of another, since that would be to intrude an alien

and disruptive model. So, for example, Jung claims that: "... in Christianity, Christ is an exemplar who dwells in every Christian as his integral personality. But historical trends led to the imitatio Christi, whereby the individual does not pursue his own destined road to wholeness, but attempts to imitate the way taken by Christ" (30). In the latter part of this quotation, Jung contrasts the individual's own destined road to wholeness with the way taken by Christ. He is clearly of the opinion that self-integrity is only hindered by the attempt to imitate another, in this instance Christ.

But is self-expression or self-integration an adequate human goal? Is the self to be the only source of vision, and is the human endeavour to be limited by the predispositions of individual human beings? Is it not the case that the effect of a hero or model is to enlarge the vision of mankind of human potential, to give new light and a different perspective on the assumed standards and priorities of society? There may be occasions on which imitation is restrictive rather than enlarging, but those instances do not necessarily preclude the possibility that good may come of the serious consideration of an alternative style, one which originates outside the subject. Trilling quotes the eighteenth century Edward Young: "Born Originals, how comes it to pass that we die Copies?" (31). But the practice of imitation does not necessarily result in the production of mere copies: originality is expressed in the creative possibilities of the tension between what a person is in himself and what he is challenged to become by another. So, with reference to the Imitation of Christ, the originality of the imitators is seen in the varied styles of imitation of, for example, St. Paul, Francis of Assisi, Søren Kierkegaard, Dag Hammarskjöld. Trilling's reply to Young's question is that it is society which "destroys our authenticity" (32). Yet as we have observed,

in Jaspers' description of the stimulating function of his Four Paradigmatic Individuals, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus, the example of others may as well enlarge our notion of authenticity as destroy it.

So then within the human context, imitation cannot be prohibited on the ground that it will destroy self-integrity. The Imitation of Christ provided a useful example as an instance of the human practice of imitation. There are, however, characteristic features of the Imitation of Christ which are relevant to this discussion of the claims of self-integrity and self-expression.

For it should be noted that there are a variety of ways in which "Christ" may function as archetype or model. So for Jung, "Christ" is a name attached to the symbol of wholeness which derives from man's unconscious, and is a name appropriate for those who recognise him as a symbol of wholeness in a "consciousness illuminated by conversion". So he is "an exemplar who dwells in every Christian as his integral personality", while others are destined to be pagans, Jews, or Buddhists (33). This "Christ" derives from the unconscious, not from history, and Jung regards it as regrettable when an individual moves from the "Christ" who represents his own destined road to wholeness to "the way taken by Christ" (34). It is clear then that the kind of "imitation of Christ" that Jung supports is entirely consonant with self-expression, and indeed is a means of achieving it. However, it will be argued in Chapters Four and Five that an Imitation of Christ which ignores the historical Christ is indefensible.

Another way in which Christ may function as model or archetype is found in Jaspers' study of the four Paradigmatic Individuals. In contrast to Jung, Jaspers is concerned with the Jesus of history, and with the historical features and problems which are associated with him.

For Jaspers, Jesus is one who, in company with the other three, fulfilled ultimate human potential, who became a beacon by which to gain an orientation (35). All four stand as paradigms, they cannot be synthesised, or pieced together to form a single man. So here the historicity of Jesus is taken into account, but he still remains one among several options for imitation. The function of the paradigmatic Jesus here is similar to that described above; "Once the distance between our own questionable lives and the earnestness of these great men is brought home to us, we feel impelled to summon up all the earnestness of which we are capable" (36). So their function is to enlarge our vision of human potential. Here self-integration is challenged by the greater potential exhibited in the lives of others. It is this view of imitation in the human context which was defended above.

Another way in which Christ may function as model concentrates, like Jaspers, on the historical rather than the internal Christ, but makes an exclusive claim for that Christ, which Jaspers does not. This exclusive claim is defensible not by an absolute claim of moral superiority, but by a theological claim that Christ is the form of the new humanity. In this context, the greatest threat is placed on self-integrity and self-expression, because Christ is understood as the definitive absolute of humanity. The claim that Christ is the form of the new humanity will be discussed in the next chapter: of significance here is the variety of ways in which Christ may function as model or archetype. These ways vary in the extent to which they allow for self-integrity and self-expression. In this respect the Imitation of Christ is comparable to the imitation of other significant religious figures such as Buddha, in that Buddha too may be used as model or archetype in the different ways used above.

Another way in which the Imitation of Christ is distinctive from many other forms of human imitation with respect to its effect on the self-integrity of the imitator is that the Imitation of Christ includes within it the category of morality. This category is not necessarily found within the context of self-expression, and so self-expression may find itself challenged at the moral level by the Imitation of Christ. For, as Hillyer observes; "Jung is concerned with the archetypes of wholeness rather than the archetypes of perfection" (37). If man's aim is integration or self-realisation, then even evil elements in the unconscious will have to find their place within the whole man. Perfection is a possible aim, but for Jung: "The individual may strive after perfection ... but must suffer for the opposite of his intentions for the sake of his completeness" (38). A self-integration which is deliberately amoral in its endeavour to come to terms with its disparate elements is threatened at a fundamental level by the moral imperative conveyed by the Imitation of Christ. The legitimacy of that moral imperative will be discussed below. Of importance in this context is the observation that the objection to the Imitation of Christ on the basis of the value of self-expression has to answer the charge that it is amorality being threatened by morality. So it is the status of morality which is at stake in this particular discussion. With this observation we end our consideration of objections to the Imitation of Christ that are based on an appeal to the value of self-integrity and self-expression.

### (iii) Imitation and Moral Responsibility.

The third objection to the practice of imitation that we shall consider is that imitation inhibits the exercise of moral responsibility. This objection is clearly stated in the writings of Kant, whose comments on the value of examples we have already noted. In this discussion of

the problem of imitation and moral responsibility we will use two quotations from Kant to state the problem, but as in the case of other authors quoted in this thesis, we will not attempt to do justice to his thought.

The first quotation from Kant is a comment on the use of examples in general in matters of morality, the second includes particular reference to the use of Christ as exemplar. The first quotation is as follows:

Certain actions of others which have been done with great sacrifice and merely for the sake of duty may be praised as noble and sublime deeds. ... But if anyone wishes to put them forward as examples for imitation, the incentive to be employed must be only the respect for duty, the sole genuine moral feeling, this earnest holy precept, which does not leave it to our vain self-love to dally with pathological impulses (as far as they are analogous to morality) and to pride ourselves on our meritorious worth (39).

Kant's aversion to the use of examples has particular reference to the Imitation of Christ:

Nor could anything be more fatal to morality than that we should wish to derive it from examples. For every example of it that is set before me must be first itself tested by principles of morality, whether it is worthy to serve as an original example, i.e. as a pattern, but by no means can it authoritatively furnish the conception of morality. Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our idea of moral perfection before we can recognise Him as such; and so he says of Himself, 'Why call ye Me (whom ye see) good; none is good (the model of good) but God only (whom ye do not see)?' But whence have we the conception of God as the supreme good? Simply from the idea of moral perfection, which reason frames a priori, and connects inseparably with the notion of a free-will (40).

In discussing the issue raised by these two quotations we will discuss the use of examples in general and then the particular case of the notion of Christ as exemplar.

This critique of imitation in terms of moral responsibility is justified in cases of mimicry, of unreflective copying of another's

actions. To hide behind the moral authority of another's action is irresponsible because it does not take into account the fact that different people at different times have a variety of moral claims upon them; it is quite exceptional to meet an entirely analogous situation. It is also irresponsible because it assumes that an act by itself has a certain quality, without regard to its motive. To imitate a generous act out of desire for praise would not of course be a good action. We have seen before that it is difficult to defend that form of imitation which is unreflective mimicry in adult human beings, and the particular point here is that reflection must include moral reflection which takes account of particular circumstances and responsibilities.

However on the other hand, the morally praiseworthy action of another may perform the function of enlarging the subject's vision of moral goodness, and morality may be described and taught by examples (real or imaginary), as well as by principles. Moral education may include case studies if it also teaches ideas of morality by which examples can be evaluated. So there may be instances in which the imitation of another's action is morally praiseworthy: imitation does not necessarily imply moral irresponsibility.

The same comments are relevant to the Imitation of Christ as far as moral imitation is concerned, though, as we have seen, mimicry in matters of religious behaviour may be defended in terms of the conveying of a culture. It is certain that unreflective imitation of Christ in matters of morality is impossible to defend for the reasons just stated, but it is also the case that the example of Christ may function in a morally educative way. Moral discernment is part of the Imitation of Christ tradition. For the appropriate response to Christ's washing of the disciples' feet in John 13 is not to wash feet but

mutual service: and only suffering for righteousness sake can be considered as being after the example of Christ in I Peter 2. So it is only the reflective moral imitation of Christ which can be defended from the charge of moral irresponsibility.

However there remains the question of whether or not man's own moral sense may be suspended by the will of God, in this case that will being expressed in the example of Christ. This is of course an issue which has wider application than the subject of Imitation, and we cannot hope to do justice to this difficult topic of the relationship between the will of God and man's ethical responsibility. In terms of the Imitation of Christ, it is most productive to see the example of Christ as one of the means by which the moral sense of the Christian is informed as to the requirements of a godly life. It will be a matter of debate as to whether or not this moral education may involve the disruption of a man's moral sense. If this is regarded as legitimate, then the moral example of Christ may be one way in which the divine command is revealed. However, even if man's moral sense is regarded as the final court of appeal, the example of Christ, as we have seen, may still perform a useful function in terms of moral education and clarification (41).

So the issue of moral responsibility does not preclude the possibility of imitation, though a consideration of the objection does serve to clarify the question of what kind of imitation is defensible, both in terms of imitation in general, and in terms of the Imitation of Christ in particular.

This concludes our study of Problems of Imitation under the general heading of Imitation in Ethics and behaviour. A recurrent theme of this study has been the possibility and importance of reflective, responsible and creative imitation. This idea will be

discussed further in Chapter Four, in our study of the distance of Christ from his present-day imitators. To continue our discussion of the Imitation of Christ as an instance of the general human practice of imitation, we now turn to study Imitation as a feature of the Religious Life of man.

## 2. Imitation in the Religious Life of Man.

In the previous section of this chapter I have endeavoured to demonstrate that it is illuminating to study the Imitation of Christ in the context of the human practice of imitation in matters of ethics and behaviour, and that some of the problems commonly associated with the practice of the Imitation of Christ are in fact endemic to any form of human imitation, and are most helpfully understood and answered in that wider context. So I have endeavoured to show that the Imitation of Christ needs to be understood as, in part, a particular instance of the human practice of imitation in ethics and behaviour. So now, in this section, I will demonstrate that the religious practice of the Imitation of Christ is better understood by being seen in contrast to and as an example of the human practice of religious imitation. In this section I take two types of religious imitation, the Imitation of God, and the Imitation of Holy Men.

### (a) Imitation of God.

It is useful to note the prevalence of the notion of the Imitation of God in religious practice because of the common assumption

that the Imitation of Christ is difficult or impossible if Christ is seen as in any way divine. This view assumes that while a purely human Christ would be readily imitable, the presence of divinity renders imitation inappropriate or impossible. So, for instance, F. F. Rigby in Can We Imitate Jesus Christ? writes, in answer to that question; "... Christians have always said that God is in Christ, or that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to pretend that we can achieve such high standards is to fall into the greatest of all sins, namely, pride" (42). But the imitation of God is a frequent theme in religion. (I will omit references to the mystical imitation of God, as they are more relevant to the next section of this Chapter). So for instance, Tinsley quoted Plato: "We ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as possible; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as is possible; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise" (43). And in a similarly religiously ethical vein Epictetus wrote: "We are next to learn what the gods are; for such as they are found to be such must he who would please and obey them to the utmost of his power endeavour to be. If the deity is faithful, he too must be faithful; if free, beneficent and exalted, he must be beneficent and exalted likewise, and in all his words and actions behave as an imitator of God". A good man, says Seneca, "differs only in point of time from God, whose disciple and imitator he is" (44). There was also, however a tradition of hesitancy about the imitation of the gods, for fear of pride: "Do not try to become Zeus ... mortal things suit mortals best" (45).

The Christian tradition of the Imitation of Christ contains an antidote to pride in that the Christian exemplar is the humble servant who dies for his people. A positive strand of Imitation of

God spirituality is not only found within the Greek world. So, for instance, Van der Leeuw notes its presence in Persian religion, where man participates in Ahura Mazda's contest against the evil power (46), and E. Carpenter describes Buddhism in terms of "Imitatio Buddhae" (47).

Of greater significance as the religious context of Christianity is the theme of the imitation of God in Judaism. Tinsley describes the imitation of God in the Old Testament in terms of the "Way", in terms of that symbol which conveys both the events into which God led his people, and the style and content of response to which the people were called, to "walk after God", to "follow after God", the Way of Torah, of Sonship, of knowledge and restoration: in terms of Israel as the Imitator Dei, holy as God is holy, imitating God in liturgy and life (48). The imitation of God is a recurrent theme in Rabbinic Judaism; to imitate God is to be attuned to his being, according to Moses Cordovero; it is to bear insult, be limitless in love, overlook wrongs, remember kindnesses, be tender to the unworthy, etc. (49). And Tinsley claims that Philo blends the Imitatio Dei theme of Deuteronomy with Platonic thought. So for Philo to walk after the law of God is to follow God, to fly from the world is to imitate God, to rest on the Sabbath is to imitate God's rest. Kingship and government imitates the providence of God, and he also suggests that men have in the Logos the perfect model, as the Logos imitates the way of the Father (50).

The imitation of God is a theme within the New Testament as well, even in the context of the Imitation of Christ. To imitate God is to be merciful as he is merciful, perfect as he is perfect, holy as he is holy (51). The imitation of God and of Christ is closely linked: "... and be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another,

as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (52). Christians, as sons of the Father, imitate his virtues and character, as much as they imitate Christ. The subject of the Imitation of God will be further discussed in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology.

The notion of the imitation of God is found then in a variety of religious contexts including that of Christianity. The occurrence of this notion makes it more difficult to understand the objection to the Imitation of Christ which claims that it is impossible to imitate a divine exemplar. For if there is the possibility of the Imitation of God, then the example of an incarnate God is even more comprehensible and accessible. Similarly, the prevalence of the imitation of God means that the Imitation of Christ need not be dismissed because it implies a "reductionist" Christology. These are two common objections to the Imitation of Christ, and it is important to see that they can be answered by a study of the Imitation of Christ in its context of the religious activity of man. Attention will be given in Chapter Four to the problem of the claim of divinity made for Christ the exemplar, and the effect of this claim on the practice of the Imitation of Christ.

We now continue our study of Imitation in the religious life of man by moving from the subject of the imitation of God to the subject of the imitation of holy men.

#### (b) Imitation of Holy Men.

The historian of religion Mircea Eliade writes of "a very general human tendency ... to hold up one life-history as a paradigm, and turn an historical personage into an archetype" (53). It is



this use of holy men as religious examples which is our present context of thought. I. Abrahams quotes as examples of the imitation of holy men the Moslem mystic Abu Said in his desire to imitate the "perfect man", Mohammed, and the Buddhist saint taking up the Master's begging bowl (54). Hadas and Smith note the prevalence of aretology in the Greek world, the cult of the martyr in Maccabean times, and the effect of these on early Christian accounts of martyrdom (55). What significance does this human phenomenon of using holy men as religious exemplars have for the Imitation of Christ?

Firstly, this phenomenon indicates that the notion of imitation is not conceived of solely in ethical terms; imitation is not "merely moral". For it is not the function of the human exemplar in this context to point to issues of ethical duty, but to portray an exemplary religious life, a life of response to God. This may find expression in ethical attitudes and actions, but cannot be totally understood in terms of them. While of course the general religious phenomenon of imitation of holy men is not definitive for the Imitation of Christ, nevertheless the existence of that phenomenon raises the possibility, if not the expectation, that the Imitation of Christ will not be concerned solely with ethical issues. The exemplary holy man enlarges vision and understanding of the appropriate responses to God. Within the Christian context this response will have a particular style, determined by the nature of Christianity itself.

Secondly, the prevalence of this phenomenon means that man has an exercised aptitude as to what features of an exemplar ought to be imitated, and what features should not be imitated. An ability to discern the points of value of the exemplar and to ignore personal or historical accidental details is a feature of human experience. This is in part the ability to understand that the notion of exemplar does

not imply that every feature ought to be imitated; in Passmore's language, there may be "technical" perfection without "Immaculate" perfection (56), i.e. one aspect of the exemplar<sup>is</sup> to be imitated, not every aspect. This point is most usually expressed in terms of distinguishing between the motive and the particular expression, between the core and the peripheral detail, between the attitude and the actions. This last distinction was discussed in Chapter Two. It is often assumed that the particular expression, the peripheral detail, the actions can (and should be) dispensed with so that the motive, core or attitude can find new expression appropriate to the imitator. In many instances this is a helpful way of thinking. But, as we have seen in the context of religious imitation, particular expressions and actions of the exemplar may well be imitated in order to make real, both publicly and privately, the continuity of a religious culture. That is to say that particular actions may have a symbolic function, and should not be too rapidly dismissed as anachronistic, as historical and accidental details. So, in terms of the Imitation of Christ, opposition to it because of the danger of thoughtless mimicry, while it does point to danger, is not enough to discredit it. There is a human aptitude to distinguish exemplary features and discard the rest. But also it is dangerous to assume that the repetition of an historical action, such as foot-washing, is inevitably an anachronism. It may well be an important cultural symbol.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of the imitation of holy men in a religious context points to the value of the proximate model which does not reduce the value of the god. Man may seek for a concrete example of god-like virtue, may seek to be encouraged and enriched by another human being in whom is perceived a deeper and greater response to god. It is important to see that the imitation of a human being does not

denigrate the god: it is a way of responding to that vision of the god conveyed by the exemplary human. What implications does this have for the Imitation of Christ? It means that the example of Christ is not redundant in the context of the imitation of God, and that the imitation of God is not anachronistic in the context of the imitation of Christ (57). For Christ may be understood as the proximate model of the divine life (whatever other claims are made about his divinity). This idea does not denigrate the value of God, nor does it imply that Christ's example is redundant.

Fourthly, the idea of the human model of the divine exemplar also makes sense of the idea of the imitation of Christian saints in the context of the Imitation of Christ. The idea of the imitation of Christians is common in Christianity from the New Testament onwards (58). These Christian exemplars exhibit the virtue and characteristics of Christ, and provide a proximate and comprehensible model of them to those who are separated historically from the life of Christ. (This function of the saints will be discussed further in the next chapter). To speak of value of the saints as exemplars is not, as we have seen, to denigrate the value of the primary exemplar, Christ: it is a way of responding to that vision of Christ conveyed in the life of the saints: it is a way of responding to Christ, a way of imitating him. So hesitation about the imitation of saints for fear of undervaluing Christ is unjustified: it is precisely the Christ-likeness of the saints which is imitated. It is then inappropriate to claim that Christ is the only example for the Christian: a saint may provide a perfect "technical" example, even if he is not an "immaculate" example (59). The uniqueness of Christ in this context is not preserved by a statement of the superior quality of his example, heightened by a denial of the value of other exemplars. It is maintained by a theology of Christ

as the new Adam, the form of redeemed humanity, the image of God to whom all men will conform by his redeeming power. So it is the theological basis of the practice of the Imitation of Christ, a wider understanding of the meaning of that Imitation which articulates the supreme value of the example of Christ. (The significance of this theological statement of the universal value of Christ will be discussed further in Chapter Four). The imitation of holy men is a legitimate part of Christianity, and a legitimate aspect of the Imitation of Christ.

In these respects it can be seen that it is of value to take cognisance of the human phenomenon of religious imitation, both in terms of the imitation of God and of holy men, and as a context for understanding the Imitation of Christ, and that various problems associated with the Imitation of Christ are best tackled by studying the wider practice of imitation. It is clear that the imitation of a divine figure is not obviously inappropriate, that the Imitation of Christ does not necessarily imply a "reductionist" Christology, that imitation is as likely to be a religious or an ethical activity, that mankind has the practised ability to discern imitable features and avoid mimicry, and that the imitation of the saints does not necessarily devalue Christ the exemplar.

This concludes our investigation of the Imitation of Christ in the light of the human practice of religious imitation. We now study mystical imitation in human life in an attempt to illuminate the Mystical Imitation of Christ.

### 3. Mystical Imitation in Human Life.

Mystical imitation is a much more restricted feature of human life than, for example, ethical imitation. It is virtually non-existent in rationalist societies, because it depends on a view of the world which includes ideas of myth and magic. Van der Leeuw and Tinsley point to mystical imitation in the religion of Osiris, in which the king repeats in ritual form the action of the god; and in the Hellenic mystery religions in which the participants share in the life, death and resurrection of the saviour-god, in the Orphic mysteries in which participation in the suffering of the god is a means of sharing in resurrection, in the Eleusinian mysteries in which worshippers lived through the trials of Demeter, and in Mithraism in which the followers of Mithras followed him in daily life (60). These mimetic actions are not just cultural symbols: they are an effective means of communication and participation by means of ritual repetition.

In what ways does the existence of this mystical imitation aid our understanding of the Imitation of Christ?

The existence of this mystical imitation questions the common assumption that imitation, and in particular the Imitation of Christ, is solely the action of the imitator, and that it is adequately understood in terms of ethical or religious actions. For in mystical imitation the exemplar is not a figure of the past but of the present, and the actions of ritual repetition are empowered by the exemplar as much as by the imitator: they are effective means of grace, a communication of divine power, a means of participation in the divine life. So, in terms of the Imitation of Christ tradition, imitation is not adequately understood, as we have seen above, in terms of the action

of the imitator in copying an absent exemplar in ethical or religious activities: conformity to image of Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit, Christ is the present forerunner, and imitation is a means of grace, and a participation in the risen life of Christ. This notion of imitation is not completely alien to the religious nature of man, as the existence of mystical imitation in other religions indicates, and finds particular expression in the practice of the Imitation of Christ (61).

It is also possible to note what is a characteristic feature of the mystical Imitation of Christ in the context of mystical imitation in other religions. The Imitation of Christ tradition has a characteristic emphasis on the moral nature of mystical imitation. For the Imitation of Christ in mystical experience demands and conveys not only ritual purity, but moral transformation. It is not just that some form of moral purification is necessary before the mystical imitation can take place: it is that the mystical imitation itself has a moral dimension. It is death with Christ to sin, and life with Christ to righteousness, it is walking in newness of life, putting on the new nature restored after the image of its creator in holiness and righteousness. It is self-denial, and the daily taking up of the cross (62). The Imitation of Christ is not primarily mystical and only secondarily, or by implication, ethical: it is a mystical and ethical action. The hypothesis that the Imitation of Christ is an ethical, religious and mystical activity has been assumed in this thesis, and the notion of the unity of the tradition will be specifically defended in Chapter Five. Here it is sufficient to point out that comparing the Imitation of Christ with mystical imitation in other religions is of value because it raises the question of the status of moral imitation, which I, of course, regard as integral to the Imitation

of Christ.

So studying the Imitation of Christ in the context of religious mystical imitation has pointed up two features of that Christian tradition. One feature is that the Imitation of Christ shares an emphasis with other forms of mystical imitation on the present reality of the exemplar, and the communication of grace through symbolic action, and the other feature is that the Imitation of Christ has a characteristically moral content, as well as a mystical content.

#### Conclusion.

In this Chapter I have attempted to show how the subject of the Imitation of Christ is illuminated by taking into account the general human practice of imitation in its ethical, religious, and mystical expressions. In some instances the similarity between the Imitation of Christ and other forms of imitation has been evident: in others the particular nature and characteristics of the Imitation of Christ have been highlighted through its comparison with other forms of imitation. In many cases it was evident that objections that are commonly raised against the practice of the Imitation of Christ are in fact objections to any form of imitation. It is helpful to point this out in order that it may be realised what a pervasive element in human life is at stake if the objections are upheld, and because some objections are more easily answered in the general and wider context of imitation rather than in the narrower and specific context of the Imitation of Christ.

In particular, the discussion pointed up the variety of contexts in which humans learn to avoid mimicry in imitation, to allow for different historical circumstances, and to engage in creativity

in imitation; the prevalence of unconscious imitation, the function of ritual deeds of imitation in continuing a culture, and the function of imitation in creating new possibilities and providing encouragement. The insights of Psychology on imitation were discussed and applied to the Imitation of Christ, and objections to imitation such as the need for self-expression and moral independence<sup>were</sup> discussed. The practice of the imitation of God provoked the comments that the assertion of the divinity of Christ is not a hindrance to imitation, and that the Imitation of Christ need not imply a "reductionist" Christology. Imitation of holy men indicated a more than ethical view of imitation, and provided an understanding of the function of the imitation of saints in the context of the Imitation of Christ. The phenomenon of mystical imitation suggested the possibility of a mystical dimension to the Imitation of Christ, and also pointed up how characteristic that Imitation is in its ethical content. In these ways the study of the human practice of imitation has illuminated our understanding of the Imitation of Christ.

In this Chapter I have concentrated on the Imitation of Christ in terms of the ways in which it is one form of imitation among many. There have of course been occasions in which it has been the distinctive features of the Imitation of Christ which have emerged. In the next chapter I turn to consider the distinctive and characteristic features of the Imitation of Christ which derive from the nature of the Christian exemplar. This forms part of our study of the Imitation of Christ and Christian theology.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## SOME FEATURES OF CHRIST AS EXEMPLAR

Introduction.

This chapter and the next chapter have as their subject the relationship between the Imitation of Christ tradition and Christian theology. Whereas in the last chapter we studied the Imitation tradition as an instance of general imitation, we now investigate its relationship to that continuous body of thought within which it occurs. It is affected by other theological themes, and has a particular place in Christian theology. The discovery of those effects and that place is the purpose of these two chapters.

In this chapter our concern is with Christology, for the notion of Christ as exemplar raises issues of Christology, some of which derive from characteristics imposed by Christology on the Imitation tradition, and others of which are problems raised by the notion of Imitation. The first three sub-sections of this chapter deal with Christological issues which affect the Imitation tradition: 1. The Divine nature of Christ, 2. The Saving purpose of Christ, and 3. The Perfection of Christ. These notions have affected the Imitation tradition in different ways, as we shall see. The other three sub-sections have as their subject problems of Christology that are raised in a particular way by the notion of Imitation. They are: 4. The Ambiguity of Christ's witness, 5. The Universal Value of Christ, and 6. The Distance of Christ from his present-day imitators.

These topics connect in various ways to the subject of the Humanity of Christ. The study of the relationship between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ, which forms the climax of these two chapters, occurs at the end of Chapter Five. It is thus delayed until after the investigation of the relationship between Imitation and other theological themes which comprises the earlier part of that chapter. This is because a clear understanding of the relationship between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ is best achieved in the light of the discussion of those other theological themes.

#### 1. The Divine Nature of Christ.

This issue has been discussed briefly previously in this thesis but at this point it deserves a more extended treatment. It is the question of the compatibility of the claims that Christ is Divine and that he is the Example. The supposed incompatibility of these two notions has led to the dismissal of the notion of Christ's Divinity by those who are determined to preserve his value as Example on the one hand, and the dismissal of the notion of his exemplary value by those who are determined to assert his Divinity on the other. The purpose of this study is to investigate this problem, and to demonstrate that the Imitation tradition includes Christologies which do assert the Divinity of Christ.

We begin by studying a notion of the Imitation of Christ which includes a "reduced" Christology, and then study some ways in which the imitation of the Divine Christ has been described.

The notion of the Imitation of Christ which is associated with a "reduced" Christology usually concentrates on the subject of

morality. Christ as man provides a good moral example, and the imitation of Christ (which is the most appropriate response to this moral example) is conceived of in solely moral terms. This Christology may or may not be adequate, but as will be evident from the statement of this thesis on the nature of Imitation, this "merely moral" understanding of Imitation does not represent the theological depth of the Imitation tradition.

Though this "merely moral" understanding of the Imitation of Christ is fairly common among lay-people, particularly those on the boundary of the Church, it is not common among theologians. It is however expressed in one form in the writings of Matthew Arnold. His quest was for a Christianity without Aberglaube, extra-belief. The religion that he found had to do with morality, and that morality was perfectly expressed in Christ. So Arnold writes in Literature and Dogma: "Jesus himself ... is ... an absolute; we cannot explain him, cannot get behind him and above him, cannot command him. He is therefore the perfection of an ideal, and it is as an ideal that the divine has its best worth and reality. The unerring and consummate felicity of Jesus, his prepossessingness, his grace and truth, are, moreover, at the same time the law for right performance on all man's great lines of endeavour, although the Bible deals with the line of conduct only" (1). Jesus exhibited a right "inwardness" and the secret of "self-renouncement", and the element of "mildness", and the total impression was one of "sweet reasonableness, epieikeia". This perfect balance was found in him alone (2). The doctrine therefore is double: "Renounce thyself, the secret of Jesus, involving a fore-going exercise of his method; and Follow me, who am sent from God!" (3) Jesus recommended and exemplified renouncement and mildness, and made his followers feel that in these lay the secret of finding their best

self (4). For Arnold then, ethical imitation of the "sweet reasonableness of Christ" is the meaning of Christianity, of Religion. It is not that the Imitation of Christ is part of Christianity; any addition to it, especially dogma, is a perversion of Christianity (5). "But is there, therefore, no difference between what is ethical, or morality, and religion? There is a difference; a difference of degree ... the true meaning of religion is thus, not simple morality, but morality touched by emotion" (6). This emotion, according to Robbins, is love. Trilling, on the other hand, claims that it is emotion about an outside and transcendent force, God (7). Whichever of these is correct, it is still clear that, for Arnold, Jesus is the perfection of an ideal, and that that ideal should be understood and responded to in terms of the morality of renouncement, mildness, and sweet reasonableness.

It is interesting to note that Arnold claims that the "nameless author of the Imitation" is among the true lights of the Christian Church (8), and that De Imitatione Christi provides the second largest number of quotations in the Note-Books (The Bible provides the largest)(9). The appeal of De Imitatione Christi lies in its concern with morality rather than dogma, "righteousness" not "ecclesiastical dogma" (10). The ethical significance of Christ was emphasized in the Nineteenth Century by many who were hesitant about, or opposed to, doctrinal Christianity, but who wanted to keep the name Christian. So in popular literature, the move from doctrinal to ethical Christianity (from Christ the Son of God to Jesus the Example) was regarded as a common result of doubt, and likely to lead to atheism. So Robert Elsmere, unnerved by arguments against the miraculous in Christianity, abandons the dogmas of the Church, and comes to believe in Christ as "teacher, martyr, and symbol ... of all things heavenly

and abiding" but no longer in Christ the "Man-God, the Word from Eternity" (11). Elsmere does not believe that Christ was a perfect man, but does see him as a symbol of the Divine, whose Resurrection occurs in "a wiser reverence and a more reasonable love ... in new forms of social help inspired by his memory" (12). The immense popularity of Robert Elsmere reflects a move in England in the late Nineteenth Century towards this understanding of Christianity, and so to this use of the Imitation of Christ. So Maggie Tulliver, in The Mill on the Floss, discovers in De Imitatione Christi an authentic religious escape from the weakness of her own character and from the orthodox Anglican Protestantism of her environment (13). Here is a less orthodox, but for her more authentic, style of Christianity.

As has been stated above, a result of this association of the Imitation of Christ with "reductionist" Christianity led to the rejection of Imitation in the interests of "orthodoxy", and the theological opinion that it was practically impossible to combine "orthodox" faith with the notion of Imitation. This orthodox reaction was of course inaccurate: belief in the Divinity of Christ and a belief in the Atonement do not preclude belief in Christ as Example as will be demonstrated below. But even apart from discussions of these areas of "orthodox" concern, Matthew Arnold's notion of Imitation can be questioned within the context of that tradition. Is "sweet reasonableness" a correct interpretation of the character of Christ? Does it do justice to the variety of Jesus' actions and attitudes? Is there not a suggestion in the Gospels that a wider and greater response is expected of the disciples than moral character? Is Imitation adequately understood in terms of morality? So even apart from the question of whether a distrust of dogma leads Arnold to a "reductionist" Christology, his notion of Imitation can be shown to be "reductionist".

We now study various attempts to correlate belief in the Divinity of Christ with the practice of Imitation. H. P. Liddon, in The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, discusses the relationship between the divine nature of Christ and the possibility of imitation in an attempt to demonstrate that the divinity of Christ does not preclude imitation of him (14). The argument to which Liddon is replying is described as follows:

... if Christ's Godhead be insisted on, you contend that His Human Life ceases to be of value as an ethical model for humanity. An example must be in some sense upon a level with those who essay to imitate it. ... A merely human saviour would at least be imitable; and he would thus better respond to the immediate moral necessities of man. ... The Humanitarian Christ is, you contend, the most precious treasure in the moral capital of the world. He is the Perfect Man; and men can really copy a life which a brother man has lived (15).

Liddon begins his reply to this dilemma by arguing that what is imitated is the humanity of Christ:

... according to the terms of the Catholic doctrine, our Lord is truly and literally Man, and that it is His Human Nature which is proposed for our imitation. ... Certainly the Divine attributes of Jesus are beyond our imitation...

And, he claims the province of the imitable in the life of Jesus is not indistinctly traced (16). Liddon then instances Christ's friendship with sinners, his consolation and help for those in need, his tenderness, meekness, patience and courage. Liddon acknowledges that we cannot reproduce Christ's human perfections in their fulness, but insists that we can approximate to them, for close imitation of Jesus of Nazareth is a duty and privilege of those whom God has predestined to be conformed to the "Human Image of His Blessed Son" (17).

The difficulty with this attempt to retain belief in the divinity of Christ and the possibility of imitation is that it assumes

that it is possible to identify activities of the human nature of Christ in order to provide a model for imitation. Although there is a tradition in Catholic thought which suggests that it is possible to distinguish between the divine and human activities of Christ (18) this possibility must be rejected on the basis that it destroys the unity of the person of Christ. Are not the actions and attitudes of Christ which Liddon describes, his friendship with sinners, his consolation and help for the needy, his tenderness, meekness, patience and courage, actions and attitudes which reflect the divine nature of Christ? It is difficult to know on what basis actions of divinity and humanity could be distinguished. So Liddon's argument here does not provide an answer to the problem of reconciling the practice of the imitation of Christ with an assertion of his divine nature.

It is interesting to notice that in a subsequent argument Liddon claims that Christ provides a notable example of humility, not because superior privilege pertained to the man Jesus, but because "Christ left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, to become Man" (19). The subject of the action is however strictly the eternal Son rather than Christ. So Liddon, in language from Philippians 2, has in fact used an instance of a divine, rather than a human, action as a model for imitation, which is antithetical to his previous claim noted above. The selfless action of the eternal Son in the incarnation does provide a motive for imitation in the New Testament (20), and Liddon is reflecting this tradition in this contradiction of his previous claim that it is only the actions of the humanity of Christ which ought to be imitated. The imitability of the divine action will be discussed further below.

Calvin attempts a similar discrimination to that of Liddon when he warns that there are many things which Christ did which

Christians ought not to do. Christians ought to exercise a right judgement, which for Calvin means a distinction between the things that pertain to service, and things that pertain to majesty. Christians ought to imitate the things that pertain to service; faith, patience, obedience, in self-denial and cross-bearing. Christians ought not to imitate the actions of Majesty, the actions of the divine nature, such as fasting forty days, cleansing the Temple, and miracles of raising the dead, healing the sick, or turning water into wine (21). It is interesting to notice that Calvin includes fasting forty days in the actions associated with Majesty: his division is not into triumph and subjection. So Majesty is demonstrated in fasting (it is perhaps the super-human power of Christ to fast that indicates Majesty). But it is also possible to see humility, patience, and service as expressions of Majesty, of the divine nature (22). Liddon and Calvin are right in their attempt to assert that not all that Christ did should be the subject of imitation, but wrong in their assumption that some actions can be ascribed to the humanity of Christ, and others to his divinity. For it is the one Christ who acts, and his weakness and service are consequently the work of the divine-human subject. So the attempt to relate imitation and the divinity of the exemplar by ascribing some actions to his divinity and others to his humanity does not succeed.

A way ahead is suggested by Paul Sponheim (23). According to Sponheim, Kierkegaard, despite his assertion of the incommensurability between God and man, affirms the humanity and divinity of Christ: "To believe is to believe the divine and the human together in Christ" (24). The unity of the divine and human nature of Christ seems to be affirmed rather than developed, though Sponheim points to the notion of daily kenosis as an attempt to develop this area (25). Kierkegaard

is clear that it is impossible to divide the person of Christ by reference to certain functions (cf. Liddon and Calvin above), so the imitator of Christ is in relation to God: "He believes that this pattern, if he constantly struggles to resemble it, brings him into kinship with God a second time and into an ever closer kinship, that he does not merely have God for a creator, as all creatures have, but he has God for a brother" (26). The Imitation of Christ is an important theme for Kierkegaard, as we have seen, and according to Sponheim its connection with the notion of the divinity of Christ is an important one: "Therefore Christ is in truth the pattern, and therefore he is also the eternally exacting in being a man, because he merely said that he was a man like other men. He makes the divine commensurable to being a wholly ordinary man" (27). Kierkegaard views God's claim on man as portrayed in the paradigmatic manhood of Christ, and he thereby asserts both the divinity and humanity of Christ, and the divine incognito (28). This connection between God and man is possible through Christ, and also depends on man's basic formation in the image of God: he says of the Christian: "... As a man he was created in God's image; but as a Christian he has God for a pattern" (29). We will return later to this idea of image as a most useful context in which to think of the relationship between the divine nature of Christ and the imitation of him. Our final comment on Kierkegaard is that although he begins with the incommensurability of God and man it is precisely in Christ that contact is established: "... in attaining contemporaneity with the Christ, the Christian is formed into God's likeness..." (30). So it is in the imitation of the divine-human Christ, in whom God is made commensurate with humanity, that man can be formed into the likeness of God (31). It is probably Kierkegaard's use of the kenosis motif which makes the divine Christ

imitable. This is a good example of a way of dealing with the problem of the imitation of a divine exemplar, and is developed further by Bonhoeffer, as will be evident in the second section of this thesis.

It is instructive to compare Barth's thought on the same issue of how man can imitate a divine exemplar, because Barth, like Kierkegaard asserts the infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity. This might be thought to render human imitation of divine being impossible. It is rendered possible, according to Barth, in the following terms. The grace of God in Jesus Christ determines man's response to God, and that response mirrors God: "The elect man is chosen in order to respond to the gracious God, to be his creaturely image, this imitator": Jesus Christ is "the original of this representation and illustration of the gracious God ... the true imitator of his work" (32). The correspondence between the activity of God and the activity of man is expressed in terms of analogy, the analogia fidei, the analogia gratiae, the analogia relationis. Christ is the royal man; "... as a man He exists analogously to the mode of existence of God. In what He thinks and wills and does, in His attitude, there is a correspondence, a parallel in the creaturely world, to the plan and purpose and work and attitude of God" (33). In the analogy, it is the nature of man which is clarified, rather than the nature of God, and the point of contact is the divine and human nature of Christ, reflecting as it does the eternal relation between the Father and the Son in the Trinity (34), and indicating, as we have seen, a style of response that is appropriate for mankind. So for Barth, as for Kierkegaard, the divinity of Christ does not provide a focus for the problem of how human beings might imitate the divine life, instead the divine nature

of Christ provides the answer. For the nature of God is reflected in Christ: in the communicatio gratiae "... there takes place the mutual participation of divine and human essence which results from the union of the two in the one Jesus Christ" (35). So, for Barth, it is the divine nature of Christ which renders imitation significant, and which renders the imitation of Christ central to Christianity.

So then, in both Kierkegaard and Barth, the difficulty of the human imitation of the divine is met in the divine and human person of Christ. Because of the person of Christ, imitation of Christ is necessarily imitation of the divine.

There are two more elements in the theology of Barth which are relevant to the issue of whether or not the divine nature of the exemplar precludes imitation.

The first is his theology of "image" (Bild, its cognates and synonyms). The place of image-language in the Imitation of Christ has been indicated above. Its significance here is that it points to the appropriateness of human imitation of the divine. So, for instance, in Barth's thought, Christ is the image of God (36), in him is revealed what man was intended to be, the image of God: "this human image is at the same time God's own image" (37). So in Christ is the true and normal form (Gestalt) of human nature, and also the powerful archetype (Urbildlichkeit) of the elevation and establishment of all humanity (38). So the Church is the likeness of Christ, and is transformed into an image of the unrepeatably one Christ, by the power of the Spirit, and as it duplicates and copies its image (39). In this context, then, the notion of image expresses the connection between God, Christ, and Man and gives a theological context for the imitation of divine action, and indeed for the imitation of God.

The second element in Barth's theology which is related to

the first, is the idea of the imitation of God, which has been mentioned before, but is mentioned here because of its relevance to the subject in hand. The idea of the imitation of God in Barth is the context for his thought on the imitation of Christ, and there are three ways in which God can be imitated. Firstly, by imitation of the Christ who imitates God, secondly, by imitation of the activity of God, and thirdly, by imitation of God himself.

The imitation of God by means of the imitation of Christ has been described above in terms of Barth's thought and in particular in his use of image. The imitation of the activity of God is found, for example, when Barth writes of the basis of love. The Christian "... loves because God loves ... He is called to follow as a man the movement in which God Himself is engaged; to do as a man, and therefore in the form of a reflection or analogy, that which God does originally and properly". So human love follows divine love, is analogous to it; "It can only correspond to it as a likeness and copy" (40). This is an imitation of the activity of God, the second way in which God can be imitated. The third way in which Barth writes of the imitation of God is in terms of imitation of God. So, for instance, the monastic flight from society is condemned: "Nor can this flight claim to be an imitation of God. For neither in Himself (as the Triune) nor outwards (as the Creator and Sustainer of the distinct being man and his cosmos) is God isolated or alone" (41). Or, more positively, Barth writes of the creation of man: "He [God] willed the existence of a being which in all its non-deity and therefore its differentiation can be a real partner; ... to which His own divine form of life is not alien; which in a creaturely repetition, as a copy and imitation, can be a bearer of this form of life" (42). So man is an imitator of the divine Life of God himself. As we have seen, this imitation is possible because

of the nature and work of Jesus Christ. In these three ways then, Barth can write of the imitation of God. This provides a context of thought in which the human imitation of a divine Christ is not only a possibility, but also an appropriate action, in so far as the divine Christ renders the action of imitation a realistic possibility, and also reveals its form and content.

The discussion of the possibility of human imitation of a divine exemplar has so far assumed that in redemption human nature remains human nature. However a theology of "divinisation" renders possible the imitation of the nature in a new way. So Lossky writes: "Man created in the image is the person capable of manifesting God in the extent to which his nature allows itself to be penetrated by deifying grace ... by grace what God is by nature ..." (43). Deified man will of course be in some sense an imitator of the divine life.

But even for a theology which rejects the notion of deification, we have seen various ways of understanding how it is possible to think of man imitating a divine exemplar. We have noted the attempt to distinguish between the divine and human actions of Christ, and, more productively the use of kenosis, and the notion of image as ways of understanding imitation of the divine. We have noted the idea of the imitation of God in order to demonstrate that within this context, the imitation of a divine Christ is less problematic (44). But even that theology of the imitation of God emphasizes the importance of the imitation of Christ, and indeed asserts that it is in the divine and human nature of Christ that the clue to the imitation of God is found. It is in these terms that the objection to the imitation of Christ on the ground of the impossibility of a divine exemplar can be met. Indeed it has been suggested that imitation of this divine exemplar is not only possible, but also appropriate (45).

So the Imitation of Christ tradition includes various ways in which belief in the Divine nature of Christ and in his exemplary value may be combined (46).

## 2. The Saving Purpose of Christ.

The second element which is characteristic of Christ, and which is sometimes used as an objection to the imitation of Christ, is the claim that he is the Saviour, that he performs a unique work of salvation. So even Kierkegaard, who is in favour of the imitation of Christ, writes: "... in so far as he is the saviour and redeemer of the race, I cannot, of course, imitate him" (47).

At first sight, it might appear possible to distinguish between different actions in Christ's life, viewing some as exemplary and others as salvific. For instance, one could claim that Christ's life is exemplary, and his death salvific. But in 1 Peter 2:18ff, it is the atoning death of Christ which indicates the style of behaviour which is appropriate for Christians who suffer unjustly. Is it then that what Christ does is salvific, but the way in which he does it is exemplary? Selwyn suggests that this is not the case, that what Christ does is exemplary as well as the way does it. He writes: "... we have no reason to think that the pattern which St. Peter bids Christians follow was not intended to include the "sin-bearing" as well as the meekness of the Master" (48). This issue will be studied further in the context of Bonhoeffer's theology.

Whether or not this is correct, it is certainly possible to

produce a view of Christ which includes the idea of exemplary Atonement. Barth, for instance, views Christ as both Substitute and Example (49). But even if it is thought that Christ performs some actions which are not in themselves imitable, it is still possible to think of him as Example as well. William Law writes:

So that although Christians are not Redeemers of the World as he was, though they have not his extraordinary Powers, nor that great Work to finish which he had, yet they have their Work to do in the manner that he did his; they have their Part to act, which though it be a different Part, must not be performed with a different Spirit, but with such Obedience to God, such Regard to his Glory, for such Ends of Salvation, for such Good of others, and with all such Holy Dispositions, as our Blessed Saviour manifested in every Part of his Life (50).

Here we return to a distinction between action and attitude which we have already noticed. The action of Christ as "Redeemer of the World" is inimitable, but his attitude, even as expressed in that action, is exemplary.

What then of the "Exemplarist" view of the Atonement? If the term Example in this context means that Christ is the notable proof or evidence of God's love rather than imitable example of love, then the theory is not really related to the practice of the Imitation of Christ. However if the Exemplarist theory does include some idea of imitability, is it then incompatible with what are commonly described as objective theories of Atonement? R. E. Weingart, in The Logic of Divine Love, gives an analysis of Abailard's theology of salvation in which he demonstrates that for Abailard, these ideas are not mutually exclusive. According to Weingart, Abailard teaches that Christ is the revealer of Divine Love, who by his death achieves the reconciliation of man to God by sacrifice, victory, and expiation, and also gives man an example of self-sacrificing love (51). So for Abailard, an Exemplarist view of Christ's death is compatible with objective theories

of the Atonement. The Imitation of Christ tradition does not necessarily exclude a notion of Christ as Saviour. Calvin, for example, commenting on 1 Peter 2:23 notes three things in the passage: "The first is that by His death Christ has given us an example of patience; the second, that by His death he has redeemed and restored us to life, ... In the third place ... we, being dead to sins, ought to live in righteousness" (52).

How then are the notions of Christ as Atonement and as Example related? Selwyn, in his notes on "The Imitation of Christ and the Atonement" (53) suggests that the connection is the principle of "the dying life". This principle is exemplified in the character and death of Christ, in the need for the Christian to die to self, take up his cross, and follow Christ. There is certainly an important motif here, associated with the cross of the Christian and the cross of Christ, and this forms a strong link between the death of Christ and the imitation of Christ.

Kierkegaard sees the connection between Atonement and Imitation to be a close one. For the Atonement enables Imitation, to imitate Christ is to respond appropriately when man can do nothing, but only thank Christ (54). The Atonement is needed at death, when all imitation will be of no avail, it is needed to keep imitation from becoming anxious, and because imitation is sure to make mistakes (55). And imitation necessarily involves suffering, because Christ suffered: "The prototype, however, expresses that piety means to suffer in this world" (56). The question of the relationship between Atonement and Example is closely connected to that of Grace and Imitation. This subject will be studied in the next Chapter.

So it can be seen that the claim that the death of Christ has atoning significance does not remove the possibility of imitation

and indeed that it is in the connection between the death of Christ and the idea of imitation that imitation becomes a real possibility, and that it is given much of its characteristically Christian form. The Imitation of Christ tradition then, includes a variety of ways in which belief in the Saving purpose of the Christ and in his exemplary value may be combined.

### 3. The Perfection of Christ.

The claim that the Christian exemplar is perfect is usually made with one of two intentions. Either it is made in order to affirm the significance of Christ as exemplar, or it is suggested as a reason for rejecting the possibility of imitation. We will investigate these in turn.

The significance of Christ as exemplar is sometimes intensified by the claim that he is the "perfect example". This could have a variety of intentions. If it is intended to mean that whereas other examples are relevant for only some situations, but that the example of Christ is paradigmatic for every possible human condition and predicament, then it is clearly a mistaken claim. The human life of Christ does not provide exemplary material for every human situation. Nor can belief in the perfection of Christ be defended if it is intended to convey the idea that Christ was "the 'greatest' as dialectician, philosopher, mathematician, doctor, politician, orator, farmer ..." (57).

Then again, the claim that Christ is the perfect example could be intended to mean that whereas with other examples considerable

care has to be taken in allowing for differences in historical situation, in the example of Christ there is a life which is perfectly and immediately appropriate for application to the life of the imitator. This would be to claim that the perfection of Christ's example lies in the fact that it can be appropriated and applied without thought. This is clearly wrong; as we have seen previously, the use of Christ as exemplar, as with any other exemplar, calls for that creative imagination which can cope with difference of historical circumstance. So the claim that Christ is the perfect example in that his actions can be copied without reflection is clearly wrong.

It is also wrong to claim that the perfection of the example of Christ means that there is no need to consider other examples. This attempt to support the unique significance of Christ as example by denigrating the value of other examples is both wrong and unnecessary. It is wrong because, as we have seen, appeal can be made to the imitation of Christian saints in a way which does not reduce the value of the original exemplar, and because any one may function as a technical example of some skill. And the attempt is unnecessary because the uniqueness of Christ is not supported by statements about the supreme quality of his example, but by theological statements about his nature and role in the destiny of mankind. So it is wrong to suggest that because Christ is the perfect example, no other example is necessary.

It is useful to distinguish between the claim that Christ is the perfect example, and the claim that the Christ who functions as example is also perfect. The former claim has to do with the quality of the Example of Christ, and, as we have seen, the claim that Christ is the perfect example has to be further elucidated before it can be accepted. The latter claim, that the Christ who functions as example is also perfect raises different questions. The question here is of

the incompatibility of the claims that Christ is both perfect and an example. The supposed incompatibility of these two claims is usually taken to result in the dismissal of the idea of Christ's perfection, though it could as well lead to the rejection of the idea of imitation because of the impossibility of imitating a perfect exemplar.

In the context of the imitation of Christ, then, what is to be made of the claim that Christ was perfect? It appears that originally the term "perfect man"<sup>was</sup> intended to state the full reality of the Incarnation, rather than as an evaluation of the quality of his life (58). Discussion about the perfection of Christ is usually undertaken in terms of sinlessness, though, as is frequently pointed out, sinlessness is a statement of the absence of the bad, rather than of the presence of the good. But if the claim of perfection is made, then the claim of sinlessness must be made as well (59). The idea of Christ's perfection need not preclude the idea of development, and indeed of ethical development (60).

The use of Christ as example might well affect the details of the claim that Christ was perfect. For example, it is obvious that the idea that Christ was able not to sin is more consonant with an appeal to the value of Christ's example in resisting temptation than is the idea that Christ was not able to sin (61). But it would be wrong to claim that for Christ to be a Christian's exemplar he must provide an example of true repentance, that to provide an example of true repentance he must have sinned, and that therefore he was not perfect (62). This argument depends on the idea that Christ must function as a model for every Christian action: but as we have seen, the value of Christ as exemplar does not depend on the completeness of his experience.

As far as the value of Christ as moral example is concerned, there is no necessity to claim that he was perfect. For even a less-than-perfect person can function as an exemplar. But insofar as Christ is an example of religious significance, sinlessness (and perfection) becomes more significant. "... the Christian conception of human life requires a sinless Example. The perfect pattern of mankind must in one material respect be as far as possible isolated and removed from the race He came to redeem: for sinlessness is a part of the Divine thought concerning human nature" (63). While some of this language may be debated, it does seem clear that some idea of the perfection of Christ is not only compatible with the idea of Christ as example, but is also formally integral to the notion of Christ as the paradigm of man in obedience to God. So the notion of Christ's perfection is here compatible with the idea of his exemplary value.

While it is important to assert this formal notion of perfection, it is also important to note that this perfection will not necessarily be seen in terms of "extraordinary moral excellence or extraordinary genius or even in extraordinary spiritual sensitivity or depth" (64). For perfection itself will not be seen, though its effects may be seen. It is not in the context of moral excellence, but in the context of divinity, that the idea of Christ's perfect humanity is best understood (65). As we have seen the claim that Christ was divine does not preclude the possibility of imitating him, so now we see that the claim that Christ was perfect does not preclude his imitation, according to the Imitation tradition. The connection between the Imitation of Christ and the idea of man's perfectibility will be studied in the next chapter of this thesis.

Language about perfection is notoriously difficult to define. We have seen that claims about Christ as the "perfect example" need to

be investigated very closely in order that the nature of the perfection being claimed can be identified and evaluated. And we have seen that some idea of the perfection of Christ is not incompatible with the idea of Christ as exemplar. The next feature of Christ as exemplar is that of the ambiguity of his witness.

#### 4. The Ambiguity of Christ's Witness.

While some claims made about Christ are claims to uniqueness, this claim, on one level at least, is merely that among human exemplars, Christ is one whose message and life-style is comparatively ambiguous. For while it is relatively easy to say what a number of exemplary human figures stand for, it is decidedly difficult to say what Jesus stood for, and it is even questionable whether or not "what he stood for" is an appropriate expression in his case.

Barth indicates this ambiguity of Christ in a vivid way when he describes Jesus' "passive conservatism" in accepting the Temple as the house of God, the family, the Synagogues, the economic and political relationships and obligations of his day. Yet, Barth says, he was always superior to them: this "superiority" was the freedom of the Kingdom of God, and found occasional expression in an occasional creaking of the timbers: he assaulted the family, the Temple, the prevailing religious and cultic order, and undermined the commercial and political order. This invasion of the new is the Kingdom of God which is antithetic to the world. It was not just that Jesus spoke against the old order: he by his actions and influence undermined the religious system, family life, the commercial and political order.

This is "the incommensurable factor of the new" mediated by Christ (66).

Yet this ambiguity, this multi-faceted nature of Christ's character does not dissolve into meaninglessness. Christ's unpredictability indicates an inadequacy in his audience, not in himself. For part of the fascination of the character of Christ lies in the unity of such ambiguous and disparate elements. For, as Bushnell said:

Men undertake to be spiritual and they become ascetic; or endeavouring to hold a liberal view of the comforts and pleasures of society, they are soon buried in the world, and slaves to its fashion; or, holding a scrupulous watch to keep out every particular sin, they become legal, and fall out of liberty; or charmed with the noble and heavenly liberty, they run to negligence and irresponsible living: so the earnest become violent, the fervent fanatical and censorious, the gentle waver, the firm turn bigots, the liberal grow lax, the benevolent ostentatious (67).

In this context, Fosdick comments on: "the remarkable poise in which the Master holds opposing virtues that with us are most difficult of combination" (68).

The ambiguous or multi-faceted nature of Christ's character does provide a problem for Christology, in that it gives rise to divergent views on the nature of Christ. But <sup>it</sup> is also a problem in the context of the Imitation of Christ. The result of the ambiguity of Christ is that any number of different and varied actions have been performed in imitation of him. M. Martin in Jesus Now gives an extraordinary account of the variety of images of Christ in contemporary society, and the variety of styles of life that have been adopted in response to those images. Christ is viewed as the paradigm pacifist, liberationist, isolate, social activist etc. (69). While some images of Christ are derived from sources other than the gospels, the ambiguity of the gospels' account of Christ is in part responsible for the

variety of actions that are done in imitation of Christ.

The natural reaction to the would-be imitator in the face of the ambiguity of Christ is to attempt to make comprehensible sense of the variety by discerning one coherent theme or motif. Some attempts to do this result in "idolization", the elevation of one facet of Christ's life into a timeless truth (70) with the purpose of imitating this one virtue. A good instance of this in the context of the imitation of Christ is the assertion that the key to the whole of Christ's life was love, and that therefore Christians ought to be loving too (71). This kind of Situation Ethics is a way of using the example of Christ in moral decisions. While the importance of love is of course central to Christianity, and indeed to the Imitation of Christ, the mission, life, and character of Christ is not adequately understood in terms of love. It is the fault of this approach that in concentrating on a motif which may underlie much of the activity of Jesus, it ignores contrary evidence. The problem of the ambiguity of Christ's actions remains. And indeed it is partly because of the disparate events of Christ's life that there is so much scope for creative imagination in the imitation of Christ.

My assumption has been that it is possible to derive a coherent view of Christ despite the multi-faceted picture of him in the New Testament, and that the Imitation of Christ ought to be concerned with this coherent view, rather than with one or other aspect of the character of Christ. However, as we have seen, some instances of the Imitation of Christ tradition have selected one or more aspect of the character of Christ rather than responding to the more complex image. What should be made of this approach? In my opinion it still has a legitimate claim to be part of the Imitation of Christ tradition, though its selectiveness makes it liable to misinterpret the character

of Christ.

In One Jesus, many Christs?, Don Cupitt raises the problem of the variety of interpretations of Jesus, and indicates that evidence of that variety is found in the multiplicity of characters who appeal to Jesus as their model (72). This variety Cupitt attributes in part to the different accounts of Jesus in the New Testament (73). Cupitt's suggestion is in part that different people may respond to Jesus in different ways, which is an idea akin to the "family resemblance" among the Christ-lives which he has mentioned previously (74). This idea may be held in conjunction with others that Cupitt rejects, such as the worship of Jesus and the possibility of describing some behaviour as un-Christlike (75). Whether Cupitt is correct or not in his evaluation of the New Testament evidence, there is considerable variety in the Imitation tradition. Variety of response to Christ is a product of the variety of human character and circumstance as well as of the multi-faceted nature of Christ, and will be discussed below under the heading of Imitation and Vocation, and Imitation and the Church.

If Cupitt is correct in his claim about the New Testament, what effect would this have on Imitation? It would be possible to imagine a variety of types of Imitation corresponding to the different pictures of Christ, but there would need to be a "family resemblance" such as Cupitt mentions for it to be reasonable to continue talking of the Imitation of Christ rather than Imitation of Christs. The fact that the Imitation tradition refers to Christ rather than Jesus means that it has in fact accepted part of Cupitt's thinking, in that the tradition refers to an exemplar to whom is attributed certain theological value.

So the multi-faceted nature of Christ's witness has a positive function in enabling a variety of styles of discipleship. But this

ambiguity of character also performs another function within Christianity. For according to Christian understanding, the ambiguity of Christ is not to be totally understood in terms of the comparable ambiguity of other exemplars. Christ's actions and life ~~is~~<sup>are</sup> ambiguous in the way in which any great man transcends his fellows: but the ambiguity of Christ also points to his divine origin, nature, and function, to his transcendence (76). In talking of this transcendence, we have of course returned to the subject of a previous discussion, that of the divinity of the Christian exemplar. In that context I argued that the divinity of Christ did not exclude his exemplary function, partly on the basis of an Imitatio Dei tradition. Here I wish to make the complementary point, that of the positive function of the transcendence of the Christian exemplar, reflected in the ambiguity of his life and actions.

That the historical Jesus was to his time, and is to all time, "a stranger and an enigma" (77), has a three-fold significance for the imitation of Christ. First, it indicates that Christ is in one sense inimitable, that his life and action, like his teaching, not only points to the immediate and possible human action, but also to the final and presently impossible ideal of being conformed to the image of the son of God. In this respect, the life and actions of Christ, like his teaching, is prophetic of the future as much as prescriptive for the present (78). The transcendence of Christ points to the eschatological nature and purpose of his witness, and the ambiguity of Christ's actions is an indication of that eschatological tension. Secondly the transcendence of the Christian exemplar is a reminder that imitation is not the only appropriate response to Christ. If Christ were manageably imitable, then it would be easy to imagine that successful imitation was an entirely adequate response.

The inimitability and transcendence of Christ is a reminder that the appropriate response is not only the attempt to imitate, but also to reverence, worship, fear, and hope for salvation. Thirdly and consequently, the variety of the response that is appropriate in the Christian context is a reminder that the Imitation of Christ is not just a matter of ethical expression, but that it is based on a wider understanding of imitation, and of Christianity. The transcendence of the exemplar precludes the possibility that an ethical imitation will be thought to be adequate and points to the deep and radical nature of Imitation.

So then the ambiguity of the Christian exemplar is one of its most distinctive features. While any great exemplar will be to a certain extent ambiguous, the ambiguity of Christ is of a special nature and function. This ambiguity precludes the possibility of a simplistic understanding of the meaning of the exemplar, and reflects the exemplar's transcendence. This transcendence indicates the role and nature of imitation, and in particular points to its eschatological tension, its context in the wider response to Christ, and the more-than-ethical nature of Imitation itself.

##### 5. The Universal Value of Christ.

The next characteristic feature of the Imitation of Christ tradition is the claim that Christ is the universal exemplar, that his life is an example for all. This claim is usually based on the supreme quality of Christ's life which is itself understood as a result of his divinity or as an expression of his human perfection. The claim that

Christ's example is of pre-eminent value for all men in every age is difficult to define or defend, and is the subject of this section of the thesis.

The idea that Christ is one of the great men of the world is fairly common. K. Jaspers, as we have already noted, writing as a philosopher, places Jesus among the four paradigmatic individuals of the world (79). K. Jung, who has also been mentioned, understands Christ as one possible archetype of humankind (80). But the Christian claim is that Christ is the universal archetype. So E. J. Tinsley, having observed the occurrence of the notion of imitation in world religions in terms of the imitation of Mahommed and of Buddha as well as the imitation of Christ, asks: "Are they then models on the same level of significance, the only difference being their appropriateness for particular cultural contexts?" This raises the issue of the uniqueness of Christ. For, he says;

Christian tradition has said not simply that Christ is an example nor even that he is *primus inter pares* among the exemplars but that he is the final unrepeatable model of human life, the unique first-fruits of a new humanity, the resurrection being the token of this (81).

Even to assume that Christ is obviously one of the world's great exemplars may be risky, for many find Christ an unattractive figure, obsessed with weakness and death, and certainly not the most appropriate model for imitation. Zoey, in J. D. Salinger's novel Franny and Zoey, contrasts St. Francis and Christ:

If God had wanted somebody with St Francis's consistently winning personality for the job in the New Testament, he'd've picked him, you can be sure. As it was, he picked the best, the smartest, the most loving, the least sentimental, the most unimitative master he could possibly have picked (82).

This element of inimitability is of course an expression of that ambiguity and transcendence to which we have already referred. Christ is not always the most attractive example, even for those who are committed to him.

It is clear then that some definition and defense is necessary for the claim that Christ is the universal exemplar.

We begin with J. A. T. Robinson's comments on the meaning of Christ's universality. He writes, "To be a 'universal man' is not to have every human quality, but to be the sort of person of whom we recognise in the individual that which transcends the individual. We see in him what each of us could be - in his own unique way" (83). In terms of the imitation of Christ, this means that Christ can function as a universal example while not giving a strict paradigm of every human condition and action. For, says Robinson; "... universality is not denied by particularity. The individual may be the antithesis of the general, but it is not of the universal" (84). So then, Christ can function as a universal example, and express that function through his own particular historical circumstance. Indeed, as has been suggested earlier in this thesis, it is precisely because Christ's historical circumstance is different to that of his imitators that there is scope for creative imitation rather than mimicry.

*is underlined*  
 A similar issue is raised by S. W. Sykes in his Christ and the Diversity of Humanity. He supports the idea that there is "... an image of Christ which can meet and cope with - even welcome - the diversity of mankind and which need not be pressed as an external standard to which all must needs conform" (85). He points to the fact that the stories of the gospels are part of universal human experience (86). This is important for the imitation of Christ. For it is wrong to think of the life of Christ as a kind of programmed

paradigm of the perfect life: one action is consciously paradigmatic (the foot-washing in John 13), but the life of Christ as a whole is not a series of self-consciously paradigmatic actions, but a life lived under God and in response to a particular human environment. So action-for-action imitation is inappropriate (87). The story of Christ also points to the activity and presence of God, and is an invitation to the kingdom (88). So the significance of Christ will not be adequately understood in terms of his imitative value, but in his theological significance.

This last point provides the way forward for this discussion. For there is no future in attempting to support the universality of the Christian exemplar by claiming that his life incorporates all human situations and provides a model reaction to each. Nor is there any way of demonstrating that Christ lived the very best human life that has ever been lived. Nor is it profitable to extrapolate certain moral qualities from the life of Christ and point to their universal applicability, for in this action the significance of Christ is in fact reduced, both because he is inadequately understood as an exemplar of certain moral qualities, and because by this process his own life becomes secondary and accidental to the actual universal, the moral qualities. It may be appropriate to suggest that Christ's universal significance is reflected in the quality and significance of his example, but his universality does not consist in his example. The universality of Christ is a statement of theological significance, and his role as the universal paradigm of humanity derives from that universality.

We now consider three ways of understanding the universality of Christ, each of which results in an assertion of universal paradigmatic value.

The first is that found in Irenaeus' theory of recapitulation.

J. Pelikan writes:

Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation can be read as the most profound theological vindication in the second and third centuries of the universal Christian ideal of the imitation of Christ (89).

Of immediate significance are the following elements within recapitulation: Christ sums up all men in himself, restores all men to life, in that all men as summed up in him recover the image and likeness of God, and thus all things are consummated in him (The underlined words translate ἀνακεφαλαιόω) (90). This theory of the recapitulation of Christ is Irenaeus' way of asserting his universal significance in terms of his universal and cosmic role in redemption. This idea of recapitulation then forms the context for a statement of the exemplary value of Christ for all: [Christ]

... sanctified each stage of life by (*making possible*) a likeness to himself. He came to save all through his own person; all, that is, who through him are reborn to God; infants, children, boys, young men and old. Therefore he passed through every stage of life. He was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infancy; a child among children, sanctifying childhood, and setting an example of filial affection, of righteousness and of obedience; a young man among young men, becoming an example to them, and sanctifying them to the Lord. So also he was a grown man among the older men, that he might be a perfect teacher for all, not merely in respect of revelation of the truth, but also in respect of this stage of life, sanctifying the older men, and becoming an example to them also. And thus he came even to death, that he might be 'the first-born from the dead, having the pre-eminence among all (*or in all things*) the Author of life, who goes before all and shows the way (91).

This long quotation indicates clearly that for Irenaeus Christ is both redeemer (sanctifier), and exemplar: his universal significance as exemplar derives from his status as redeemer and his action of recapitulation of human life.

In a different way, as we have already noted, Schleiermacher also interprets the significance of Christ's example in terms of his universal value. Christianity is, according to Schleiermacher, a

monotheistic faith in which the distinctive feature is that "... in it everything is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth" (92). R. R. Niebuhr characterises his theology as Christomorphic, by which he means that for Schleiermacher, "... Jesus of Nazareth objectively exhibits what human nature ideally is ...", and that "... the redeemer is the historical person whose presence ... becomes the abiding occasion for the reorganisation and clarifying of the Christian's consciousness of his absolute dependence ..." (93). So also in Schleiermacher's thought Jesus possesses a consciousness-of-kind (Gettungsbewusstsein) and sympathy with all men as well as a co-consciousness (Mitbewusstsein) of the differences of other men. Or again, Jesus' Urbildlichkeit is the power of God embodied in his own ideal humanity, his Vorbildlichkeit is the source by which men receive that power. Jesus' historical particularity does not preclude him from relating to all men; in fact it makes it possible (94). While Jesus is the exemplar (Vorbild) of perfected human nature, that exemplary status is a medium for the communication of his saving power, and is based in the historical individual Jesus (95). It is in these terms then that Schleiermacher develops the subjects of the relationship between the universality of Christ and his historical particularity, and the relationship between the universality of Christ and his universal value as exemplar. For Schleiermacher too, the claim that Christ is of value as the universal exemplar is a dimension of the claim that he has a universal value in communicating the power of salvation.

Barth also asserts the universal exemplary value of Christ in terms of his universal significance for man's salvation. For, as we have seen, for Barth Christ's status is that of Urbild of man as created and redeemed, indeed human nature is primarily his, and secondarily man's. Christ is also the paradigm of the Exaltation of

man, and of man under grace. So Christ not only effects the reconciliation, but is also the paradigm for reconciled and restored man. As Urbild, Jesus is both the "Man for God", and also "the Man for other men" (Mitmenschlichkeit) (96). It is because of who Jesus is, and the work that he performs in salvation, that he also functions as a universal exemplar.

These then are three ways of asserting the value of Christ as universal exemplar by means of theological statements about his universal value in salvation. It seems clear that if it is to be claimed that Christ is the universal exemplar, then this will be the context in which the claim is best understood and discussed, rather than in an attempt to demonstrate the historical evidence for Jesus' moral superiority. This is not to deny that there may be evidence of Christ's universal significance reflected in his earthly life, but it is to deny that it can be proved by it.

The claim that Christ's value as example is a product of his saving significance is related to the point made in Chapter Two that imitation of Christ is inadequately understood as a matter of behaviour only, but must be understood as grounded in an aspect of salvation, that of being conformed to the image of Christ by the power of God. The connection between imitation in behaviour and conformation will be discussed further below.

Bonhoeffer's development of the notion of Christ as universal Exemplar will be discussed in the second section of this thesis. We turn now to the last of our six characteristic features of the imitation of Christ, that of the historical remoteness of the exemplar.

6. The Distance of Christ from his present-day Imitators.

The characteristic of historical remoteness is not of course limited to the exemplar Christ. A present-day imitator of Socrates also has to deal with the historical distance of his exemplar, <sup>t</sup> though a study of this problem in respect of Christ will demonstrate that the particular nature of the exemplar does result in some distinctive elements in this characteristic.

The distance between Christ and his present-day imitators is one of historical, cultural, and personal remoteness. Historical because of the passage of time, cultural because of his different religious and human setting, and personal because of the remoteness of Christ's character recognised even by his contemporaries. We have already noted this personal remoteness in terms of Christ's ambiguity. It was also reflected in his extra-ordinary actions and claims, his varied response to moral and religious standards, his use of esoteric language, and his preoccupation with death and destruction yet without despair.

Firstly we must consider the question of whether or not the Christ of history is so remote that no knowledge of him is now available. The Imitation of Christ tradition has assumed the general historical reliability of the New Testament witness to Christ's actions and character, and consequently this has been assumed in this thesis. The logical consequence of not accepting this view is a reluctance to practice Imitation, for the historicity of the exemplar, and knowledge of that exemplar are necessary for imitation to take place. For, to accept the language of "Jesus of history" and "Christ of faith" for a moment, the Imitation tradition is concerned with the character of Jesus. That is to say that the nature of the Imitation of Christ derives in part from the character of its exemplar, Jesus.

Questions of the "Jesus of history", the possibility of knowledge of him, and his significance for the Christian faith are too large and complex to be discussed here (97). All I can do is to comment on the significance of these issues in the light of the notion of Imitation.

It is interesting to note in this connection that references to the Imitation of Christ in the Epistles do not include many references to the historical actions of Christ. Paul, for instance, points to general statements about Christ's attitude and actions, rather than to particular actions when he refers to the exemplary value of Christ's humility and obedience, his grace in becoming poor, his forgiveness and love (98). One notable exception is the reference to Christ's example in his "good confession before Pontius Pilate" (99). And in other instances the language used to describe Christ's example does not use the language of historical account, but derives it from the Old Testament or elsewhere. So in Romans 15:1-3, the example of Christ in not pleasing himself is described in words from Psalm 69:9, in 1 Peter 2 the language used to describe the suffering of Christ comes from Isaiah 53, and the language of Philippians 2 is clearly formal rather than historical description. However although the language of historical description is not frequent, the appeal to Christ's example does imply knowledge of his character: the appeal to "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" demonstrates this concern (100).

What then of Paul's claim to regard no-one, not even Christ, from a human point of view? While at first appearance this appears to be a rejection of the "Jesus of history" in favour of the "Christ of faith", the text of 2 Corinthians 5:16 is more likely to mean that Paul no longer regarded Christ from the perspective of unbelief, but

from the perspective of faith (101). For Paul, it is the one Christ who came to Palestine and who comes in present Christian experience. So Tinsley says: "There were not for St Paul three absolutely separate dimensions of time, that of the historical Jesus in the past, that of the Christian Church in the present, and that of the Coming of the Lord, but basically the one life of the eternal Christ in his church" (102). G. N. Stanton claims that Paul's interest is equally in the character of the pre-incarnate Son, the incarnate Christ, and the present Lord, and that one Christ provides a model for Christian behaviour (103).

What then of the Gospels? They certainly present Christ as an exemplary figure, as we have seen, even if it is not a major theme. Does this witness convey the character of the Christ of history? It is certainly possible to argue with C. H. Dodd that there was real interest in the character of the historical figure, and that this interest determined to some extent the preservation of historical recollection (104). This interest in the life and character of Jesus may even have been supported by the desire for exemplary material (105).

So then it can be claimed that there is the possibility of finding within the New Testament evidence for the historical character of Christ. If this possibility is not allowed, then, as I have said, the Imitation of Christ becomes a meaningless exercise.

The Imitation of Christ tradition has assumed the availability of knowledge of its historical exemplar. How then has it attempted to bridge the gap between that exemplar and the present-day practice of imitation? How has it dealt with the "pastness of the past"? It is worth noting that the "pastness of the past" is more of a problem in matters of belief than in matters of moral and personal behaviour, and it is with the latter that the Imitation of Christ is primarily concerned. For, as Ramsey indicates, moral statements

have an ageless quality which results in their relevance to every age (106). And if moral qualities are recognisable in different ages, so too are personal characteristics. The character studies of Theophrastus are as lively, vivid and relevant today as they were when they were written (107). So, though there are some aspects of thought in the Gospels which are foreign to the world of today, the character and values of Christ are generally comprehensible, even if, as we have seen, they are also in some respects ambiguous.

But if the problem is not of the comprehensibility of the character of Christ but of acceptance of the relevance of that character to the Twentieth Century, then the Imitation of Christ becomes more problematic. Indeed if the irrelevance of the example of Christ is asserted, then the notion of the Imitation of Christ is of course redundant.

However our concern is with the Imitation tradition, and we now study how that tradition has attempted to deal with the problem of the historical remoteness of Christ, which is an important aspect of the problem of the distance of Christ from his present-day imitators. It is possible to discern five different ways in which imitators have attempted to bridge the gap between Christ and themselves: (a) the Journey back, (b) the Journey forward, (c) the use of abstract statements, (d) direct experience, and (e) imitation of saints. We consider these in turn.

(a) The journey back.

This first way of bridging the gap between Christ and his modern followers involves an imaginative journey back to Palestine and attempt to recreate the scene of Christ's life and live in it. So, for example, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, whether of Egeria,

or of H. V. Morton "In the Steps of the Master", the journey to Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the "Via Dolorosa", the Garden Tomb, or Charles de Foucauld at Nazareth (108). Or again the attempt to recreate the life of First-Century Palestine in the simple outdoor life, beard, and sandals, is possibly an aid to, if not an expression of, the imitation of Christ. Or again, a theatrical presentation which enables involvement in the life of Christ may dissolve the historical distance and promote a sense of imitation. Barth gives a vivid account of this activity through a collection of songs, and says of it: "It [Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Golgotha] was all present without needing to be made present" (109). These are attempts to relive, to recreate the historically distant by means of a journey. The difficulty with this attempted solution is that the journey back is often more convincing to the participant than to the observer, or to the historian, and even if the past is successfully recreated, the present relevance of the example of Christ is not easy to retrieve, let alone live out in an authentically modern context. For all this, the value of this imaginative reconstruction should not be underrated, for the imitation of Christ in symbolic action is an important element in the tradition, as we have seen.

(b) The journey forward.

The second solution involves the movement of Christ rather than of the imitator. It is an imaginative attempt to bring Christ from his original historical setting to the present day, to imagine what he would do, and then to imitate that example. This approach is found in the popular writings of C. M. Sheldon (110). Sheldon's challenge is "not to do anything without first asking the question,

What would Jesus do?" (111), and his writings give a vivid account of the consequences of this approach. The danger of this approach is that to remove Christ from his historical context is to lose an important control on his meaning and significance. He may be reinterpreted quite freely by his modern imitator, and at worse the exercise may merely provide religious legitimation for already determined courses of action. There are considerable interpretative difficulties in imagining Christ in situations which are completely alien to anything he could have encountered in First-Century Palestine. Nevertheless this approach is part of the Imitation tradition, and operates as a form of imitating Christ's attitudes by means of an imaginative application to the present day. It is best used in conjunction with the next approach, and with due regard for the issues raised in our study of Imitation of Christ's Attitudes and Actions in Chapter Two.

(c) The use of abstract statements.

This involves the deduction of principles from the actions of Christ, the statement of inner qualities or virtues which are reflected in the life of Christ, and which are imitated by the Christian. This provides a way of dealing with the historical particularities of Christ's life, by extrapolating from them some imitable virtues. So, for example, William Law writes

When it is said that we are to imitate the life of Christ, it is not meant that we are called to the same manner of Life, or the same sort of Actions, for this cannot be, but it is certain that we are called to the same Spirit and Temper, which was the Spirit and Temper of our Blessed Saviour's Life and Action. We are to be like him in Heart and Mind, to act by the same Rule, to look towards the same End, and to govern our lives by the same Spirit (112).

This is an attractive solution, and is a technique which can be used in a variety of contexts. It provides positive stimulus, avoids archaism, and provides a way of understanding the imitation of Christ. Again, the dangers of a concentration on Christ's attitude to the exclusion of his actions has already been studied in Chapter Two (113). But this method can be viewed more positively as an attempt to gain a coherent example from the character of Christ, and to put it into practice in different circumstances.

(d) Direct experience.

In this method there is an attempt to communicate with the present Lord Christ by direct mystical or sacramental experience, or to experience the Spirit who conveys Christ to the believer. This attempt may be corporate or individual, sacramental or mystical. So, for instance, by meditation "... the Mysteries of our Lord's life will be contemplated not as long past events, but as present realities of which we are ourselves actual spectators", according to Ignatius Loyola (114). Or, in the language of Joseph Sittler, God's deed in Christ engenders the same shaped deed in the life of the believer. He is conformed to that by which he is formed. The Christian life is "... a re-enactment from below on the part of men of the shape of the revelatory drama of God's holy will in Jesus Christ" (115). Or again, Baptism results in conformation to the present risen power of Christ (116). Conformation to the image and likeness of Christ is a facet of daily Christian experience (117). This theory then involves a correspondence to the form of the present Christ, and by this means avoids the gap caused by his historical remoteness. The difficulty of this lies in the problem of understanding what conformation to Christ

means except by reference to the historical Christ. But for all that, the experience of conformation to the living Christ is part of the imitation of Christ, and is best done in conjunction with reference to the historical Christ.

This idea will be studied further in terms of Bonhoeffer's theology.

Belief in the risen Christ should render the imitation of Christ easier than imitation of other figures of comparable historical distance or even of figures of recent history. For there is, in the living Christ, a present exemplar, who, as he functions with the historical record, produces a powerful effect. This will be discussed further in the next Chapter in terms of the work of the Holy Spirit.

(e) The imitation of saints.

This is an attempt to imitate the life of the historically distant Christ by means of the imitation of the saints whose lives reflect the character of Christ. This idea is as early as the New Testament, when the difficulty with which we are dealing was of course already present. Paul calls for imitation of himself (Be imitators of me as I am of Christ), and points to the churches as examples to be imitated (118). So the lives of the saints may be studied for encouragement and example, and also present day saints may convey the character of Christ. For, according to J. R. Seeley, "... living examples are, as a general rule, more potent than those of which we read in books ... It cannot, therefore, be said that Christ is the direct source of all humanity. It [enthusiasm] is handed on like the torch from runner to runner in the race of life" (119). This method is not however without difficulty. For <sup>it</sup> it is difficult to

discern how Christ should be imitated by those in different circumstances, it will be just as difficult to distinguish the character of Christ from the specific personality of the saint in question. Again reference will have to be made to the historical witness of Christ, as a test of the significance of the witness of the saints, and a variety of saints considered in the hope that each may reflect a different facet of the character of Christ.

These then are five ways in which imitators of Christ have attempted to bridge the gap between themselves and the historical Christ. The five ways are the journey back, the journey forward, the use of abstract statements, direct experience, and the imitation of the saints. These five ways should not be understood as mutually exclusive, and they are most satisfactorily employed in conjunction. Of the five, the journey back is an expression of imitation in symbolic action, the journey forward and use of abstract statements often function together, and the direct experience and imitation of the saints in particular need to be done in constant reference to the historical record of Christ's witness. These then are the ways in which the Imitation of Christ tradition attempts to deal with the problem of the historical remoteness of Christ.

Although the problem of the historical remoteness is one which is common to all exemplars of ancient times, not all the answers that have been suggested are appropriate in the case of other exemplars. While imitators of other ancient exemplars may attempt the journey back or forwards, or may abstract principles from their lives, they are generally precluded from the possibility of a direct experience of their exemplar in mystical or sacramental experience, and do not always have the benefit of a group or ecclesia providing a continuing and living tradition. Thus, while the problem is a common

one, the answer that we have given includes some elements which are peculiarly characteristic of the Christian exemplar.

In the last chapter we studied the Imitation of Christ as a human phenomenon, as an ethical, religious, and mystical activity in human life. We discovered the value of this approach to the Imitation of Christ, in studying it as one instance of imitation among many. In this chapter we have concentrated on the distinctive features of the Imitation of Christ which derive from the character of the exemplar. We studied the six issues of the divine nature of the exemplar, his saving purpose, his perfection, the ambiguity of his witness, his universal value, and his historical distance from his present-day imitators. We noted the ways in which the Imitation tradition attempts to deal with the problems raised by these various features of its exemplar.

A number of theological topics have been discussed in this chapter, and in particular Christology has been a recurrent theme. In the next chapter we develop this theological discussion further, and conclude our study of the place of the Imitation of Christ within Christian theology in general.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE IMITATION OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

1. Introduction.

This chapter brings to a conclusion the first section of this thesis, in which I have attempted to uncover the nature of the Imitation of Christ. This subject has been investigated in terms of the phenomenon of the Imitation tradition. This phenomenon was analysed in Chapter Two, Imitation as a general human activity was studied in Chapter Three, and some characteristics of the Christian exemplar were investigated in Chapter Four. In this chapter we continue our study of the Imitation of Christ and Christian theology. In the next section of the thesis my aim is to verify the analysis of the Imitation of Christ presented in this first section by applying it to the theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's theology. So by this present chapter the general study of Imitation is completed, and the particular study, that of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's theology, can then be undertaken.

As in previous chapters, quotations will be used to further the current discussion rather than to explain the thought of the quotations' author. Repetition of material will occur, because of the variety of perspectives from which the Imitation of Christ is being studied, and discussion of Bonhoeffer's theology will be delayed until the second section of the thesis.

One of the features of the theological investigation of the

nature of the Imitation of Christ which has been pursued in this thesis, is that it has involved discussion of a number of doctrines. For example, we have discussed Christology (the divine and human nature of Christ, his saving purpose, his perfection, his universal significance), the doctrine of Man (man in the image of God, human integrity, fulfillment, and creativity), and the doctrine of Salvation (Christ the Saviour, the experience of Grace). Frequent discussions of doctrines related to Imitation indicates that Imitation cannot be studied in isolation from other theological areas, and that in practice it functions as a connecting-point for a number of doctrines. This interrelatedness of Imitation with other doctrines arises because Christian theology is itself interconnected, and because Imitation is by its nature linked with one of the central doctrines of Christianity, the doctrine of Christ. So the notion of the Imitation of Christ is closely related to other doctrines within Christian theology, and its character is illuminated by a study of those relationships. This chapter is comprised of a study of some of these relationships, and is a continuation and completion of a number of studies of Imitation and other doctrines which have occurred in this thesis.

One purpose of this discussion is to defend what is a fundamental assumption of the argument of this thesis. The assumption is that the Imitation of Christ can rightly be viewed as one tradition with a variety of strands or expressions, rather than as a collection of different activities with only an appeal to the example of Christ in common. This assumption was particularly evident in Chapter Two, where I wrote of the various expressions of ethical, religious, and mystical activities as aspects of one Tradition, rather than as separate activities. They may of course be engaged in as separate activities in some instances, but in my view they are best understood as <sup>different</sup> aspects

of the one Imitation tradition.

It is clear that such an assumption needs some defence, because it is more common to see diversity than unity in the practice of Imitation. So, for instance, it is not easy to see the connection between the practice of ethical imitation in love of neighbour and the practice of mystical imitation of the death of Christ, nor is it easy to see a connection between the Pedilavium and the endurance of persecution after the example of Christ. Indeed the practice of Christianity has often involved one rather than the other, or even the conscious repudiation of one form of Imitation in favour of another.

Is it possible to assert the unity of the Imitation of Christ tradition? It is my hope that the following discussion will not only give an affirmative answer to this question, but will also further illuminate the nature of the Imitation of Christ tradition.

We have already established that the Imitation of Christ cannot adequately be discussed or described except with reference to a number of major doctrines within Christian theology. This indicates the coherence of Christian theology, but it is also significant that it is the Imitation of Christ which is a meeting-point for so many major doctrines. The question of whether or not this means that the Imitation of Christ is central to Christianity will be discussed below. The point here is that because the Imitation of Christ is at the meeting-point of other major doctrines, it is formed by them. The shape of the Imitation of Christ derives from the nature of the Christian exemplar as we discovered in the last chapter; it also derives from the shape of Christianity itself. So the Imitation of Christ reflects the coherent shape of Christian theology, as it is itself formed by its relationship to the major doctrines of the

Christian faith.

The first reason for asserting the unity of the Imitation tradition as an ethical, religious, and mystical entity is this fact, that Imitation is shaped by Christian theology as a whole. For Christian theology itself encompasses and unifies both the nature of man and of Christian experience in one religious, ethical, and mystical whole. Christian theology opposes any attempt to compartmentalise Christianity or to reduce it to any one of its constituent parts. Any reduction of Christian experience to ethics without religion, or mysticism without ethics, is a perversion of the nature of Christianity: the Christian response is at the one time religious, ethical, and mystical.

This total view of the nature of Christianity is reflected in the practice of the Imitation of Christ. And consequently this total view as expressed in Christian theology is reflected in the theology of the Imitation of Christ. This is the first reason for accepting the assumption of this thesis as to the unity of the Imitation of Christ tradition. It can now be seen that it was preferable to delay discussion of the validity of this assumption until the Imitation of Christ had been discussed in greater detail.

It is my claim then that the Imitation of Christ can only adequately be described as religious, ethical and mystical. This is in conscious opposition to ideas that for instance, it is fundamentally ethical, or fundamentally religious and that other aspects are implications of Imitation, or bases for it, rather than part of Imitation itself.

Gustafson makes a similar point when in discussing "Christ the Pattern" he says: "... the Christian life has its integrity in relation to God, and its moral concerns are grounded in that relation.

The Christian life is not less moral because it is not primarily moral" (1). Gustafson is here arguing about the nature of the Imitation of Christ on the basis of the nature of Christianity, as I have done, though I would dispute his idea that the Christian life is not "primarily" moral. According to my claim, it is primarily religious, ethical, and mystical, and the Imitation of Christ shares and reflects that same character.

Another reason for asserting the unity of the tradition is that the Imitation of Christ has to do with the whole of man, his religion, his ethics, his mysticism; that it is in the confrontation of the whole man by the whole man Christ Jesus that Imitation takes place. As K ung says; "If someone commits himself to Jesus as the standard, if he lets himself be determined by the person of Jesus Christ as the *basic model for a view of life and a practice of life*, this means in fact the transformation of the whole man" (2). So one may argue for this particular view of the Imitation of Christ on the basis of the nature of Christianity, on the basis of the nature of man as an ethical, religious, and mystical being, and on the basis of the total meaning and ministry of Christ. This last point will be developed below, in our study of Imitation and the Humanity of Christ.

What then of the place of the Imitation of Christ within Christian theology? We have indicated that the Imitation of Christ is a meeting-point for a number of major doctrines. Is it then appropriate to say that the Imitation of Christ is central to Christianity? Opinion has varied widely on this subject, and even greater variety is found in the practice of Christianity. As we have seen, it is near the centre of Barth's theology, and is for Kierkegaard an essential part of the practice of Christianity.

While it is not altogether clear what the concept of

centrality in theology might mean, we have certainly claimed that the Imitation of Christ is not peripheral to Christianity, but is an integral part of it. This point is most clearly made by claiming that the Imitation of Christ is the response of man to the humanity of Christ. This subject will be developed further below. If this is a correct understanding of the nature of the Imitation of Christ, and the humanity of Christ is integral to Christianity, then the significance of the Imitation of Christ is established in that it is an integral part of Christianity.

In order to develop the idea of the relationship between the Imitation of Christ and other doctrines and thus shed more light on the nature of Imitation and its place in Christian theology, we continue our study by investigating Imitation and various doctrines. These doctrines have been selected because in their relationship with Imitation they point up the character of that tradition.

In sections 2 and 3 we study Imitation and Grace and the Means of Grace. This is in order to refute the common assumption that Imitation has to do with "works" and not "Grace", and thus to demonstrate the true nature of Imitation. In section 4 we investigate the subject of Man's Perfectibility, because this issue is raised by the idea of imitating a perfect exemplar. As I will have demonstrated in section 2 that Imitation is a part of Salvation, section 5 studies the Eschatological dimension of Imitation. Section 6 Imitation and the Church, is an attempt to refute the notion that Imitation is solely an individualistic activity. Imitation involves contact with God in Christ, so section 7 discusses the relationship between Imitation and the Trinity. The last section 8, returns to the Christological theme of the last chapter in discussing the relationship between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ. The study of this

relationship is the climax of these two chapters, and indeed of the first section of the thesis, for reasons that will become evident.

## 2. The Imitation of Christ and Grace.

The question of the relationship between Imitation and Grace is complex but of considerable importance. At its most obvious level, it is the problem that there is a strong objection to the practice of Imitation on the basis that Imitation looks like "works", an activity which appears to ignore the priority of Grace. At a deeper level, it is the problem of divine and human activity, and the relationship between the two that results in the practice of Imitation.

One of the issues of Imitation and Grace has already been studied in the course of this thesis, that of the imitation of the Christ, and his work of representative or substitutionary atonement. In that place I attempted to demonstrate that there is in theory no difficulty in imitating in some form a representative act (and indeed that imitation may be an appropriate response), and that even if by definition a particular act of substitution could not be imitated, it was still not inappropriate to speak of imitating the character or style of the doer of the act. This was an attempt to show that what may be regarded as the supreme act of Grace in Christ ~~does~~ not preclude the practice of imitation, and I suggested at the end of that discussion that it was likely that some of the force that lay behind this particular objection to Imitation derived from a fear of "works-righteousness", a denial of Grace; and it is this problem which is my present concern.

The antipathy of Grace to Imitation has been a recurrent theme in theology. Imitation has been dismissed as "Pelagian", "works-righteousness", and "Arminian". Pelagius indeed gave prominence to the imitation of Christ, quoting: "He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk as he walked" (3). It was not, however, that Augustine was opposed to the practice of imitation: the point at issue here was the connection between imitation and Grace, or the meaning of Grace. "...Pelagius defined grace, not as an inner power transforming [men], but as their original endowment with rational will, the divine forgiveness they obtain through baptism, and the illumination provided by the law of Moses and the teaching and example of Christ" (4). Again the Protestant attack on Imitation (which included an attack on De Imitatione Christi) was based on a fear of "works-righteousness" (5). Luther claimed that Christ as gift is pure gold but as example is mere iron (6). And the Lutheran tradition has continued to find it difficult to find a place for imitation in the context of a belief in justification (7), despite the fact that Luther himself did emphasise the value of Christ as example (8). And although Calvin wrote of the value of the Imitation of Christ as we have seen, in later times the practice of Imitation came to be identified with Arminianism (9).

Nevertheless despite this opposition Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, as we have seen, support the idea of Imitation as well as supporting the priority of Grace, and in their writings help establish a tradition in which the relationship between Imitation and Grace is both positive and carefully worked out.

It is of course possible to speak of the Imitation of Christ in such a way that it does become a new Law, the higher requirement of the Gospel, but good news only insofar as the imitator is successful. If Christ is viewed as Standard not Gift, as demand rather than Grace,

then of course the objection to which we refer can be upheld (10), and it must be admitted that some instances of Imitation theology have expressed this view.

An obvious way in which Imitation and Grace could be related would be to talk in terms of Imitation being responsive to Grace. In this way Grace is asserted as a divine activity which forgives man and sets him free to make an appropriate response, and Imitation is understood as a human activity which is the appropriate form of a response to God's action of Grace. In this view, Christ is understood as having the successive offices of Saviour and Example, and Christian experience in terms of appropriation of the Gospel, succeeded by responsive obedience to the new Law. This idea of the relationship between Imitation and Grace is akin to that expressed in the writings of William Law, who is persuasive in his statement of the responsibility of responsive imitation of the Saviour (11). In this scheme Grace and Imitation are viewed as complementary but separate activities, one an activity of God, and the other an activity of man.

However in the course of this thesis the notion of Imitation with which we have been concerned is one in which there is a closer relationship between Grace and Imitation, and we now attempt to articulate and describe that relationship.

In this view the practice of Imitation is seen as both a divine activity and a human activity, as both Grace and Work. Here the work of God is perceived in enabling the human act of imitation, and the human act of imitation as both a response to that work of God and to the example of Christ. The work of God within the Christian is of course wider than that which results in what is called Imitation: that which is called Imitation is described as such because it relates in some recognisable way to the character and actions of Christ. So

Imitation of Christ is the product of the activity of both God and man, and is a response both to the present work of God within the believer and to the witness of the Christ. In this way Imitation is a particular instance of the general experience of Salvation, which is both "worked in" by God and "worked out" by man, and which is a response both to the present work of God in the Church and to the historical action of the Christ.

The importance of the dual response to the historical witness of Christ and to the present life of Christ was noted in our discussion of the problem of the historical distance of Christ from his present-day imitators, and in our discussion of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. We will discuss the idea of Imitation as response to the present work of God in terms of the ministry of the Spirit later in this chapter.

This view of the relationship between Grace and Imitation, that of Imitation as an experience of Grace is fundamental to the idea of Imitation which has been defended in this thesis. It has been expressed in a variety of ways, for it is inherent in Irenaeus' doctrine of Recapitulation, Calvin's doctrine of participation and conformation, and Schleiermacher's doctrine of the experience of Salvation. With different vocabulary, each of these speak of Imitation in terms of the work of Grace (12).

In different words, H. Thielicke expresses the same idea, drawing on the theology of Luther and M. Kähler (13). Thielicke notes Luther's idea of Christ as exemplar in terms of prototype, Urbild, both of God's saving activity and of man's state of salvation. Man "in Christ" is a participant in the dying and rising of Christ, and as such is fashioned in accordance with the model, Christ. Kähler describes this participation in terms of "inclusive representation" -

Christ's prototypical actions are actions which include human kind, into which men are drawn, by that faith in which there is real communication and union between Christ and the believer(14). So Luther can speak of a conformity to the Son's imago Dei which is constitutive of the Christian: "It is precisely because Christ accepts 'conformity' with our sin, our dereliction, our perplexity and doubt. ... that we are 'conformed' to his divine likeness and he takes us up into his life..." (15). So for Luther, participation in the divine likeness is not the result of the practice of Imitation, it is its pre-condition. "It is not the imitation that makes sons; it is sonship that makes imitators" (16). Here then in the clearest terms is expressed the closest relationship between Grace and Imitation, that Imitation is an expression of Grace.

Luther further develops the connection between Grace and Imitation in the following ways. Firstly, Imitation of Christ is a necessary result of Grace:

Truly, if faith is there, he [the believer] cannot hold back: he proves himself, breaks out into good works, confesses and teaches this gospel before the people and stakes his life on it. Everything that he lives and does is directed to his neighbour's profit, in order to help him - not only to the attainment of this grace, but also in body, property, and honour. Seeing that Christ has done this for him, he thus follows Christ's example ... For where works and love do not break forth, there faith is not right, the gospel does not take hold, and Christ is not rightly known (17).

The presence of the Imitation of Christ is for Luther a sign of the presence of the grace of Christ.

Secondly, Luther expressed the union between Christ and the Church in terms of Head and Body, and developed the idea of the union between Christ the Head and his Body in terms of the Church being involved in the same fate as its Head, and in terms of doing the same works as the Head began (18). Here there is a close connection

between the Church and its actions, and its risen Lord. Another image Luther used to express the close relationship between the Grace of Christ and the Imitation of Christ is his development of the idea of "putting on Christ" in his Commentary on Galatians. To put on Christ is an action both of Gospel and of Law. To put on Christ in accordance with the Gospel is new birth and new creation: to put on Christ according to Law is to put on patience, love, modesty:

Now, when we are apparelled with Christ, as with the robe of our righteousness and salvation, then we must put on Christ also as the apparel of imitation and example (19).

But it is the same Christ who is put on, both as gift and as example: "What is it to know Christ?" Luther asks, "Nothing other than to recognise Him firstly as gift and present and secondly as an example" (20). So for Luther the ideas of Christ as Head, and of putting on Christ, are vehicles for expressing the close relationship between Grace and Imitation.

Thirdly, Luther makes use of the dual nature of Imitation as both grace and work when he suggests:

.... the Christian should set Christ the gift before him in times of affliction, and take Christ as example only in times of joy; but by the same token, it is the example and not the gift which should be declared to the stubborn and self-satisfied (21).

So in practice, the idea of Imitation functions as challenge as well as grace. Indeed, the challenge of Imitation is in itself a revelation of grace: to the one who already knows the grace of God in Christ, it will not be a challenge that results in despair, but in hope.

Kierkegaard, in Judge for Yourself, makes use of the flexibility of the Christian message in a similar way to Luther. According to Kierkegaard, when the Middle Ages misunderstood Christianity in terms of the wrong kind of imitation, and in terms of merit, then Luther pointed to the danger of a theology of good works as leading to

presumption or despair: justification is by faith. But although Luther himself did not neglect imitation, his followers did so and reduced Christianity to doctrine, not life. In this context, Kierkegaard asserts the importance of imitation, in response to Christ the Pattern (22).

So it can be seen, from both Luther and Kierkegaard, what a close and subtle relationship there is between Grace and Imitation. Similarly, Barth develops the relationship between Grace and Imitation in the following terms: Christ is both the one through whom grace comes, and also the exemplar of that grace and its reception (23). Grace and Law are the one Word of God, the Word of grace in Jesus Christ. "The content of grace is given as Gospel; the form of grace is given as Law"; or the Gospel is the inner dimension of grace, and Law is the outer dimension (24). So Grace and Example, Gospel and Law are all found in Christ. And the response to Christ has the same form as the gift of Christ, for both have the form of Christ: "... the life, choices, thought, speech, and activity of the men ... follow the life-movement of Jesus Christ as their model ... imitating, reflecting, illustrating, and attesting it" (25). As we have already seen, Barth has a clear idea of Grace and Imitation, and in particular of how the activity of Imitation is a response to the immediate prompting of the grace of Christ. We have noted in a previous discussion Barth's discussion of Divine Grace and human freedom in Church Dogmatics IV 4. It is worth summarising the relevant section here. In answering the question how does the extra nos of salvation become in nobis, Barth rejects the christomonist solution (that it is a divine action done by Christ with no human action), and also rejects the anthropomonist solution (that it is done by man, and the work of Christ is perhaps only an example). Instead Barth suggests that Christ

creates in the history of every man the beginning of his new history, and man's response corresponds to this inner divine transformation of his life (26). So for Barth too, Grace and Imitation are indissolubly fused together.

We began this section with the problem of the relationship between Grace and Imitation, and in particular with the objection to the idea of Imitation which is based on the desire not to obscure the doctrine of Grace. In attempting to meet this problem we attempted to articulate the notion of the relationship between Grace and Imitation that has been fundamental to the presentation of Imitation in this thesis and to explore in more detail the idea of Imitation as an experience of Grace that does occur within the Imitation tradition.

This notion is well expressed by contrast to some words of P. T. Forsyth: "It is better to trust Christ and His work than even to imitate Him. He is worth infinitely more to the world as its Saviour than as its model, as God's promise than as man's ideal" (27). Our view does not recognise these polarities: for part of knowing Christ and his work is in imitating him, knowing him as model is part of knowing him as Saviour, and in imitating him he is known and received as God's promise. Imitation is not opposed to Grace; Imitation is an experience of Grace. The connection between Grace and Imitation in Bonhoeffer will be described below.

If then Grace and Imitation are so closely connected, what are the "Means of Grace" for the practice of Imitation?

### 3. Imitation and the Means of Grace.

In the Imitation tradition, God is not only the origin of Grace, but also the means whereby that Grace is conveyed. God the Father makes men into imitators of Christ. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (28). The work of Christ in impressing his character upon his disciples was discussed in Chapter Four under the subject of the distance of Christ from his present-day imitators. The imitation of Christ is in part a response to the present work of the risen Christ.

With regard to the work of the Spirit in conveying the image of Christ to believers, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding (or reflecting) the glory of the Lord are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit". The most usual interpretation of these words is that they speak of the work of the Spirit in transforming Christians into the likeness of Christ (29). On this interpretation the text is a reminder of the role of the Spirit in the practice of the Imitation of Christ. So conformation to the image of Christ is an activity of God, and in particular of the Spirit of God. We have noted previously that Imitation is in part a response to that present work of God.

It is also important to notice the relationship of this work of the Spirit to the problem of the historical remoteness of Christ from his present-day imitators. In that place we discussed the significance of the fact that the Christ who is being imitated is not only a figure of past history but is also the risen Lord. Here we make the complementary point that it is the function of the Holy Spirit to

convey Christ to the Believer, to indicate the truth of his character and demands, and to produce "Christ-like" behaviour. The presence of the Spirit is another part of the answer to the problem of the remoteness of Christ.

So the work of Grace in conformation to the image of the Son is the work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The subject of the Trinity and Imitation will be studied further later in this chapter. As well as being conveyed directly, this conformation is also achieved sacramentally. In considering Baptism and the Eucharist as means of conforming grace, I am making a complementary statement to that section of Chapter Two in which Baptism and the Eucharist were described in terms of being a form of the Imitation of Christ. In that connection they were actions of Imitation, whereas here they are means of grace which result in the practice of Imitation.

Baptism conveys the character of Christ because it is performed in the name or character of Christ or of the Triune God. It is baptism into the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, a means by which disciples are made (30). Insofar as Baptism involves a sealing by the Spirit, in Baptism men receive the divine image and likeness. Lampe quotes Cyril: "We are transformed, as into the divine image, into Christ Jesus, not by undergoing a bodily refashioning, but ... by partaking of the Holy Spirit, and possessing the riches of Christ Himself within ourselves ... for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ " (31). It is not just that Baptism is a picture of the life of imitation (32); Baptism conveys the character and form of Christ.

The Eucharist offers the occasion for self-offering to God after the example of Christ (33); it is also a means by which the character of Christ's offering is conveyed to the participants. A

clue to this is found in Augustine. He writes:

... the whole redeemed community ... is offered to God as a universal sacrifice, through the great Priest who offered himself in his suffering for us - so that we might be the body of so great a head - under 'the form of a servant' (34).

In Corpus Christi, E. L. Mascall develops this thought further, and quotes from M. J. Scheeben:

... Christ can and should consummate the sacrifice of himself both in himself as the head, and likewise in his entire mystical body. His entire mystical body is to be sacrificed through his power and according to the model of his real body. As his sacrifice is by no means purely symbolic in character, but is utterly real, so too, when considered as the sacrifice of the community, it ... should be the efficacious ideal of the real sacrifice which the community ought actually to offer. ... [the bodies of his members] ... after the example of their head, take death upon themselves for the honour of God. This they do by allowing Christ, to whom henceforth their life belongs, to immolate that life (35).

So in the Eucharist, the self-sacrifice of Christ is conveyed to the Church, and the Church then sacrifices itself after the example of Christ, and in the power of his self-sacrifice.

This assimilation into the self-sacrifice of Christ does not just occur in the Eucharist. It is part of the meaning of worship.

In the words of T. F. Torrance

He [the Holy Spirit] renews us by drawing us within the self-consecration of Christ made on our behalf, and by assimilating us into his holiness. ... It is through the power of the same Spirit who came down at Pentecost that we are united to Christ in his identification with us, and joined to him in his self-consecration and self-offering for us once and for all on earth and eternally prevalent in heaven (36).

So the means of grace include the direct work of the Triune God, and his sacramental work in Baptism and Eucharist, and in Christian worship. Another means of grace, by which the shape of the Christ-like life is conveyed to the Christian, is found in the example of Christ as

revealed in the New Testament and in Christian saints, and in the obedient response to this example. For in the New Testament, the example of Christ is usually the occasion of a challenge to faithful obedience, to humility, love, service etc. This challenge is an invitation of grace, and a positive response results in closer conformity to Christ (37). This view of responsive obedience as a gift of grace relates to that view discussed above that the demand of Christ's example is in itself an act of grace.

This concludes our study of Imitation and the Means of Grace.

#### 4. Imitation and Man's Perfectibility.

In the previous chapter we discussed the question of the way in which the Imitation tradition copes with the notion of a perfect exemplar. We now study the issue of the association of Imitation and Perfectionism, the view that because Christians imitate a perfect exemplar, they may themselves become perfect.

As an instance of Perfectionism we study the thought of John Wesley. Here Perfectionism is linked to the idea of the Imitation of Christ, which is itself a major theme in his spirituality (38). Wesley means by Perfect "one in whom is the mind which was in Christ, and who so walketh as Christ also walked ... [he] loveth his neighbour, every man, as himself; yea, as Christ loveth us" (39). So one view of Perfection is that it is walking as Christ walked, a being renewed in the heart in the whole image of God, which results in righteousness and true holiness (40). Note the use of 1 John 2:6, a verse well-used by Perfectionist Imitators, and the use of the imago Dei vocabulary,

which provides a theological basis for the Imitation appeal. Wesley's view of the real character of Perfection is fairly precise, and he allows for mistakes through ignorance, and also that the sanctified will be conscious of their "littleness of grace, coming short of the full mind that was in Christ, and walking less accurately than they might have done after their divine Pattern" (41). Nevertheless, it is their inherent holiness which makes them like Christ (42).

Wesley was influenced by A'Kempis' De Imitatione Christi (he edited a version of it which he called The Christian's Pattern), and by the writings of William Law, who linked the ideas of Perfection and the Imitation of Christ. However in asserting the possibility of Perfection in the Imitation of Christ on earth, Wesley went beyond the thought of both A'Kempis and Law.

The same issue of the association of Perfection with Imitation arose in the Pelagian-Augustine controversy. The basis for Pelagius' "Perfectionism" is wider than an appeal to the Imitation of Christ, but does include that significant reference 1 John 2:6: "He that says he abides in him, ought himself also to walk as he walked" (43). But although Augustine opposes Pelagianism and this use of the Imitation of Christ, he is not opposed to the idea of Imitation: "Whatever was done, therefore, in the crucifixion of Christ, his burial, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension into heaven, his being seated at the Father's right hand - all these things were done thus, that they might not only signify their mystical meanings, but also serve as a model for the Christian Life which we lead here on earth" (44). So there is, for Augustine, the possibility of a non-Perfectionist Imitation of Christ.

In connection with this discussion of the possibility of perfect conformity to Christ, it is relevant to mention the Eschatological

aspect of Imitation, a subject that will be discussed further below. For the idea that conformity to Christ is eschatologically fulfilled supports the idea that perfect conformity is not possible in this life. 1 John 3:2 implies that "being like him" is a hope for the future, 2 Corinthians 3:18 that "being changed into his likeness" is part of the present continuous condition, and 1 Corinthians 15:49 looks to the future general Resurrection when "we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven".

So there are within the Imitation tradition both possibilities: an association of Imitation with Perfectionism, and an understanding of Imitation which does not include Perfectionism. The issue of man's perfectibility is too large to be dealt with adequately in this thesis. The point of indicating those two possibilities is to indicate that Imitation does not necessarily connote Perfectionism, and therefore cannot be dismissed on the basis of a repudiation of Perfectionism.

On the other hand the Imitation tradition does include, as we have seen, an Eschatological hope of final conformation to Christ. As Imitation has to do with Salvation, it has this Eschatological perspective. We now develop further the theme of Imitation and Eschatology.

##### 5. Imitation and Eschatology.

The Eschatological dimension of Imitation is basic to the New Testament notion of Imitation, as we have seen. 1 John 3:2 speaks of being like him "when he appears", Ephesians 4:13 of a future "mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ", and

1 Corinthians 15:49 describes the resurrection in terms of bearing the image of the man of heaven. As Tinsley says: "... the Christian's life of conformation to Christ is seen as an eschatological reality; it looks to the consummation for its full actualisation" (45).

What then is the significance of the Eschatological dimension of the Imitation of Christ?

Firstly, as we have seen, the Eschatological dimension of the Imitation of Christ is a reminder that whatever measure of conformation to Christ is achieved in this life, fulness of conformity will only be found in terms of final redemption, in Eschatological fulfillment.

Secondly, the perspective of Eschatology ensures that the practice of Imitation is an activity of hope. For while at the present time the practice of Imitation is of the imperfect attempting to imitate the perfect, the eschatological hope is of the perfection of men in Christ. And the eschatological context functions as a reminder that while the practice of Imitation may be viewed as a human activity which is weak and fallible, its obverse side and its basis is that it is a work of God, and that work of God in conforming men to the image of the Son will be completed at the end. For Eschatology speaks of the fulfillment of God's plan. So Imitation is an activity of hope, not despair. And Eschatological hope also speaks of the end of conformity to the suffering and death of Christ, and of final conformation to the risen Christ. Calvin writes: "Therefore, the apostle teaches that God has destined all his children to the end that they be conformed to Christ (Romans 8:29). ... we share Christ's sufferings in order that as he has passed from a labyrinth of all exits into heavenly glory, we may in like manner be led through various tribulations to the same glory (Acts 14:22). ... when we come to know the sharing

of his sufferings, we at the same time grasp the power of his resurrection; and when we become like him in his death, we are thus made ready to share his glorious resurrection (Philippians 3:10-11)"(46). The eschatological perspective brings hope to Imitation.

Thirdly, the Eschatological perspective ensures that Imitation is not an activity which concentrates only on the past, on the Christ of history, but that it is also an experience of the present Eschatological reality of God's work and that it also looks to the future. (The work of the Spirit in this respect has been described above). It is this present and future dimension which keeps the Imitation of Christ from becoming merely an antiquarian exercise (47).

Fourthly, the Eschatological hope of the redemption of man in his transformation into the image of Christ functions as a reminder that the purpose of Imitation is not that of denying the humanity of man in favour of the development of a religious replacement, but that Imitation involves an affirmation and redemption of the creaturehood of mankind. For Eschatology speaks of hope and re-creation for the natural order. And the Eschatological vision of conformity to the Son indicates the consummation of man's religious, ethical, and mystical search in the one experience of transformation. It is because of this perspective that we have spoken of religious, ethical and mystical forms of Imitation as aspects of one tradition, rather than as different forms of Imitation. This point will be developed further below.

So it can be seen that Eschatology is an important context for a correct understanding of the Imitation of Christ as it is a reminder of the imperfection of the activity of Imitation in this life, it makes Imitation an activity of hope rather than despair, it ensures a balance of concentration on past, present and future, and it aids a

view of Imitation which includes the redemption of the whole man in Christ.

#### 6. Imitation of Christ and the Church.

The Imitation of Christ is so commonly regarded as a matter of individual action, if not an individualistic activity, that it is important to correct the balance by pointing out the corporate dimension to Imitation which is found within the tradition.

This corporate dimension is found in several of the themes that have recurred in the course of this thesis. The idea of dying and rising with Christ as an involvement in the "movement" of Christ is corporate, as is the idea of Recapitulation. And there is as much reason for understanding the notion of "image" as corporate as there is for regarding it as individualist. The most obvious basis for a corporate understanding of Imitation is found in the Body-Head motif. The Church, as the Body of Christ, imitates the actions of its divine Head, Christ. The gifts of the exalted Head are "... for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". Thus it is that the body grows up into the Head, Christ (48). Maturity of the body of Christ is mature manhood, the measure of which is the stature of the fulness of Christ. Here conformation to the Head is clearly corporate.

We have also noticed the function of the Christian community

in transmitting a Christian culture which is marked out by acts of Imitation, both in the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, and in symbolic liturgical acts such as the Pedilavium. And exemplary behaviour is found within the context of the Church, when saints function as proximate models of Christlike behaviour. Indeed exemplary behaviour is not only found within individuals: the church of the Thessalonians was an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, and itself imitated both Christ and the churches in Judea (49).

This ecclesial dimension of Imitation is of great importance in understanding the role of the individual in imitating Christ. For as it is the Body which grows up into the Head, the individual members practise different aspects of Christian service, different aspects of the Imitation of Christ. All are imitators of Christ, but each member has a different charism, a different vocation, a different expression of the Imitation of Christ (50). In the Imitation of Christ, as in the life of the Body, not only is there room for different expressions of discipleship, but variety is appropriate. This corporate context of Imitation is important for the individual imitator because it means that no individual ought to feel the responsibility of expressing every aspect of the Imitation of Christ, because it means that one expression of Imitation need not be threatened by another, and because the partial vision of Christ conveyed by the individual is complemented by the vision conveyed by others and by the Church as a whole. The grace of Imitation is multi-faceted, and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ is attained by the Church community, in its corporate conformation to its Head.

The corporate dimension is both fundamental to Imitation, and necessary for its healthy practice. This connection of Church and

Imitation will be developed further in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology.

### 7. Imitation of Christ and the Trinity.

As the Imitation of Christ has to do with the personal formation of human beings and finds frequent expression in inter-personal relationships, it is of significance that the Christian exemplar is claimed to have a share in the life of the Trinity, that of a persona, the Son. While there is a profound distinction between the meaning of persona and the modern notion of person, this aspect of the exemplar's existence has already found expression in this thesis. In Chapter Two we studied both the idea of Christ as the model Son of the Father, and also the idea of Christ as the model receiver of the Spirit. While the evidence we have for these relationships of Christ to the Father and Spirit is of the life of the Incarnate Son, this is still expressive of the inter-personal life of the Triune God.

We have already investigated another connection between the Trinity and Imitation earlier in this chapter when the work of Grace in conforming men to the image of Christ was seen to be that of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We have also noted that Barth writes of an imitation of the life of God the Trinity in man's inter-personal relationships (51). And Augustine seems to have understood that man is in the image of the Triune God, and that he is conformed to that image. (52).

If it is possible to think of man's imitation of the Trinity, then it is also possible to think of imitation of the Father, and even

of the Spirit (53). What is the relationship between these ideas of the **I**mitation of God and the Imitation of Christ? While it is not inappropriate to speak of men imitating God, the Trinity, the Father, or the Spirit, in Christian theology it is the Imitation of Christ which is most appropriate and which naturally functions as a control on the other ideas. The reason for this is Christological: it is in Christ that the character and purpose of God is focussed for the benefit of man, and because the character and plan of God is conveyed through the **H**umanity of Christ. We will develop this theme of Imitation and the Humanity of Christ in the next section of this chapter. The subject of the Imitation of God will recur in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology.

#### 8. Imitation and the Humanity of Christ.

During the course of this thesis we have had occasion to study the relationship between the Imitation of Christ and a number of different doctrines including a number of Christological issues. In coming now to a discussion of Imitation and the Humanity of Christ we reach what is the climax of that series, for Imitation of Christ is most adequately understood as a response to the Humanity of Christ.

It is easy to state this connection in the wrong way, and we have in this thesis noted the inadequacy of ideas such as the division of Christ's activities into categories of human and divine, the human activities being understood as imitable. Nor is it satisfactory to claim that the divine Christ is the Saviour, the human Christ

the Example. Nor is it satisfactory to speak of Imitation in terms of a quest behind the Christ of faith to the historical Jesus. We have already demonstrated the inadequacy of these ways of connecting Imitation with the Humanity of Christ.

A satisfactory view of the significance of the Humanity of Christ must include two ideas: that the divine life of God is revealed in human form, and that the same human form reveals true and perfect humanity. This is to say that in the humanity of Christ is revealed both the nature of God and also the nature of man as he is intended to be. Augustine says:

God the Son of God, who is himself the Truth, took manhood without abandoning his godhead, and thus established and founded this faith, so that man might have a path to man's God through the man who was God ... this road is provided by one who is himself both God and man. As God, he is the goal; as man, he is the way (54).

But the notion we have been expressing is that as God and man, Christ is both the goal and the way. Insofar as Christ is God incarnate, "this is the divine life operating under human conditions" (55), and insofar as Christ is the perfect Man, he shows what is man's goal. Yet it is the same humanity which is the revelation both of Divinity and Humanity: the connection between the Divinity of Christ and his perfect Humanity is best understood in terms of man's nature as in the image God, and Christ's nature as the image of God (56).

The Imitation of Christ tradition has neglected this dual view of the significance of the Humanity of Christ to its impoverishment. For Imitation which views the Humanity of Christ only as a vehicle for the disclosure of the Divine nature is likely to value the Humanity of Christ only as a means to an end, and to imagine that it can eventually be dismissed as irrelevant to the spiritual search. We will discuss this idea below. But the opposite view, that the

Humanity of Jesus is only the revelation of full human potential, easily allows Imitation to reduce to a matter of ethics, and to neglect the notion of the restoration of man to the image of God. If the former tends to de-humanise man, the latter tends to reduce Imitation to mere humanism.

While it is evident that there are difficulties in describing the Humanity of Christ in terms both of the revelation of God and of man in a way which does justice to both (57), it is my intention to note that both ideas are needed for an adequate understanding of the Imitation of Christ. While it is also a matter of debate whether or not conformation to the humanity of Christ involves divinisation, as for example E. Leen claims in his In the likeness of Christ (58), it is clear that conformation to the humanity of Christ involves not only a regard for the historical Jesus but also a response to the ascended Christ whose assumed humanity is now glorified. For it is the glorified humanity of Christ which is the sign of hope for Christ's imitators, as Christ is the first-fruits of the Resurrection, and as Christians will themselves be transformed into that glorious likeness of the man of heaven (59). Conformation to the Humanity of Christ not only speaks of Eschatological hope for the imitator, but also, as we have seen in our discussion of the characteristic features of the Christian Exemplar, gives an understanding of how human beings can imitate one who is Divine, and how a Saviour may be imitated. The Humanity of Christ provides the most helpful key to understanding the meaning of the Imitation of Christ.

The fruitfulness of this connection is further illustrated by noting that it is the Humanity of Christ that exemplifies the appropriate response of man to God, to himself, and to others. For it is only in a man that some of the severest problems of human behaviour

can be met; the problem of the right response of a creature to its Creator, the right balance of self-denial and self-affirmation, and the right balance of love for others and self-love. The value of the example of the Son of God in these areas depends on his assumption of humanity. It is for this reason that, as we have discovered, it is more natural to speak of the Imitation of Christ rather than of Imitation of the Father or the Spirit, because it was the Son who became incarnate.

The theology of the Humanity of Christ also provides an answer to the question which has already been raised in this chapter whether or not it is legitimate to speak of one tradition of the Imitation of Christ, rather than dividing it into its different aspects, ethical, religious, and mystical. Previously we argued for that unity on the basis of the shape of Christian theology, and on the basis of the nature of man as an ethical, religious, and mystical being. Our argument now is from the Humanity of Christ, and it is that conformation to the Humanity of Christ is religious, ethical, and mystical. It is religious, because the Humanity of Christ reveals both the character and purpose of God and also the appropriate religious response of man. It is ethical, because the moral character and requirements of God and the moral character of the perfect man are revealed in the Humanity of Christ. It is mystical, because conformation means involvement in the destiny of the Son of Man, conformation to his death and resurrection, and daily transformation into his likeness. So the third argument for the validity of our assumption of the unity of the Imitation of Christ tradition derives from the nature and significance of the Humanity of the Exemplar, and is based on the idea that Imitation is a response to that Humanity.

In view of this assertion of the close connection between

Imitation of Christ and the Humanity of Christ, what is to be made of those instances of Imitation of Christ in which the Humanity of Christ is viewed as merely appropriate for the preliminary stages, becoming redundant as spiritual and mystical heights are scaled? This tendency to want to move beyond imitation of the Humanity of Christ derives in part from an interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:16 with its refusal to regard Christ "from a human point of view", and also derives from mystical notions which regard flesh and matter as an encumbrance, and which seek to fly from them (60). Representatives of this tendency include Bernard, who despite his emphasis on the sacred humanity of Christ attempts to move beyond carnal love to spiritual love (61), the Victorines (62), and St. John of the Cross (63). This tendency is not however a necessary part of a mystical theology of following Christ. Theresa of Avila, for example, views the humanity of Christ as both the door and road to all grace, and also asserts that the summit of mystical contemplation will be the divine and human nature of Christ. In this view of the significance of the humanity of Christ at the height of mystical experience, Theresa was consciously rejecting a notion that she had previously held, that the humanity of Christ must be set aside in order to rise to a higher contemplation of the divine (64).

There is not room here to discuss the value of this Neoplatonic or pseudo-Dionysian way of thinking. All we can do is comment on it from the perspective of the Imitation of Christ.

Firstly the Imitation of Christ should not be understood as relating merely to Jesus of Nazareth. As we have seen, it can also legitimately be understood in terms of following the Risen and Ascended Christ, whose glorified humanity is a pledge of the Christian's future state. The heavenly existence of the Christian, as well as the earthly,

can be described in terms of following the Lamb (65).

Secondly our understanding of the Imitation of Christ as religious, ethical and mystical means that it is wrong to see ethical imitation as merely a preliminary step towards mystical imitation.

Thirdly, Ignatius of Antioch, as we have seen, points to the reality of the sufferings of Christians as imitators of the reality of the sufferings of their Lord. Docetism is an opponent both of the Incarnation and of the practice of the Imitation of Christ. Imitation of Christ must be practised within the realities of this world, or it is not the Imitation of Christ. For, as C.S. Lewis says:

... our imitation of God in this life ... must be an imitation of God incarnate: our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions (66).

Fourthly, Imitation which attempts to move from the carnal to the spiritual is likely to undervalue the created order, and especially the humanity of man. This is an inappropriate reduction of the Imitation of Christ. For being a Christian and an imitator of Christ is an expression of radical humanity; "... a transfiguration of the human, at once preserving, cancelling, surpassing the human" (67).

For these reasons then, we must regard the tendency to leave behind the humanity of Christ in a quest for higher forms of Imitation to be mistaken.

Finally, the connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ is that it is the Humanity of Christ which makes Imitation possible. It is Christ in the image of God to whom men are conformed, and it is through the Humanity of Christ that Christian response is formed and offered. In words of T. F. Torrance;

... Christ lifted up our human nature in worship and prayer and adoration to God ... presented himself in spotless sacrifice to the Father as the Head of Humanity and through this one offering presented us to him as those whom he had perfected in himself (68).

The grace of God, mediated through the Humanity of Christ, conforms men to that Humanity, and elicits a response in man of the Imitation of Christ.

So the connection between the Humanity of Christ and the practice of Imitation is that Christ's Humanity reveals both the character and plan of God, and also perfect humanity in relation to God, itself, and others. Christ's Humanity affects Imitation both in the weakness of the incarnate life, and as the glorified Humanity of the ascended Head, and reveals the ethical, religious, and mystical nature of Imitation. The doctrine of Christ's Humanity ensures that Imitation is practised in the realities of this world, and that it does not devalue man's humanity. Finally, the Humanity of Christ is the means as well as the model of the practice of Imitation.

In my opinion the close relationship of Imitation to the Humanity of Christ is the key to a right understanding of Imitation. If this is the case, then a right understanding of the Humanity of Christ is fundamental to a correct understanding of Imitation. It is for this reason that I have delayed this discussion until the end of this section of the thesis, until there had been sufficient theological discussion to clarify the significance of the Humanity of Christ, especially as a vehicle of Grace.

If this close connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ is granted, and if it is accepted that Christology is at the centre of Christianity, then, in answer to the question at the beginning of this chapter, the Imitation of Christ is of central importance to Christianity.

The connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ will be developed further in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology, in which Bonhoeffer's particular emphasis on the Humanity of Christ is productive of a strong notion of Imitation.

#### Conclusion to Section One.

With this chapter we end the first section of this thesis in which we have studied the nature of the Imitation of Christ by a careful investigation of the Imitation tradition. In Chapter One we stated two assumptions of this investigation, the value of which have been clearly demonstrated in the subsequent chapters. The two assumptions were that an investigation of the Imitation of Christ must extend beyond the document De Imitatione Christi, and beyond a study of the word "imitate" and its cognates. These principles will also apply in the study of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation in the second section of this thesis, and are as essential for discerning the Imitation tradition in that context as they have been in this.

In Chapter Two we began our investigation of the Imitation tradition, and studied its three forms of expression in ethical, religious, and mystical Imitation. We noted the variety within the Imitation tradition, and also investigated various problems associated with the practice of Imitation, and studied how the tradition attempted to deal with those problems.

In Chapter Three we continued our study of the Imitation tradition by investigating the Imitation of Christ as a form of the human practice of Imitation. In it we studied the use of imitation

in everyday life, the phenomenon of unconscious imitation, the function of the model, some insights of Psychology, and objections to the practice of imitation on the grounds of creativity, self-expression, and moral responsibility. We also studied the imitation of God and holy men, and the nature of mystical imitation. The purpose of this exercise was to illuminate the nature of the Imitation of Christ by studying it in the context of other instances of imitation.

In Chapter Four we studied the Imitation of Christ by means of an investigation of some features of the Christian exemplar, that is, the connection between Christology and Imitation. Our six topics were the Divinity of Christ, Christ the Saviour, the Perfection of Christ, the ambiguity of Christ's witness, the universal value of Christ, and the distance of Christ from his present-day imitators. In each of these we investigated the ways in which the Imitation tradition integrated each notion with the idea of Imitation.

In Chapter Five we continued this investigation into the nature of the Imitation of Christ tradition by means of studying the relationship of Imitation to other doctrines. Whereas our concern in Chapter Four had been exclusively Christological, in this chapter we ventured further afield. We studied the relationship between the Imitation of Christ and Christian theology in general, and then concentrated on the themes of Grace, the Means of Grace, Man's Perfectibility, Eschatology, the Church and the Trinity. We concluded by a statement of Imitation in terms of a response to the Humanity of Christ.

The subject of our investigation was what I hope to have demonstrated as a single continuing tradition of the Imitation of Christ which is most clearly understood in terms of its theological relationship with the Humanity of Christ. In describing this tradition I have been able to use evidence from a wide variety of authors, and this

variety of provenance has served to emphasize the unity of that tradition.

The purpose of this study of the phenomenon of the Imitation of Christ tradition in general was two-fold. Firstly to begin to answer the question of the nature of the Imitation of Christ, and secondly to provide a theological context for the second section of this thesis, which is a study of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ. The provision of this theological context is not of a precise and tightly-packed formula to be used as a measure for the adequacy of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation. It is rather the creation of an understanding of the varied nature of the Imitation tradition, of its human and theological problems and how it copes with them, and of its theological shape and significance.

The study of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation will provide a test-case for the validity of what I have described as the Imitation tradition. I hope to demonstrate that Bonhoeffer is an exponent of this tradition, and thus that it is not a mere figment of theological imagination. The study of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ will also demonstrate the value of the theological analysis of the general Imitation tradition by an accurate theological discernment of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, will show Bonhoeffer's place in the Imitation tradition, and by describing Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation will further illuminate the nature of the Imitation of Christ.

SECTION TWO : THE IMITATION OF CHRIST IN THE THOUGHT OF  
DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST IN DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S THEOLOGY

Introduction.

The last two chapters of this thesis, which comprise its second section, have as their subject the theme of Imitation of Christ in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Whereas in the first section of this thesis our study was of the Imitation tradition in general, in this section we concentrate on the writings of this one theologian. The purpose of the first section was to analyse the Imitation tradition to discover the nature of the Imitation of Christ. Consideration of Bonhoeffer's theology was excluded from that investigation, though at a number of points it was indicated that the subject under discussion would receive further attention in the section of the thesis devoted to Bonhoeffer's theology.

The first section of this thesis has provided a theological analysis of the Imitation of Christ tradition, and that analysis is the basis for the study of Bonhoeffer in this section. The purpose of these two chapters is to uncover Bonhoeffer's notion of the Imitation of Christ and thus provide a test-case by which to verify our analysis of the general Imitation tradition; to evaluate Bonhoeffer's theology

of Imitation and to assess his place in the Imitation tradition and his contribution to it; and by these means to further illuminate the nature and character of the Imitation of Christ.

Whereas in the previous section reference has been made to various theologians, and quotations used from their writings in order to further the argument of this thesis rather than to demonstrate the theology of Imitation to be found in any of those theologians, in this section our study is of the writings of one theologian, and our aim to investigate his theology of the Imitation of Christ. So our subject is Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation. Though the study of this one theme may shed light on his theology as a whole, our concern is primarily for his theology of Imitation and with those elements in his theology that are relevant to Imitation. And the background against which we will study Bonhoeffer's theology is not his theological and historical context (though that will at times prove useful), but that of our general analysis of the Imitation of Christ. So in this section, we will, refer back to many of the features of the Imitation tradition noted in the last section, and investigate how Bonhoeffer meets the problem or develops the idea. What is offered here is not a new interpretation of Bonhoeffer's theology as a "theology of Imitation", but a study of his notion of Imitation as a particular instance of the Imitation tradition.

Two points of method that were established in the first chapter and which applied throughout the first section apply in this section as well. They are that a study of the Imitation of Christ must extend beyond a discussion of A'Kempis' De Imitatione Christi, as that document represents only a part of the Imitation tradition, and that a study of the phenomenon of the Imitation tradition must extend beyond an investigation of "imitate" and its cognates to a variety

of verbal and theological forms. The extent of material employed in the study of the phenomenon of the Imitation tradition in the last section has vindicated the correctness of these two points of method, and so they will apply in these chapters as well. The latter is of particular relevance in the study of Bonhoeffer as we shall see, because of <sup>his</sup> development of new vocabulary to express the notion of Imitation.

Bonhoeffer's theology has been the subject of a variety of interpretations (1), and it is not my purpose to enter this debate except where it is immediately relevant to the material in hand. For, as has already been said, this is a study of only one theme of Bonhoeffer's theology. However a study of any part of Bonhoeffer's theology comes up against the problem of the continuity of his thought. It is now widely accepted that there is continuity and some of the most obviously continuous themes are those of Christology (John A. Phillips and Ernst Feil) and Ecclesiology (James W. Woelfel and Walter Pabst) (2). While I am not suggesting a new key to understand Bonhoeffer's thought, it will become evident that if Christology and Ecclesiology do provide continuous and important themes, then it might be expected that the notion of Imitation forms a significant link between them, and a point at which they overlap and mingle. It will be argued that while Imitation is not a major preoccupation of his writing, it is a constantly recurring element throughout his writing and is important because of its link with both Christology and Ecclesiology.

The theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's theology has received little more than brief mention in the major published studies of his work. Bethge merely comments: "Both [The Cost of Discipleship] and Letters and Papers from Prison end in a remarkably similar way

with the motif of imitatio" (3). And Godsey comments: "Within the theology of the Word of God he has introduced what might be called an imitatio Christi theology, which means that the community which is established by the hearing of the word must pattern its life after Christ's own life and thus be transformed into his image" (4). The theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer is discussed by R. A. Carson in his article on the motifs of Imitatio and Kenosis in Bonhoeffer's theology (5), though he does little more than outline the material, and does not develop the important connection between these two motifs in Bonhoeffer. Gustav Aulén, in his study of Dag Hammarskjöld's Markings, picks up the theme of Imitation in Hammarskjöld's writings, and in the course of that study, compares it with the theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's theology (6). And Martin Kuske in Kirche für andere, points to the Church's formation after the example of Christ: "The Church can be 'The Church for others' because Jesus Christ is 'The man for others'" (7). But these are little more than hints of the importance of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's theology. There are other studies of Bonhoeffer's theology which undoubtedly include an investigation of his ideas of Imitation (8). This study will of course relate to his theology as a whole, but our primary point of reference will be the theology of the Imitation tradition described in the earlier section of this thesis. I hope to demonstrate the value of this approach both for the light it sheds on Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation, and also for the greater understanding of Imitation of Christ in general in which it results.

The Imitation material from Bonhoeffer will be investigated in this chapter, and we will notice both the continuity and development of this Imitation theology, and in the next and final chapter I will study the issue of whether or not Bonhoeffer was an Imitator of Christ,

and also comment on his contribution to the Imitation tradition. In this present chapter, I will concentrate on his major works, though also include some other incidental references to Imitation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive study of every reference to Imitation, but an investigation of his theology of Imitation. For the sake of convenience, the material in this chapter is divided into what Bethge claims is a defensible three-fold division of his life, thought and writings. Bethge's three stages are: 1927-33, in which Bonhoeffer's concerns were dogmatic; 1933-40, in which he worked with the Confessing Church and engaged in exegesis; and 1940-5, in which his concerns were ethical and political (9). Though any division must be arbitrary, this will be useful for the purposes of this chapter, and will highlight the fact that Imitation material occurs in each period, and also point up the continuity and development in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology.

#### The First Period : 1927 - 33.

This covers Bonhoeffer's life from the presentation of his thesis Sanctorum Communio to the University of Berlin, his time in Barcelona and America, his work as a Lecturer, and the start of his involvement as an Ecumenical worker, up to the time of the Aryan Clause and Bonhoeffer's departure to London. Bonhoeffer had been educated under Harnack and Seeberg, was being influenced by Karl Barth, and stimulated by his time in America and by his Ecumenical involvement (10).

Bonhoeffer's theological writings of this period with which

we are mainly concerned are Sanctorum Communio, Act and Being, his lecture The Essence of the Church, Creation and Fall, and Christology.

Sanctorum Communio is an attempt to combine the insights of both sociology and dialectical theology on the nature of community, and in particular, the Church. The foundation for the notion of Imitation is laid in his emphasis on the concepts of community and person, and their relation to each other and to the concept of God:

For the concepts of person, community and God have an essential and indissoluble relation to one another ... the nature of the Christian concept of community can be reached as well from the concept of God as from the concept of person (11).

Bonhoeffer develops these links in terms of the notion of the divine image. The other member of the community becomes a Thou in an I-Thou relationship when God's gift occurs:

... only by his [God's] action does the other become a Thou for me, from which my I arises. In other words, every human Thou is an image of the divine Thou (12).

Bonhoeffer compares this idea to that of each man being Christ for the other (13).

What has all this to do with the Imitation of Christ? The connection between personhood and the concept of God is later developed in terms of conformity to the divine action and image, and so to the Imitation of Christ. The notion of the neighbour being an image of the divine Thou, and of being Christ to the neighbour leads to the idea of imitating Christ's action to all men, and the connection between person and community is developed in terms of ecclesial as well as personal conformation to Christ. These ideas will be studied further below.

Bonhoeffer's later development of ecclesial conformation to Christ has its basis in the idea of community in Sanctorum Communio.

Human community is part of being the divine image (14), and has a collective ethical responsibility(15). Human community is "Adam", a collective person, which can be superseded only by the collective person, 'Christ existing as the Church'" (16). So as human community can be "in Adam", so it can be "in Christ", in that the new humanity is founded in him. The connection between Christ and the new humanity is, as we have seen previously in this thesis (pp. 135ff) a basis for the Imitation of Christ. The new humanity, the Church, is founded on Christ the corner-stone, he is the beginner of a new mankind, the first-born among many brothers. The Church is his body, he is its Head, and thus he rules over it, is present in it, and is creator of its whole life (17). By the history of Jesus Christ, mankind is transformed from the mankind of Adam to the mankind of Christ, from the body of Adam to the body of Christ (18). With these ideas from the New Testament, there is then ample ground for the developing of the idea of the conformation of the new community to Christ (19). This Bonhoeffer does in the following ways.

To speak of "Christ existing as the Church" is to have the possibility of relating the life of the Church directly to Christ's life:

The crucified and risen Christ is recognised by the Church as God's incarnate love for men, as his will for the renewing of the covenant, for the setting up of divine lordship, and thus for community (20).

This recognition of love in the vicarious action of Christ is recognition of the basis for relationships within the new humanity:

The new mankind is focused together in one point, in Jesus Christ; and as the love of God through Christ's vicarious action restores communion between God and man, so the human community too once again becomes a living reality in love (21).

The Holy Spirit through the Word brings the love of God to man, restores man's basic moral relationships, and this results in the formation of the church (22). God's love is thus both the means and model for man's communal love, and God's love is revealed in Christ (23). So it is the present work of God in the human community which is the model for human social action, and the quality of this work as love is revealed in Christ. Christ then as the revelation of love is the model for the life of the new humanity, which is founded and formed by him. There are two ideas here which we have discussed as they have occurred elsewhere in the Imitation tradition: The first is the idea of love as the meaning of the Imitation of Christ, and we noticed how this view understands the character of Christ in terms of this one virtue or attitude, and also the dangers of this reduction of the ambiguities of Christ's character (p. 33). The second is that the formation of the Church here occurs by the historical revelation of Christ, by his present work, and by the work of the Spirit and the Word (pp. 142ff, 166ff). We will discover later that Bonhoeffer also views this formation happening through the sacraments. As we have seen, this formation is based on the relationship of Christ and the Church, and indeed on the creative purpose of God. In terms of the Imitation tradition then, Bonhoeffer explores a wide range of the means of grace which result in the formation of the Church.

If love is the meaning of the communion of saints, what are its concrete acts? Bonhoeffer describes these social acts in terms of two groups of ideas:

1. the God-appointed structural 'togetherness' (Miteinander) of the church and each of its members;
2. the fact that the members act for one another (Füreinander) and the principle of vicarious action (24).

In respect to the meaning of this kind of action which derives from

the character and action of Christ, he says:

The man whose life is lived in love is Christ in respect of his neighbour - but, of course, only in this respect. 'We are God through the love that makes us do good to our neighbour'. Such a man can and should act like Christ. He should bear his neighbour's burdens and sufferings. 'You must take other men's wants and infirmities to heart as if they were [yours]..just as Christ does for you in the sacrament' (25).

Notice here Bonhoeffer's use of the Imitation tradition in his quotations from Luther, his awareness of the difficulty for Christology raised by the Imitation of Christ, and his use of the sacrament as the model of Christ's action. Bonhoeffer further develops Füreinander as follows:

This active 'being for one another' can be defined from two standpoints: Christ is the measure and standard for our conduct (John 13:15, 34f; 1 John 3:10), and our conduct is that of a member of the body of Christ, that is of one equipped with the strength of Christ's love, in which each man can and will become Christ for his fellow-man (1 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:4ff; Eph. 4:4, 12ff; Col. 3:15) (26).

This notion of Füreinander develops later in his work to the idea of the Man for Others. See further in the study of the Third Period.

We have noticed that the idea of "being Christ to one's neighbour" which Bonhoeffer derives from Luther, and which he uses again (for instance in his Catechism for his Confirmation class (27)), also occurs in the context of viewing one's neighbour as Christ, as both become Thou to each other by God's gift. Although according to Bonhoeffer's theology as we have seen, it is true that because Christ exists as the Church, both the Christian and his neighbour may be described as Christ, nevertheless the two ideas are difficult to hold together in practice. For while it may be effective to speak of doing Christ-like actions, or of serving Christ in the poor, the two together require considerable suspension of disbelief. Because of this,

Bonhoeffer tends not to use them together in his later writings, and when he uses the idea of Christ in the needy, he does not use the idea of Imitation.

We have also noticed that Bonhoeffer is aware of the problem for Christology raised by the language of "being Christ to one's neighbour". For he writes: "The man whose life is lived in love is Christ in respect of his neighbour - but, of course, always only in this respect" (28). He is also aware of the problem raised for the doctrine of the Atonement by his notion of Imitation in vicarious action. This is of course another common area of difficulty in the Imitation tradition, as we have seen (pp. 123ff.). In Sanctorum Communio, Bonhoeffer is emphatic that vicarious action is the key both to the work of Christ and the works of men (Füreinander), and he bases the works of men on the foundation of the work of Christ. He quotes Luther, who puts into Christ's mouth the words:

I am the head, I seek first to be the one who gives himself for you, I seek to share your suffering and misfortune and bear it for you, so that you too will in turn do likewise, for me and among yourselves, and let all those things be done in me and shared by me.

Bonhoeffer then comments:

The church could not bear anything if it were not itself borne by Christ; thus it is only in view of Christ's meritum that Luther finds it possible to speak of the merita of others, of those who help me (29).

The vicarious actions of the Christian in active love, intercession, and forgiveness of sins,

[are] possible only in the church of Christ, resting as it does in its entirety upon the principle of vicarious action, that is, upon the love of God(30).

This problem is however intensified later in Bonhoeffer's theology, as we shall see, by his continued identification of Christ with the

Church on the one hand, and by his increasingly kenotic view of the weakness of Christ on the other.

Bonhoeffer's concentration on the church and on community life in *Imitation* in this document is not surprising in view of its title. However that last quotation is the strongest statement of the church context of *Imitation*: vicarious actions happen between members of the Church, and can only happen to members of the Church. In his later writings Bonhoeffer develops a wider understanding of *Imitation* which includes the action of the individual, and *Imitation* in the world. This development will be studied in the third section of this chapter.

Another later development is in terms of the Christ who is to be imitated. In *Sanctorum Communio* the figure of Christ is the Lord who works in vicarious service (the rule of God in service (31)). In his later work, Bonhoeffer develops this in a more varied way in terms of conformation to the Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen Christ. This development too will be discussed below.

Finally in *Sanctorum Communio*, conformation to Christ is achieved not only by the work of Christ, Spirit, and Word, but by the Eucharist. We have already noticed Bonhoeffer's reference to Luther's idea of the sacrament as the means by which Christ takes men's needs and infirmities (32). Bonhoeffer comments in another place:

[In the Holy Communion] Christ makes a gift of himself, of communion with him, that is, he gives me the benefit of his vicarious Passion and he makes a gift of the church, that is, he causes it to become new and thus gives the church to the church itself. He presents each of us with the rights and duties of priestly action towards our neighbour ... It is his gift that enables one man to sustain the other, and be sustained in return ... Christ's priestly action is the basis for ours (33).

We will notice below that Bonhoeffer similarly views Baptism as a means of grace whereby conformation to Christ is effected.

All we have been able to do so far is to outline the main features of the notion of Imitation in Sanctorum Communio, and notice how they relate to the Imitation tradition. The main lines of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology have already been indicated: his ecclesial notion of Conformity, his strong emphasis on Conformation as the work of God, his varied understanding of what we have called the Means of Grace, his awareness of the problems raised by Imitation for Christology and the Atonement, his image of the Christ to be imitated, and his use of Luther. We also noticed that both the ecclesial aspect of Conformation and the image of the exemplar are subjects that are reconsidered in Bonhoeffer's later works. More general comments about Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology will be made in the next chapter of this thesis, but even this first study of one of his works has indicated both the usefulness of the analysis of Imitation provided in the first section of this thesis in investigating the theme of Imitation, and also the quality and creativeness of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology. We continue this study with an investigation of Act and Being.

While the interpretation of Act and Being and its place in Bonhoeffer's thought are a matter of debate (34), the document is fairly straightforward from our point of view, because there is not a great deal of Imitation material in it, and because the material is similar to that in Sanctorum Communio. "Christ existing as the Church" becomes "Christ is the corporate person [Kollektivperson] of the Christian communion" (35). The church is: "... a communion created by Christ and founded upon him, one in which Christ reveals himself as the δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος, the new man - or rather, the new humanity itself" (36). Thus it is through the person of Christ that other persons

acquire for man the character of personhood: as the individual joins in the community he is part of the new community, is affected by it, and affects it (37). Within the Church, every member may "become a Christ" in proclaiming forgiveness to his brother (38). As we have observed before, to "become a Christ" connotes Imitation, as Christ-like actions should be done in a Christ-like way.

This is material which is familiar to us from Sanctorum Communio. Bonhoeffer repeats the New Testament ideas of the relationship between Christ and the Church that are found in Sanctorum Communio, including the expression, "'put on the new man', which sometimes takes the form, 'put on the Lord Jesus ...'" (39). This is important for two reasons. Firstly because it implies that likeness to Christ is in part derived from Baptism (40), which complements Bonhoeffer's similar use of the Eucharist. Secondly because it suggests that imitation of the character of Christ, which is the other dimension of "putting on Christ", is a means by which personhood and community is achieved. While Imitation is only one aspect of this transition (41), this is apparently the only place for the activity of Imitation in this document. For though Bonhoeffer develops the "in Adam, in Christ" theme of Sanctorum Communio, his description here of life in Christ does not include Imitation material, as it did in the former document. This is perhaps because he does use the notion of "seeing Christ in one's neighbour" (42), and as we have suggested, this idea is not easily compatible with the notion of Imitation.

As far as Imitation of Christ in Act and Being is concerned then, there is little new development from Sanctorum Communio. There is the same emphasis on the church community as the locus for Imitation, and as we have already commented, this will be modified in Bonhoeffer's later theology.

The next document which is of interest to us is the untranslated and little commented on lecture of 1932, The Essence of the Church (43). In it Bonhoeffer investigates the place of the Church, and the shape of the Church. It is the latter which is relevant to our study. In this study of the shape (Gestalt) of the Church, Bonhoeffer discusses the theme of Adam and Christ in terms that are akin to Sanctorum Communio and Act and Being, that of Christ as the new humanity (44). He then introduces the idea of vicarious action (45), which links this document back to Sanctorum Communio and forward to the study of Deputyship in Ethics. He then discusses Christ as the foundation of the Church, another familiar theme, though now in addition to the idea of body he adds the ideas of Christ as Lord and Brother (46). In a later section, in a discussion of the Priesthood of all, he restates the themes of Miteinander and Füreinander (47). In the course of the latter, he makes what is a key statement for our study, and it is on this that we now comment.

In this discussion of the structural Füreinander of the members of the Church, Bonhoeffer includes a section which is reminiscent of a part of Sanctorum Communio (48), in which he discusses the meaning of Paul's wish in Romans 9:1 that he be accursed for the sake of his brethren. Bonhoeffer regards this not as a momentary weakness, but as the final fulfillment of the Law of Christ, that all should be given for the sake of a neighbour. "Because Paul wished to be abandoned for the sake of his brethren, he remained in deepest fellowship with the will of God." This is "imitatio Christi", which, Bonhoeffer adds, is a participation in Golgotha in and with Christ (49). This is an important reference in our study, because it demonstrates that Bonhoeffer is prepared to use the phrase "imitatio Christi" (50) when he is sure that he has made its meaning clear by the context in which it occurs, and

because it foreshadows the notion of identification with the outcast on the one hand and with the crucified Christ on the other. Both of the themes are important in Bonhoeffer's later theology, and it points to the continuity in Bonhoeffer's notion of Imitation that they occur in this early document. Finally, it is an important reference because of the association in it of the notions of the assumption of guilt and Imitation. We will see later that Bonhoeffer wrote of the new idea of guilty Martyrdom, and there is an important link here with guilty Imitation. This will become a significant issue, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

In another reference to Imitation and Golgotha, Bonhoeffer speaks of "a daily unbloody repetition of the sacrifice on Golgotha" (51). Bonhoeffer here speaks of the forgiveness of sins offered by members of the Church to their brethren. The action of Jesus is imitated in the action of the Church. Bonhoeffer also refers to Luther's statement that Christ is not only gift but also example. The members of the Church mediate this two-fold activity of Christ in conveying forgiveness and in themselves existing as examples (52). These ideas are based on the notion of Christ's vicarious actions being imitated by the Church. In our study of the Imitation tradition we noticed the sensitivity of that tradition on the subject of Christ as Saviour and Example (pp. 123ff), and Bonhoeffer shows himself aware of the problems involved (e.g., it is an "unbloody sacrifice") yet also determined to follow Luther in speaking of Christ as both gift and example. The idea of vicarious action, of Deputyship, is developed further in Ethics.

Our next document is Creation and Fall, a study of Genesis 1-4 given by Bonhoeffer in the winter Semester 1932-3. Its interest to us lies in the fact that it is an exegetical work on the Old Testament rather than a sociological or dogmatic study, and so provides a

different perspective on Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation. In fact, as we shall see, it does include many of the themes we have already met. Its relevance also lies in the fact that it deals with the notion of man created in God's image, which as we have seen in the previous section of this thesis (pp. 63ff.), is an important element in the Imitation tradition, and which is also important in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, as we shall see.

The significance of the material on the imago dei is intensified because although Creation and Fall is in the form of an Old Testament exegesis, Bonhoeffer's method of interpretation means that the Genesis narrative is commented on as a document of Church and Christian life.

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 "... the Church sees only the beginning in the end; from the end. It sees the creation sub specie Christi ... " (53). For the Church "reads all Holy Scripture as the book of the end, of the new, of Christ" (54). To read these chapters in the light of Christ is to assert that they speak of the resurrection of Christ: "It is the gospel, it is the resurrected Christ of whom one is speaking here ... By his resurrection we know of the creation ..." (55). So Bonhoeffer's comments on the notion of man in the image of God are in terms of Christian experience, and in terms of Christ. Hence their relevance to the Imitation of Christ.

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What then does Bonhoeffer understand by man in the image of God in Creation and Fall? According to Bonhoeffer, though God loves his creation

... still God does not recognise himself in his work; he sees his work but he does not see himself. 'To see oneself' means as it were 'to behold one's face in a mirror', 'to see oneself in a likeness' ... (56).

God does not see himself in his work, so he creates man in his own image (57). To say that man is made in God's image is to say that man is free like the Creator. What does this freedom mean? Bonhoeffer says:

... freedom is not something man has for himself but something he has for others ... freedom is a relationship between two persons. Being free means 'being free for the other', because the other has bound me to him. (58)

And again: *et aliam*

Man is free in that [one] creature is related to the other creature, in that man is free for man. 'And he created them, a man and a woman'. Man is not alone; he is in duality, and his creatureliness consists in this being-directed-to [Angewiesensein] the other (59).

This is like the freedom of God, who exists for his creatures. The likeness between God and man is analogia relationis.

Three comments on this material before we investigate further Bonhoeffer's notion of freedom. Firstly, there is a parallel between this idea of freedom being freedom for another and Bonhoeffer's idea of community in Sanctorum Communio as comprised of life Miteinander and Füreinander. Secondly, Green claims that this interpretation of imago dei in terms of social relationships rather than the possession of the individual was an important new development in imago dei interpretation (60). Thirdly, Bonhoeffer's suggestion of analogia relationis is important as an attempt to express the possibility of a similarity to, or imitation of, the divine by man (61). Bonhoeffer's other solution to this problem of Imitation theology, that of Kenotic Christology, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Freedom is not only freedom for others, it is also freedom from the created world, rule over it. This is the other aspect of man's likeness to God (62). This can only be done as man is free for God, in dependence on him: "man's being-free-for God and the other person and his being-free-from the creature in his dominion over it, is the image of God in the first man" (63). It must be admitted that what Bonhoeffer means by this idea is not altogether clear, and it is perhaps significant that it is the former idea, that of freedom

for the other, that he develops.

Freedom for the other is positively expressed in terms of love. The community of man and woman (Bonhoeffer is commenting on Genesis 2:18-25) is the community derived from God, the community of love (64). Again, this language is reminiscent of Sanctorum Communio. For Bonhoeffer, this community of love is the Church in its original form, and in this context he refers to Ephesians 5:30-32, which speaks of Christ and the Church (65). This of course supports Bonhoeffer's Christological reading of these chapters, and this framework of thought, that of human community and the Church both understood in terms of Christ, is a common theme in these early documents. These ideas receive different treatment in Bonhoeffer's later work.

The notion of the imago dei is further clarified by comparison with the idea of sicut deus. The promise of the serpent, "you will be like God", is a warning of the danger of the perversion of the notion of Imitation, and Bonhoeffer's words on this subject form a valuable contribution to the Imitation tradition. Bonhoeffer compares imago dei man with sicut deus man. Imago dei man is Godlike in his existence for God, and for his neighbour. He lives in dependence on the Creator, in unity of will. Sicut deus man derives his existence from himself and for himself, in loneliness (i.e., not in existence for God and for his neighbour), and derives his knowledge of God from within himself, and is divided in mind (66). Sicut deus man is "like God" in a parody. He is:

..... himself creator, the source of life, the origin of the knowledge of good and evil. He is only for himself [für sich], he lives out of himself, he no more needs others; he is lord of the world, but now of course the solitary lord and despot ... of his own mute, violated, silenced, dead ego-world (67).

Bonhoeffer further characterises this wrong desire to be like God in describing it not in terms of rebellion, but of mis-directed devotion:

Wherein does man's being like God consist? It is in his attempt to want to be 'for God' himself; to ordain a new way of 'being for God', in a special way of being religious ... Therefore man's being like God is disobedience in the form of obedience, it is will to power in the form of service, it is desire to be a creator in the form of creatureliness, it is being dead in the form of life (68).

One might express this in terms of the Imitation of Christ by saying that the dangers of the practice of Imitation are more in the line of misdirected intensity than lack of zeal, that the desire to imitate may derive from pride rather than humility, and that imitation is in danger of becoming identification with God and then replacement of him. These dangers are reflected in the Imitation tradition's sensitivity in the area of Christology (see above, pp.114 ff.). It is Bonhoeffer's contribution to see this mistake as the activity of the religious man, and thus to point out a danger inherent in the practice of Imitation.

Bonhoeffer includes in this discussion of imago dei and sicut deus the compact sentence:

Imago dei, sicut deus, agnus dei - the One who was sacrificed for man sicut deus, killing man's false divinity in true divinity, the God-Man who restores the image of God (69).

This sentence points to the way out of the isolation of sicut deus to the life of communion with God and neighbour in imago dei. The way out comes in Christ, the imago dei, who restores man to this relationship to God and in community, by his sacrifice to God and for his neighbours, thus restoring man to the imago dei (70). Thus Bonhoeffer's discussion of the imago dei clearly includes the notion of the restoration of the image through Christ, a traditional Imitation notion.

Finally, Bonhoeffer writes of man in the image of God in terms of bodily existence:

To live as man means to live as body in Spirit. ... [Man] is the image of God not in spite of but just because of his bodiliness. For in his bodiliness he is related to the earth and to other bodies, he is there for others, he is dependent upon others ... As such a creature man of earth and spirit is in the likeness of his Creator, God (71).

Whatever the precise meaning of these words, Bonhoeffer is saying that life as the image of God must be lived in the reality of the creature's world. This is a theme which Bonhoeffer will develop later in terms of Imitation and obedience in the world. Bonhoeffer also writes of God's purpose for the human body:

... God enters into the body again where the original in its created being has been destroyed... He enters into it where it is broken, in the form of the sacrament ... Adam is created as body, and therefore he is also redeemed as body, in Jesus Christ and in the Sacrament (72).

The promise of re-creation in God's image is achieved through the Humanity of Christ and through the Eucharist. We studied the connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ in Chapter Five (pp. 177ff.), and have noted Bonhoeffer's idea of re-creation through the Eucharist, also part of the Imitation tradition.

So then Bonhoeffer's discussion of man in the image of God, an important topic for the notion of Imitation, while not always clear in meaning, is suggestive as a contribution to the notion of Imitation. Of particular significance is his idea of freedom for others as constitutive of the notion of imago dei, his community of man-in-image, his comments on sicut deus, indicating the danger of the perversion of Imitation, and his emphasis on the meaning of the human body.

The last major document of this Period is Christology, Bonhoeffer's lectures of 1933. The only straightforward reference to

the Imitation of Christ in this document is a negative one:

If Jesus was the idealistic founder of a religion, I can be elevated by his work and stimulated to follow his example. But my sins are not forgiven, God still remains angry and I remain in the power of death. Jesus' work leads to despair in myself, because I cannot imitate his pattern. But if Jesus is the Christ, the Word of God, then I am not primarily called to emulate him ... (73).

Bonhoeffer is here rejecting a wrong notion of Imitation with an argument that is familiar to us from our general study of Imitation.

Bonhoeffer's fear of the misuse of Imitation is, we have suggested, the reason for his reluctance to use the conventional terminology (74). But he does have a positive notion of Imitation, as is becoming evident in this study, and we have learnt in the previous section of this thesis not to restrict ourselves to the more obvious vocabulary in our search for the meaning of the Imitation of Christ (cf. pp.13ff.). In this quotation Bonhoeffer is rejecting the notion of Imitation that views Christ as example and not gift, to use Luther's terms. We have already demonstrated that the Imitation tradition is capable of combining both these ideas (pp.152 ff).

Although this is the only explicit reference to the Imitation of Christ in Christology, it is worth studying the lectures, because their subject is of course basic to the notion of Imitation of Christ. The following ideas are relevant to Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation.

Bonhoeffer begins Part One of Christology with two statements about Christ: "Jesus is the Christ present as the Crucified and Risen One" and "Christ is present in the church as a person" (75). We consider these in turn.

The presence of the Crucified and Risen One continues a theme that we have already noticed (pp.56 ff). As the Church derives its structure from Christ, it is important to discover what model of

Christ is influential, or in language of former chapters in this thesis, what part of the "movement" of Christ is decisive for the shape of the church. We have noticed Bonhoeffer's use of the recapitulation motif in his Adam-Christ parallel. Later, in Ethics, he will write of the Church's conformity to the One who is Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen. Here, in Christology, there is just the suggestion that the shape of the Church's life is determined by the nature of its present Christ:

The church goes its own way of lowliness with this Lowly One ... As Paul says of himself that he can be either exalted or lowly so long as it happens for the sake of Christ, so too the church can be exalted and lowly, so long as it follows Christ's way (76).

The mode of Christ's humiliated life is perhaps suggestive of Bonhoeffer's later ideas of life in conformity with Christ in Letters and Papers from Prison. Bonhoeffer also says in Christology: "[Christ] does not enter in the royal clothes of a 'Form of God' ... He goes incognito as a beggar among beggars, as an outcast among the outcast, despairing among the despairing, dying among the dying. He also goes as sinner among the sinners ..." (77). This idea of the form of Christ's action is later developed as the model for Christian action. Bonhoeffer again shows himself aware of the dangers of over-zealous Imitation when he says of Christ's way:

This way is the enemy of the proud, whether they wrap themselves in purple robes or set the martyr's crown upon their heads. The church always looks only to the Humiliated Christ ... (78).

This opposition to proud martyrdom will be discussed below.

Mention of Christ as sinner raises for Bonhoeffer the question of Christ's sinlessness, which, as we have seen (pp.126 ff.) is an issue in the Imitation tradition. Bonhoeffer states that Christ was without sin, and yet that he was made sin on behalf of others (79). The idea of men becoming guilty on behalf of others is one we have met in

Das Wesen der Kirche, and it will recur later in Bonhoeffer's writings.

The second statement about Christ that we must consider is: "Christ is present in the church as person" (80). This is "Christus ist als Person gegenwärtig in der Kirche" (81), which has a statement of Christ as person which was not evident in the former phrase "Christus als Gemeinde existierend" (82). This movement from the idea of structure to the idea of person in Bonhoeffer's understanding of Christ's presence (83), is aided by the fact that in Christology Bonhoeffer has to deal with the question of the historical Jesus (84), and it seems to me that this new concentration on the person of Christ opens the way to greater use of the notion of Imitation, particularly in an individual as well as community context.

This presence of Christ is a presence pro me:

His being Christ is his being pro me ... This being pro me ... is meant to be understood as the essence, as the being of the person himself (85)

This pro me is fundamental to Bonhoeffer's theology, as we shall now see.

Pro me means three things for the relationship of Christ to the new humanity:

1. Jesus Christ pro me is pioneer, head and first born of the brethren who follow him. ... He is pro me as pioneer for the others.
2. Jesus Christ is for his brethren by standing in their place. ... he is the new humanity. He stands vicariously where mankind should stand, by virtue of his pro me structure ...
3. Because he acts as the new humanity, it is in him and he is in it ... (86).

In our previous study of Imitation, we discovered how these aspects of the idea of Christ and the new humanity have within the possibility of development in terms of the Imitation of Christ (pp.135 ff.).

Next, Christ as present pro me means for Bonhoeffer <sup>that</sup> Christ is

present in Word, Sacrament, and Church (87). We have already seen how important these are as a "means of grace" for Imitation (pp.166 ff.). Bonhoeffer's treatment of them here opens up the possibility of Imitation theology. Christ as Word means that the Word comes in terms of personal address, and that the Word is personal rather than abstract (88). Christ as Sacrament means that the Word is embodied in the Sacrament, that God hallows an element of his creation, that Christ begins the restoration of creation, and that Christ's form in the Church is that of humiliation (89). Christ as Community means that Christ as Word forms the shape of the community, and that Christ as sacrament of the community is one with it, is both Head and every member (90). As we have already discovered, each of these ideas is connected with the notion of the Imitation of Christ.

Finally, Christ as the present person pro me means that Christ is the Centre (Christus als Mitte) of human existence, history, and between God and nature (91). What relevance has this for the Imitation of Christ?

Firstly, it reflects Bonhoeffer's determination not to allow creation a separate existence apart from Christ. This means that creation, and man's humanity, can be valued and affirmed within Christianity, and that the Imitation of Christ can be a humanizing rather than dehumanizing phenomenon. This is certainly the direction in which it moves in Bonhoeffer's later theology.

Secondly, when Christ as pro me means that he is in the Centre in three ways: "... im Dasein für den Menschen, im Dasein für die Geschichte, in Dasein für die Natur" , then the notion of being "for others" is obviously basic to the world. Even creation is restored in terms of "Für-den-Menschen-sein" (92). So "being-for-others" can be the subject of an appeal to all men, and Christ, as "the man for

others", to use a later phrase, is a universal model. This is a significant contribution to the ideas of Christ as Example of universal significance which we discussed in the earlier section of this thesis (pp.135 ff.).

Thirdly, Christ is the Centre of man's existence in that Christ has fulfilled the Law where man cannot, and that he is "the beginning of his new existence, its centre" (93). Thus Christ enables man to cross the boundary from the old "I" to the new "I" (94). It there follows that because the notion of "for the other" is fundamental to the meaning of Christ, new existence for man will come in terms of life for others. The Imitation of Christ is thus basic to Christian experience, and is also a necessary constituent of man's wholeness. So the Imitation of Christ does not negate man's basic nature, but expresses its true purpose. This is in line with our study of Imitation and wholeness in the last section (pp.86 ff.).

Bonhoeffer's understanding of the Centre has become overtly Christological and personal (95), and this movement is conducive to the idea of Imitation. J. A. Phillips observes that Bonhoeffer's notion of moral transcendence becomes Christological in Christology (96). The nature of the personal moral demand is conducive both to the idea of Christ in the poor and needy, and also, if less directly, to the idea of Imitation.

Bonhoeffer also includes in Christology a critique of Christologies which is of interest because of the light it sheds on his own Christological thinking. He asserts that the "present-historical Christ is the same person as the historical Jesus of Nazareth" (97), and that faith has direct access to history (98). The problem of the Jesus of history for the practice of Imitation was discussed in the first section of this thesis (pp.142 ff.), and it must be admitted that Bonhoeffer meets this problem by assertion rather than evidence or

argument.

Bonhoeffer rejects Docetism (99), which is, as a doctrine, inimical to Imitation, as we have seen (pp.182 ff.). He rejects the Ebionite heresy (100), which though it is compatible with the idea of Imitation, Bonhoeffer regards as inadequate Christologically. He weighs the Kenotic tradition carefully (101), and as we shall see, he develops this idea in association with the idea of Imitation in Letters and Papers.

Though the Imitation of Christ is not a theme of Christology, we have engaged in this study of that document in order to demonstrate that Bonhoeffer's Christology of this First Period is susceptible of development in terms of Imitation, and in order to show the general outline of the ways in which that development did in fact take place.

Finally in this study of the theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's First Period, a few brief comments on his "Leadership principle" talk. This was not simply an attack on Hitler's place in Germany, but also an attack on the introduction of this notion into the Church (102). It is of interest in this context because, as we have seen in Chapter Three, the Imitation of Christ has to be understood in terms of an instance of human imitation. Bonhoeffer is aware of the danger of human leadership. The Leader is the bodily incorporation of the ideals of the group, his humanity is veiled in his Leader's form (103). The individual thus finds in the Leader not another person, but his own mirror image (104). The individual abdicates his responsibility:

For that reason, the true concept of community, which rests on responsibility, on the recognition that individuals belong responsibly one to another, finds no fulfilment here (105).

Leadership is only a valid service if it is done with an awareness of the ultimate, of God (106). What should we make of these comments?

Bonhoeffer is obviously determined to preserve the notion of responsibility as a way of life. We have seen that this is Christologically determined, and it is a constant theme in his theology. He is aware too of the danger of self-projective idealism, because, as we have seen, Christ is the Centre. Leadership is service which should point to God: Christ is then the model for that kind of leadership. Bonhoeffer does not rule out human leadership, and we will discover that he writes later in Letters and Papers of the value of human example (107), which as we have seen in our previous studies (pp. 101ff.), is entirely compatible with the assertion of the universal value of Christ's example.

In this First Period we have discovered the material from which Bonhoeffer develops his theology of Imitation: his emphasis on community and personhood, and on the notion of Grace and the Means of Grace; his Christology of Christ as the Centre and of the new humanity in Christ; Love as the meaning of relationships; and the ideas of 'being Christ to one's neighbour' and of sicut deus. In terms of the development of his Imitation theology we noticed an emphasis on Church later to be complemented by world and individual, and the idea of Image, to be developed further later in terms of the Biblical theme, and also in the language of Gestalt etc. We noticed that cluster of ideas of imitation and the assumption of guilt, a continual theme, the notion of love to be developed in terms of "for" (für) language, and the idea of Christ as the Crucified and Risen, later to include the notion of the Incarnate. We also discovered that Bonhoeffer is aware of some of the dangers of the Imitation tradition, particularly in terms of mimicry, and in the doctrines of Soteriology, Christology, and Grace. He uses some of Luther's ideas on Imitation, and begins to create a new vocabulary of Imitation. In terms of the general Imitation tradition

we find the significant themes of the new humanity, love and Image. Bonhoeffer has a strong emphasis on community and <sup>on</sup> the notion of Grace, and an unusual contribution in terms of his discussion of sicut deus.

#### The Second Period : 1933 - 40.

This covers Bonhoeffer's life from the time of his ministry in London, his participation in the work of the Confessing Church especially in his seminary work at Finkenwalde, and his departure to, and return from, America. During this Bonhoeffer continued his international Ecumenical contacts, and also continued to develop his theology (108).

His writing during this period was mainly for the benefit of the Confessing Church, and the most important document is The Cost of Discipleship. Our study of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology during this time will concentrate on this document, though reference will also be made to his other writings, including Temptation and Life Together. We will continue to notice how Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology develops, and how his ideas relate to the Imitation tradition in general.

We begin with The Cost of Discipleship, which forms the major part of our study of Imitation in this Period. It is a very different kind of work to the documents studied so far, and this new character effects the way in which we conveys the notion of Imitation. It is exegetical and hortatory in style, and this means that it contains more explicit references to Imitation. It is concerned with decisions about life and action rather than about the basic structure of community,

and so Imitation is more easily described in active terms, the action of response, whereas previously it has tended to occur in its passive form, as a statement of the nature of the Christian structure. And the movement in Bonhoeffer's Christology towards a view of Christ as person, finds further expression in this document. We have moved from "Christ existing as the church", to "Christ as person present in the church", and now come to the point at which Christ is more obviously the Lord of the Church, directing it by his command. But at the same time as the emphasis on the community of the church continues, there is also a new emphasis on the responsibility of the individual. This too is conducive to the explicit exhortation to imitate Christ.

So then the theological emphases of The Cost of Discipleship, which mark it as new in character when compared with the documents we have already considered, tend to promote a new context and understanding of Imitation.

The subject-matter of The Cost of Discipleship is also conducive to explicit reference to the Imitation of Christ. A brief investigation of some of that subject-matter will also demonstrate the context of theology in which Imitation is to be understood. We will engage in that study before investigating the Imitation references in this document.

The primary subject of the book is of course Discipleship. Bonhoeffer investigates this subject in terms of obedience to Christ and in terms of Christians as "followers" (109). His notion of Discipleship is centred in Christ:

What did Jesus mean to say to us? What is his will for us to-day? How can he help us to be good Christians in the modern world? ... what we want to know is ... what Jesus Christ himself wants of us (110).

The meaning of Discipleship is found in Christ alone: "Only Jesus

Christ, who bids us follow him, knows the journey's end" (111). The way of discipleship is to take Christ's yoke, and learn of him (112). It is because Discipleship is a following of Jesus that it is an experience of grace (113). The idea of Christians as followers is of basic importance to the book, as its title Nachfolge indicates. Its interest is in the notion of ἀκολουθεῖν, rather than μαθητιῆς. While neither of these can be identified totally with Imitation, the former almost inevitably includes some idea of Imitation, because of the nature of its Gospel references. So the subject of the book, Nachfolge, inevitably results in a consideration of Imitation of Christ, as well as other aspects of "Following", such as obedience to, and belief in, the Lord (114).

Discipleship is an experience of grace, and as we shall see, because Imitation is an aspect of Discipleship, it too is an experience of grace. It is costly grace, but nonetheless grace. "Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*" (115). For the Christian, as for St. Peter, "Grace and discipleship are inseparable" (116). The difference between costly and cheap grace is discipleship: "Costly grace was turned into cheap grace without discipleship" (117). Bonhoeffer follows Luther in his discovery of discipleship as costly grace and in his idea that because discipleship is of grace, it must be lived by all, and it must be lived in the world (118). Because grace is costly, it does not preclude good works. Though there is only one good work, that of God in Christ, nevertheless the purpose of new creation in Christ is that the saints might do good works (119). Good works are God's gift, but the Christian must walk in them (120). They may be invisible to the Christian, but they are seen by God: "God alone knows our good works, all we know is his good work" (121). This

picture of costly grace and the need for good works is relevant to the notion of Imitation, which is, as we have seen (pp.163 ff, and pp. 30 ff.), both the work of God and the response of man; both passive (it is what God does) and active (it is what man does). This will be articulated more precisely later in terms of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology.

Another aspect in which Bonhoeffer's general notion of Discipleship is relevant to Imitation is in his idea of Call. So, for example: "It is Jesus who calls, and because it is Jesus, Levi follows at once. This encounter is a testimony to the absolute, direct, an unaccountable authority of Jesus" (122). The fundamental nature of this authority demands absolute obedience:

Jesus summons men to follow him not as a teacher or a pattern of the good life, but as the Christ, the Son of God (123)... The life of discipleship is not the hero-worship we would pay to a good master, but obedience to the Son of God (124)... It is nothing else than bondage to Jesus Christ alone, completely breaking through every programme, every ideal, every set of laws (125).

So the Call is to Christ, not to a programme of Discipleship or Imitation. And the Call comes to the practice of Christianity as defined by Christ:

Discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship.

Conversely:

Discipleship without Jesus Christ is a way of our own choosing. It may be the ideal way, it may even lead to martyrdom, but it is devoid of all promise. Jesus will reject it (126).

Here Discipleship functions as a test of the presence of real Christianity, hence the dictum: "Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes" (127). We have studied the

same function of the Imitation of Christ earlier in this thesis (pp.30 ff.).

The Call to Discipleship is also a call to obedience in "the utterly impossible and ethically irresponsible situation" (128). We have noted elsewhere the theme of the guilty martyr and imitator in Bonhoeffer. This theme is reflected here in the idea of the ethically irresponsible nature of response to the Call of Discipleship.

The Call to Discipleship is a call addressed to individuals: "Through the call of Jesus men become individuals ... Every man is called separately, and must follow alone" (129). As we have already remarked, this is a new emphasis in Bonhoeffer's theology, and is conducive to a more explicit call to imitate Christ. This Call is not to individualism, however. Christ is the Mediator, through whom men have access to each other, and to the community of the Church (130). But there is a new emphasis on the individual, and this is shown by the idea that the individual may be in the image of God (131), whereas previously, as we have seen, the imago dei was understood in social terms of man in community.

The ecclesial dimension is however retained in The Cost of Discipleship:

Such also is the promise which is held out to Christ's followers - they will be members of the community of the cross, the People of the Mediator, the People under the cross (132).

This ecclesial dimension remains an important context for the Imitation of Christ. When dealing with the problem of how the historical Christ calls to contemporary discipleship, Bonhoeffer asserts that it is the living Christ who speaks and calls in the Church in Word and Sacrament. It is also in the Church that the variety of expressions of Christian discipleship are to be understood (133). Because Christian disciple-

ship is an individual activity, yet engaged in in the context of the Church, Bonhoeffer asserts: "... Jesus Christ is not a standard which I can apply to others" (134). Bonhoeffer develops the idea of Church and Imitation in a variety of ways, and these will be considered below.

This concludes our investigations of some of the theological themes of The Cost of Discipleship which relate to the Imitation of Christ. In studying them we have noticed both the theological development of Bonhoeffer reflected in this document, and also the theological shape of the book, which determines in part the notion of Imitation to be found in it. We now proceed to a study of the Imitation material itself.

The Imitation material in The Cost of Discipleship can be divided into four sections: (i) Imitation and Suffering, (ii) Imitation and other aspects of Discipleship, (iii) Imitation and the Church and Ministry, and (iv) Imitation and Image.

(i) Imitation and Suffering.

As taking up the cross is part of Discipleship, so suffering is part of the Imitation of Christ:

Jesus must therefore make it clear beyond all doubt that the 'must' of suffering applies to his disciples no less than to himself. Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion (135). When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die (136).

The cross of Christ means suffering and rejection, that is, suffering without honour: so suffering and rejection are ingredients of the Christian's life:

It is not the sort of suffering which is inseparable from this mortal life; but the suffering which is an essential part of the specifically Christian life. It is not suffering *per se*, but suffering-and-rejection,

and not rejection for any cause or conviction of our own, but rejection for the sake of Christ (137).

Each has his share of suffering, determined by God. To some, the "highest form of suffering, ... the grace of martyrdom", to others, the cross that they are able to bear (138). These statements cover areas that are matters of debate in the Imitation tradition (see above, pp. 33 ff.), and it is interesting to note the point of view taken by Bonhoeffer.

To bear the cross means to give up worldly attachments, to endure temptation (139), to bear the sins of others by forgiving them: "Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian's duty to bear" (140). Bonhoeffer asserts that it is Christ's suffering which has redemptive efficacy, but that his suffering supports the Christian to bear the sins of others by forgiving them (141). This is consistent with his previous comments on the nature of vicarious action in the church, as we have seen. The assumption of the guilt of others continues to be a theme of his writings:

[Since Christ] shares with his disciples the fruits of his passion, the Christian also has to undergo temptation, he too has to bear the sins of others; he too must bear their shame and be driven like a scapegoat from the gate of the city (142). He whom they follow must die accursed on the cross, with a desperate cry for righteousness on his lips: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But the disciple is not above his master, he follows in his steps (143).

These themes will be further developed in Bonhoeffer's writings, as we shall see.

So Christian disciples bear sorrow and sin in imitation of their Saviour (144). As Christ suffered patiently and without violence, so they too must not offer any resistance to evil, even if they do not admit its rights (145). The change in this area of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology will be noted below; it is a change in the notion

of Imitation, not an abandonment of it.

Bonhoeffer also repeats his now familiar warning against mis-directed discipleship, against the Imitation that stems from pride:

Asceticism means voluntary suffering ... and it is just there that the danger lies. There is always a danger that in our asceticism we shall be tempted to imitate the sufferings of Christ. This is a pious but godless ambition, for beneath it there always lurks the notion that it is possible for us to step into Christ's shoes ... we are then presuming to undertake that bitter work of redemption which Christ himself wrought for us ... it degenerates into a dreadful parody of the Lord's own passion (146).

In suggesting that the danger lies in ambitious and excessive asceticism, in replacing Christ and parodying his suffering, Bonhoeffer is applying explicitly to the notion of Imitation that danger which he identified in different terms in his discussion of sicut deus in Creation and Fall. Bonhoeffer here demonstrates his awareness of the dangers of the practice of the Imitation of Christ; he is critical of the Imitation tradition, corrects it where he can, and uses new vocabulary, perhaps to avoid the unacceptable connotations of the traditional language.

Finally, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer views martyrdom as a possible expression of the Imitation of Christ's suffering (147). It is not necessary to view Christian martyrdom in terms of the Imitation of Christ, for martyrdom does not necessarily include the motive of Imitation. But Bonhoeffer associates martyrdom with Imitation and this is part of an association of ideas to which we have already referred, that of guilt-bearing, martyrdom, and Imitation. This cluster of ideas will be developed further below.

#### (ii) Imitation and other aspects of Discipleship

There are other aspects of the life of Discipleship for which Bonhoeffer uses the notion of the Imitation of Christ:

Purity of heart looks only to Christ who goes before, and only the pure in heart will see God. They are those "whose hearts have become a reflection of the image of Jesus Christ" (148), that is, those who have been shaped into his image. We have noted this idea of reflecting the image before, in Creation and Fall (149). There it was the image of God, here of Christ.

The disciples are to shed light in the world, as Christ is the light of the world. They are the light of the world: "Now they must be what they really are - otherwise they are not followers of Jesus" (150). Their light is their good works:

... poverty, peregrination, meekness, peacableness, and finally persecution and rejection. All these good works are a bearing of the cross of Jesus Christ (151).

Love of the brethren is another way in which Christ may be imitated. In commenting on "go thy way, first be reconciled with thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift", Bonhoeffer says:

... it is the way to him, our crucified Brother ... In Jesus the service of God and the service of the least of the brethren were one. ... To serve our brother, to please him, to allow him his due and to let him live is the way of self-denial, the way of the cross (152).

Similarly, the disciple must love his enemy:

[the] Christian must treat his enemy as his brother, and requite his hostility with love. His behaviour must be determined not by the way others treat him, but by the treatment he himself receives from Jesus ... (153).

Or again: "How then does love conquer? By asking not how the enemy treats her but only how Jesus treated her" (154). This is an imitation of the perfect love of the Father, as well as an Imitation of Christ (155).

The idea of the Imitation of Christ is also used to explain

the meaning of the περὸσσόν, the 'extraordinary', the better righteousness to which the disciples are called:

What is the precise nature of the περὸσσόν? It is the life described in the beatitudes, the life of the followers of Jesus, the light which lights the world, the city set on the hill, the way of self-renunciation, of utter love, of absolute purity, truthfulness and meekness. It is unreserved love for our enemies, for the unloving and the unloved, love for our religious, political and personal adversaries. In every case it is the love which was fulfilled in the cross of Christ. What is the περὸσσόν? It is the love of Jesus Christ himself, who went patiently and obediently to the cross - it is in fact the cross itself ... The *passio* in the love of the Crucified is the Supreme expression of the 'extraordinary' quality of the Christian life (156).

Christ and his suffering are the means as well as the model of the disciples' life. "If we make the 'extraordinary' our standard, we shall be led into the *passio* of Christ, and in that its peculiar quality will be displayed" (157).

But Christ is clearly not only the model of this righteousness, but also the means of its achievement. Discipleship is an experience of grace, as we have seen. The disciples achieve the higher righteousness, because :

... between the disciples and the law stands one who has perfectly fulfilled it, one with whom they live in communion. ... Jesus not only possesses this righteousness, but is himself the personal embodiment of it. ... In fact their righteousness consists precisely in their following him... In what follows the disciples are told how to practice this righteousness of Christ. In a word, it means following him. (158).

In these ideas, Bonhoeffer is offering not only an interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount in terms of the Imitation of Christ, but also an ethical interpretation of the Imitation of Christ.

(iii) Imitation and the Church and Ministry.

As we have seen, though Bonhoeffer speaks of Imitation in The Cost of Discipleship, he does not exclude the ecclesial dimension of Imitation which was so evident in his earlier writings. But not only is the Church the context in which the living Lord speaks in Word and Sacrament (159), the form of the Church is determined by the form of Christ. The idea of the church as grounded and determined by Christ has been met before. What is new here is the idea that the place of the Church in the world is determined by the place of Christ:

There is a wrong way of staying in the world and a wrong way of fleeing from it. ... the Church of Christ has a different 'form' [Gestalt] from the world. Her task is increasingly to realise this form. It is the form of Christ himself, who came into the world and in his infinite mercy bore mankind and took it to himself, but who notwithstanding did not fashion himself in accordance with it but was rejected and cast out by it ... In the right confrontation with the world, the Church will become ever more like to the form of its suffering Lord (160).

Here it is the Church and not the world which is in the form of Christ. So also he applies the servant saying of Mark 10:45 to Church in imitation of Christ, not to the world, and encourages the slave to live as a member of the Body of Christ, the New Humanity, in such a way as to witness to the world's lost condition and to the new creation which has taken place in the Church (161). This idea is revised in Bonhoeffer's later writings. But here at least, it is the Church which is "the Body of Christ on earth, the followers and disciples (die Nachfolger und Jünger) of Jesus" (162).

As this last quotation indicates, Bonhoeffer attempts to relate the concepts of the Disciples and the Church (the Gospels and Paul) in The Cost of Discipleship, and this also involves an attempt to relate these concepts in terms of Imitation:

It is no accident that to follow him meant cleaving to him bodily. That was the natural consequence of the Incarnation. Had he been merely a prophet or a teacher, he would not have needed followers, but only pupils and hearers. But since he is the incarnate Son of God who came in human flesh, he needs a community of followers, who will participate not merely in his teaching but also in his Body (163).

Bonhoeffer is here pointing to the identity of the concept of "following" with the concept of communion in the Body of Christ, in the new humanity:

Every act he [Christ] wrought was performed on behalf of the new humanity which he bore in his body. That is why he is called the Second Adam or the last Adam ... Christ is the Second Man ... in whom the new humanity is created (164).

Thus the idea of recapitulation is parallel to that of following Christ: following Christ is a participation in that "movement" of Christ on behalf of the new humanity. The importance of the notion of Christ's humanity for the doctrine of Imitation has already been pointed out (pp. 177ff.).

Similarly, Bonhoeffer asserts the unity of the Synoptists and St Paul on the subject of Imitation when he says:

Where the synoptic Gospels speak of Christ calling men and their following him, St Paul speaks of *Baptism* (165). He who is granted fellowship with Jesus must die the baptismal death which is the fountain of grace, for the sake of the cross which Christ lays upon his disciples (166). The daily dying of the Christian life is merely the consequence of the one baptismal death ... There can be no repetition of [Christ's] sacrifice, therefore the baptised person dies in Christ once and for all (167), [and the] baptized live, not by a literal repetition of this death, but by a constant renewal of their faith in the death of Christ as his act of grace in us (168).

This idea of Baptism mediating likeness to Christ is familiar to us from the Imitation tradition (p.167), and the idea of the sacramental means of grace of Imitation is familiar to us from Bonhoeffer. What is important here is Bonhoeffer's conscious attempt to relate two different sets of Imitation vocabulary, that of the Gospels and that

of the Epistles, and in doing so, to relate so explicitly the connection between Baptism and Discipleship.

In a new development in his theology, Bonhoeffer also writes of the Ministry in terms of the Imitation of Christ (compare above pp. 42ff.). The basis for this understanding of Ministry develops from Bonhoeffer's understanding that Christian ministry is Christ's ministry:

It is the one Christ who passes through the land in the person of his twelve messengers and performs his work. ... Their work is to be Christ-work ... (169).

Because the work is Christ's, the style of the work is Christ's as well. As he is the Good Shepherd, so they are to be good shepherds (170), by his commission the disciples have become like Christ (171), and because of this, the style of their work they point beyond themselves to Christ (172). As their Lord was hated, so they will be rejected:

This assurance that in their suffering they will be as their master is the greatest consolation the messengers of Jesus have. As in the master, so shall the disciple be, and as the Lord, so the Servant ... Thus Jesus will be with them, and they will be in all things like unto him (173).

Indeed the identity between Christ and his messengers is so great that "Every service men render them is service rendered to Christ himself" (174). This notion of the special representative of Christ who is in a special way his imitator, and can even be identified with him both in what he does and in what is done to him, occurs in a different context later in Bonhoeffer's theology, and contributes to that association of guilt-bearing, imitation and martyrdom that we have mentioned before. We notice here too that stronger sense of division between the Church and the world which is characteristic of this Second Period, and which is transformed in Bonhoeffer's later writing.

So in The Cost of Discipleship Bonhoeffer retains his idea of the Church as the subject of Imitation and his idea of Baptism as a means of grace of Imitation, and develops the idea of Ministry as an Imitation of Christ.

(iv) Imitation and Image.

The last chapter of The Cost of Discipleship is such a succinct and detailed development of the notion of the Imitation of Christ in terms of Image theology (compare above, pp. 63ff.), such a useful summary of many of the main points of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology up to this point, and such an explicit exposition of Imitation, that it deserves detailed comment.

The chapter is entitled "The Image of Christ", and Bonhoeffer begins with a quotation from Paul: "Whom he foreknew, he also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Bonhoeffer comments:

Those who follow Christ are destined to bear his image ... Their goal is to become 'as Christ' ... The image of Jesus Christ impresses itself in daily communion on the image of the disciple ... That image has the power to transform our lives ...

Here is the complementary idea to the call to Discipleship, that of the Grace of Imitation. The Image of Christ is impressed upon his brethren, those with whom he shares humanity. "We become the sons of God, we stand side by side with Christ, our unseen Brother, bearing like him the image of God" (175).

Bonhoeffer then develops an idea from Creation and Fall about sicut deus, the rebellious imitation of the wrong image, the essence of sin:

Created man is destined to bear the image of uncreated God ... But the false serpent persuaded Adam that he must still do something to become like God ... Adam became 'as God' - *sicut deus* - in his

own way. ... That was the Fall of man ... Since that day, the sons of Adam in their pride have striven to recover the divine image by their own efforts. The more serious and devoted their attempt to regain the lost image and the more proud and convincing their apparent success, the greater their contradiction to God. Their misshapen form, modelled after the god they have invented for themselves, grows more and more like the image of Satan ...

We have commented before on the vividness of Bonhoeffer's notion of mis-imitation. However salvation is achieved by God taking the form and image of sinful man. Man is "re-fashioned as a living whole in the image of God". The change of form takes place in God, so that it can then take place in man. In Christ:

... the divine image has been re-created on earth ... But it is not the same image as Adam bore ... Rather it is the image of one who enters a world of sin and death, who takes on himself all the sorrows of humanity. ... the Man born to poverty, the friend of publicans and sinners, the Man of sorrows, rejected of man and forsaken of God. Here is God made man, here is man in the new image of God (176).

Conformation to the image of God in Christ is clearly integral to salvation, and that image is of the suffering and rejected Man. These are recurrent themes in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology.

Christians share in the "movement" of Christ from suffering to glory:

... if we would have a share in that glory and radiance, we must first be conformed to the image of the Suffering Servant. ... If we would bear the image of his glory, we must first bear the image of his shame.

Conformity to this image is not the result of our own efforts alone:

We cannot transform ourselves into his image; it is rather the form of Christ which seeks to be formed in us ... Christ's work in us is not finished until he has perfected his own form in us. We must be assimilated to the form of Christ in its entirety, the form of Christ incarnate, crucified and glorified

(This participation in the three-fold "movement" of Christ will be developed further in Ethics). Because Christ became a man, conformity

to his image means participation in real humanity, and thus solidarity with the whole of humanity. Bonhoeffer continues to emphasize the Humanity of Christ in association with an Imitation theology:

He became Man even as we are men. In his humanity and his lowliness we recognize our own form. He has become like a man, so that men should be like him... in the Incarnation the whole human race recovers the dignity of the image of God ... By being partakers of Christ incarnate, we are partakers in the whole humanity which he bore.

The Church is the form of that humanity: "The form of Christ incarnate makes the Church into the Body of Christ. All the sorrows of mankind fall upon that form, and only through that form can they be borne" (177).

This participation in the form of Christ is both ecclesial and individual, and to some, the martyrs, is given the privilege of the closest identification with Christ crucified: "When Christians are exposed to public insult, when they suffer and die for his sake, Christ takes on visible form in his Church". (This association of martyrdom and Imitation will be developed in the next chapter of this thesis). Bonhoeffer quotes 1 Corinthians 15:49, 1 John 3:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:18, familiar to us from the Imitation tradition. "If we contemplate the image of the glorified Christ, we shall be made like unto it ... That reflection of his glory will shine forth in us even in this life ...". The Trinity and the Church as the Means of Grace of Imitation:

The Holy Trinity himself has made his dwelling in the Christian heart, filling his whole being, and transforming him into the divine image. Christ, incarnate, crucified and glorified is formed in every Christian soul, for all are members of his Body, the Church ... The Church in the first place is his image, and through the Church all her members have been refashioned in his image too. In the Body of Christ we are become 'like Christ' (178).

Because Christ "lives his life in us", Christians can love

as he loved, forgive as he forgave, have the mind of Christ, follow in his steps, and lay down their lives for their brethren: "It is only because he became like us that we can become like him. It is only because we are identified with him that we can become like him."

Imitation is a part of Discipleship, and indeed is a means to that end:

By being transformed into his image, we are enabled to model our lives on his. Now at last deeds are performed and life is lived in single-minded discipleship in the image of Christ and his words find unquestioning obedience.

The ethical form of Imitation is obedient Discipleship. And finally, the Imitation of Christ becomes the Imitation of God:

The disciple looks solely at his Master. But when a man follows Jesus Christ and bears the image of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord, when he has become the image of God, we may at last say that he has been called to be the 'imitator of God'. The follower of Jesus is the imitator of God. 'Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children ...' (179).

We have included these extended quotations because they give a good summary of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology at this stage and also provide a notable instance of the use of the ideas of Imitation and Image. We have noted how Bonhoeffer uses material which he has used before, but in a new way, and have also noticed that some elements will be revised in his later writings.

This concludes our study of The Cost of Discipleship. We continue our investigation of the theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's Second Period by studying briefly some relevant material from other documents.

In Temptation, a series of studies for clergy of the Confessing Church delivered in 1937/38 (180), Bonhoeffer has in mind a particular idea of Temptation, that of an abandonment: "This is the decisive fact in the temptation of the Christian, that he is abandoned,

abandoned by all his powers ... abandoned by all men, abandoned by God himself" (181). The Christian is to meet Temptation chiefly by believing that it is Christ who is tempted in him and who has endured the Temptation:

Either we are tempted in Adam or we are tempted in Christ. Either the Adam in me is tempted - in which case we fall. Or the Christ in us is tempted - in which case Satan is bound to fall (182). We are not tempted, *Jesus Christ is tempted in us* (183).

So Bonhoeffer has in mind a special kind of Temptation, and his remedy is to point to the idea of Christ as indwelling endurance. What has this to do with the Imitation of Christ?

When Bonhoeffer considers specific instances of Temptation, he includes a study of "Suffering for Christ's Sake" (184). He claims that suffering for Christ's sake includes an acceptance of judgement on sin:

A suffering for Christ's sake which acknowledges no element of judgement in it is fanaticism ... No man can give himself to Christ without sharing in this judgement of God. For it is that which distinguishes Christ from the world, that he bore the judgement which the world despised and rejected ... So to 'belong to Christ' means to bow oneself beneath the judgement of God. It is that which distinguishes suffering in the fellowship of Jesus Christ from suffering in the fellowship of any other ethical or political hero ... [The Christian's] righteous suffering in the fellowship of Jesus Christ becomes vicarious suffering for the world (185).

This is not an explicit reference to the Imitation of Christ, but from Bonhoeffer's treatment of these ideas in his previous writings we can recognise the basis for an appeal to imitate this Christ in his enduring of God's judgement. This is part of that cluster of ideas to which we have already referred, guilt-bearing, imitation and martyrdom.

This association of ideas will be developed in Bonhoeffer's Third Period.

The next document is Life Together, a recollection of the community life of the seminary of Zingst and Finkenwalde (186). In it

we find a variety of expressions of the Imitation of Christ.

Because Christianity means community in and through Jesus Christ, Christians must receive and accept each other as they have been accepted by Christ (187). Those who would be meek must learn to keep silent under abuse, in imitation of Christ (188). As the work of Christ can be described as 'bearing', so the Christian must bear the sins of his brother (189), and in public confession of sin shares in the cross of Christ who suffered a scandalous and public death as a sinner (190).

The need for both community and individuality is recognised in Life Together (191), and this is also expressed in terms of Imitation theology, in a discussion of the variety of "images":

God does not will that I should fashion the other person according to the image that seems good to me, that is, in my own image; rather in his very freedom from me God made this person in his image. I can never know beforehand how God's image should appear in others. That image always manifests a completely new and unique form ... But God creates every man in the likeness of his Son, the Crucified (192).

So likeness to Christ does not mean identity with all other Christians. We have discussed this idea in the Imitation tradition (p. 175), and it is an important indication of the increasing rôle Bonhoeffer sees for the individual imitator. This subject will recur later in this chapter.

Bonhoeffer also regards the communal saying of the Psalms as a kind of Imitation of Christ. This is similar to the practice of liturgical meditation that we described in the Imitation tradition (p.71). Bonhoeffer says that it is Christ who is praying in the Psalter, and that the Church prays in the Name of Christ, out of the manhood and prayer of Christ (193). So the Church can pray the Psalms of innocence because it prays them in Christ, and can pray the Psalms of

suffering and guilt because Christ has suffered (194):

The Man Jesus Christ, to whom no affliction, no ill, no suffering is alien and who yet was the wholly innocent and righteous one, is praying in the Psalter through the mouth of his Church (195).

The Church participates in, and imitates, what is the prayer of Christ in the Psalms.

Bonhoeffer also points to the example of Christ in rising early to pray (196). This too we have found in the Imitation tradition (p.73 ).

We conclude this study of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's Second Period with three points.

Firstly, as Clifford J. Green points out, there are glimpses of ideas of God and suffering in this Period which are virtually identical with Bonhoeffer's later thinking (197). He quotes Bonhoeffer: "... God suffers in the world through man and whenever he comes he has to suffer from man again. God suffered on the cross. Therefore all human suffering and weakness is a sharing in God's own suffering and weakness in the world " (198). We will meet these ideas in our study of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Third Period.

Secondly, Bonhoeffer's concentration on the Church in the earlier stages of his theology should not be taken to mean that he is not concerned about the World. The Church exists in the world: "The Body of Christ takes up space on earth" (199). It is not other-worldly. <sup>eccles</sup> Bonhoeffer is opposed to a "docetic eschatology" (as he is opposed to a docetic Christology (200)), because the church has a place in the world (201). In our study of the Third Period, we will notice a stronger emphasis on the world as the locus of Imitation, but there are hints of this in these earlier writings.

Thirdly, there is evidence that at the end of this Second

Period, at the time of Bonhoeffer's return from America to Germany, the subject of the Imitation of Christ was engaging his attention. In some notes in a diary he wrote of seven outstanding problems of present continental theology, and one of these was "Christlike life" (202). In this chapter our concern is with Bonhoeffer's writings; in the next chapter we will investigate the question of the meaning of Bonhoeffer's return to Germany and the subsequent events of his life, and the relation of these events to the notion of Imitation.

In this Second Period, Bonhoeffer develops his theology of Imitation in terms of Discipleship and ordinary Church life. He finds more place for individuals in Imitation, while not losing the ecclesial dimension. His emphasis on Grace continues as does the notion of the new humanity. Imitation in ethical behaviour is further elaborated, and Imitation in suffering more precisely described, including the cluster of ideas that includes Imitation, suffering, and martyrdom. There are new ideas in terms of the Ministry as Imitation, and a careful delineation of Image theology (including the sicut deus idea), as a basis for Imitation. A form of corporate meditation as Imitation occurs, the only instance in Bonhoeffer's theology. So there is in this period both the development of previous Imitation material, and also the introduction of some new ideas. Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the world as the locus of Imitation is not yet fully developed.

In terms of the Imitation tradition, Bonhoeffer continues his emphases on Image and Grace, and moves in a more conventional direction in his notion of the individual as Imitator.

The Third Period : 1940 - 45.

This covers the time from Bonhoeffer's return to Germany until his death. During this time Bonhoeffer lived a double life, continued his work with the Confessing Church, and worked with the Resistance until his imprisonment. The main documents from this time, Ethics, and Letters and Papers from Prison, have been edited by Bethge, and are fragmentary and un-finished. They are not polished theological products, but nevertheless they have been regarded as significant theological documents (203), and as far as we are concerned, they do represent a further development in Bonhoeffer's Imitation <sup>of</sup> ~~theology~~ <sup>theology</sup>.

Ethics is a collection of documents on ethical subjects written between 1940 and 1943 (204). We cannot attempt to do justice to the thought contained within it, and merely intend to investigate the theology of Imitation of Christ it contains.

Bonhoeffer begins with a critique of the subject of ethics:

Christian ethics claims to discuss the origin of the whole problem of ethics, and thus professes to be a critique of all ethics simply as ethics (205).

Dumas comments:

... [ethics] can designate either the dilemmas of conscience in the knowledge of good and evil, or it can designate the recognition of reality re-unified by God's commandment. To shift the discussion of ethics from the former meaning to the latter is the task Bonhoeffer sets himself (206).

Bonhoeffer is opposed to the idea of ethics because "the knowledge of good and evil seems to be the aim of all ethical reflection" (207) and of course this desire for knowledge is sicut deus, and not imago dei: "'The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil', says God (Gen. 3:22). Originally man was made in the image of God, but now his likeness to God is a stolen one" (208). (As Dumas observes,

Creation and Fall provides the theological background to Ethics (209).) Because man knows good and evil, he becomes like God, but against God. His life is now in disunion with God, with men, with things and with himself (210). Ethics is in part then an attempt to move from sicut deus to imago dei, to discover a form of Imitation that will speak to ethical dilemmas.

Bonhoeffer sees a way ahead in terms of "Proving", in the sense of "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the will of God" (211). This "Proving" is achieved through transformation, metamorphosis, a renewing of the mind (212).

This metamorphosis of man can only be the overcoming of the form [Gestalt] of the fallen man Adam, and conformation [Gleichgestaltung] with the form [Gestalt] of the new man, Christ (213).

Bonhoeffer elaborates Gleichgestaltung later in Ethics (214), but here continues:

[It] is the form of the child of God who lives in unity with the will of God in the conformation of the one true Son of God (215).

This means that man becomes ignorant of his own good and evil, and looks only to Jesus Christ (216). Because Christ lives within the Christians:

... we no longer have any criterion by which to judge ourselves, or rather our only criterion is the living Jesus Christ himself (217).

This is how Bonhoeffer begins to develop a notion of Ethics that relates to the Imitation of Christ.

Bonhoeffer then proceeds to a discussion of love. What is love? It is not a human attitude, conviction, or deed: God is love, and love is his attitude to me (218). More particularly:

Only in Jesus Christ do we know what love is, namely, in His deed for us ... even here there is given no general definition of love, in the sense, for example, of its being the laying down of one's life for the lives

of others. What is here called love is not this general principle but the utterly unique event of the laying down of the life of Jesus Christ for us. ... Love is not what He *does* and what He *suffers*, but it is what *He* does and what *He* suffers (219).

Bonhoeffer then is not content with that version of the ethical Imitation of Christ which we observed in our study of the Imitation tradition which speaks of imitating Christ's actions, attitudes, or virtues (pp. 24ff.): he is maintaining the Imitation of Christ himself as the basis for the moral life. This is because he has a strong emphasis on the passive nature of Imitation, the being conformed by God. Or in terms of our previous study of Imitation (e.g. pp.158 ff.), he has a strong emphasis on the Grace of Imitation:

Love therefore, is the name for what God does to man ... Love means the undergoing of the transformation [Umwandlung] of one's entire existence by God ...

It is this love with which a man loves God and his neighbour (220). Christ's love is not only the model but also the means by which men are drawn into love for God and for their neighbour.

Bonhoeffer continues his attempt to relate ethics and Imitation in Chapter Three of Ethics, Ethics as Formation (Gestaltung). In it Bonhoeffer intends to replace the rusty swords of reason, moral fanaticism, conscience, duty, the pure conscience, the *via media*, or private virtuousness. The sharp sword with which he replaces them is the commandment of Christ, in whom God and the world must be seen as one (221). In Jesus Christ the fury of the world is reconciled to God, <sup>and</sup> God himself sets out on the path of humiliation and atonement, and thereby absolves the world (222). In Jesus Christ God becomes real man: "The name Jesus contains within itself the whole of humanity and the whole of God" (223). (The Christological significance of this last statement will become evident later in this study). In Christ mankind is crucified, and "the figure of the Crucified invalidates all

thought which takes success as its standard" (224). Moreover; "Only in the cross of Christ ... do men achieve their true form (wahren Gestalt)" (225). Again,

Humanity has been made new in Jesus Christ who became man, was crucified and rose again. What befell Christ befell all men, for Christ was man. The new man has been created (226).

The importance of the doctrine of the Humanity of Christ for the notion of Imitation has already been observed (pp. 177ff.). So because of the Resurrection of Christ, death must not be idolised:

The man whom God has taken to himself, sentenced and awakened to a new life, this is Jesus Christ. In him it is all mankind. It is ourselves. Only the form of Jesus Christ confronts the world and defeats it. And it is from this form [Gestalt] alone that there comes the formation [Gestaltung] of a new world, a world which is reconciled with God (227).

This series of statements about Christ leads Bonhoeffer to a development of the idea of Formation (Gleichgestaltung) which we will study below. We note here though that these statements about Christ include the familiar Imitation themes of "recapitulation", and the idea that appropriate action is determined by the shape of the "movement" of Christ, an idea which is developed below. We also notice that it is not only the form of the church which is shaped by Christ, but also the form of the world. This is an important theme in Ethics and indeed throughout this Third Period of Bonhoeffer's life, and will be discussed further below.

Bonhoeffer now studies the subject of Conformation (Gleichgestaltung) which he raised earlier in Ethics (228), and which is a development of earlier ideas of "image", as for example in the last chapter of The Cost of Discipleship. Bonhoeffer is establishing a new vocabulary, perhaps, as we have suggested, to avoid what he regards as the regrettable overtones of the more conventional vocabulary of Imitation. He is aware that talk of "formation" will

arouse suspicion because of its association with contemporary programmes of "practical" Christianity (229), but he wants to use a common term, and charge it with new and correct meaning. What then is Bonhoeffer's understanding of Conformation?

"Formation" is the one form (Gestalt) which has overcome the world, the form of Jesus Christ. Formation comes not by applying the teaching of Christ or Christian principles to the world (230).

On the contrary, formation comes only by being drawn in into the form of Jesus Christ. It comes only as formation in His likeness, as conformation [Gleichgestaltung] with the unique form of Him who was made man, was crucified, and rose again (231).

Bonhoeffer refers to Galatians 4:19 (till Christ be formed in you), and equates his idea of formation with the New Testament idea of transformation in Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:10, Romans 8:29 and 12:2) (232). So this idea of Conformation is an attempt to interpret the notion of Image, familiar to us both in the Imitation tradition (pp.63 ff.), and in Bonhoeffer's theology. Bonhoeffer here continues his emphasis on the passive reception of the grace of Imitation.

#### Conformation

... is not achieved by our own efforts 'to become like Jesus', which is the way in which we usually interpret it. It is achieved only when the form of Jesus Christ itself works upon us in such a manner that it moulds our form in its own likeness ...

[It is not a ]vain imitation or repetition of Christ's form ,[but the action of Christ in forming man](233).

Bonhoeffer rejects what he regards as the more simplistic versions of the Imitation of Christ in favour of a more sophisticated attempt to develop an ethics of Imitation which is based on his Christology of Christ as the giver of form, the giver of reality.

Conformation is formation into the likeness of the Incarnate, the Crucified, the Risen One. Bonhoeffer uses this same triad in

his discussion of the Penultimate, as we shall see. Here he develops the three-fold nature of Conformation as follows:

"To be conformed with the Incarnate - that is to be a real man" (234). That is freedom not to be a superman, hero, demi-god, not to be despised or deified, but a real man, the Creator's creature. It is freedom from false uniformity, from pretence, hypocrisy, from the need to be other than what one is. This is conformity with the Incarnate, because "God became a real man" (235).

"To be formed in the likeness of the Crucified - this means being a man sentenced by God" (236), the acceptance of God's Judgement on sin, in dying daily the death of a sinner, in surrendering to God's judgement and thus being forgiven. For "it is in suffering that the Master imprints upon our minds and hearts his own all-valid image" (237).

"To be conformed with the Risen One - that is to be a new man before God" (238), a hidden newness of life, not apparent to the world, but transfigured in the form of the Risen One (239).

As Bonhoeffer observes in a different context, this triad is not successive, nor does it suggest three different possibilities. The three elements are components of the one reality (240).

Because of the Incarnation, Christ's form is not alien to man: "Man becomes man because God became man" (241). We see here the connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ to which we referred in the first section of this thesis (pp.177 ff.). By it Bonhoeffer is asserting the value of man's basic humanity and asserting that the Imitation of Christ is fundamentally "natural" to man, even if mankind does not know it:

The longing of the Incarnate to take form in all men is as yet still unsatisfied. He bore the form of man as a whole, and yet He can take form only in a small band. ... 'Formation' consequently means in

the first place Jesus's taking form in His Church (242).

So though Bonhoeffer emphasizes the passive nature of Conformation, he still leaves room for active Imitation, though as we see, it is active Imitation of a particular kind.

What then of the relation between the form of Christ, the Church, and the world? Bonhoeffer's comments here clarify what is a recurrent issue in his theology of the church and the world:

The Church, then, bears the form which is in truth the proper form of all humanity. The image in which she is formed is the image of man. What takes place in her takes place as an example and substitute [vorbildlich und stellvertretend] for all men (243).

Therefore Conformation (and so Imitation) is not a 'religious' activity:

What matters in the Church is not religion but the form of Christ ... she has essentially nothing whatever to do with the so-called religious functions of man, but with the whole man in his existence in the world ... (244).

These ideas derive from the claim that the Incarnation means God becoming a 'real' man, as we have seen. In Bonhoeffer's theology, this understanding of Conformation and Imitation relates to the "non-religious interpretation" (of which more below), and in terms of the Imitation tradition, a move away from cultic Imitation, (as for example in Life Together), to ethical Imitation.

Formation in the Christian or ethical sense depends on the "form of Christ". This form allows for a variety of expressions of reality: the real man receives the form of the one incarnate, crucified and risen Christ (as we have seen) (245). This formation - ethic then is entirely concrete. It has to do with the reality of this world, because Christ became a real man. Christian ethics serves the form of Christ in the world (246). Thus the nature of reality derives from Christ, and so the idea of the two spheres must be rejected and orders of creation replaced by Christian mandates (247). The

meaning of the world is determined in Christ, and one aspect of this is that the Imitation of Christ (correctly understood) is the shape of man's ethical responsibility. Imitation then is based on reality, affirming both the Creation and the Incarnation.

The same concern for reality lies behind Bonhoeffer's discussion of the Penultimate (248), and again the example of Christ is used as an indication of the right stance. The dilemma Bonhoeffer discussed is that of acting in accordance with the Ultimate, or with the Penultimate. To act in accordance with the Ultimate is to reject the Penultimate, and to live in the light of the end of the world, with no responsibility for the world. To act in accordance with the Penultimate is to live responsibly in the world, and not to be threatened by the Ultimate. Acting in accordance with the Ultimate has as its point of departure God the Judge and Redeemer: acting in accordance with the Penultimate has as its point of departure God the Creator and Preserver (249). To act towards the Ultimate is to be radical: to act towards the Penultimate is compromise:

Radicalism hates time, and compromise hates eternity.  
 Radicalism hates patience, and compromise hates decision.  
 Radicalism hates wisdom, and compromise hates simplicity.  
 Radicalism hates moderation and measure, and compromise hates the immeasurable. Radicalism hates the real, and compromise hates the world (250).

Both acting in accordance with the Ultimate and acting in accordance with the Penultimate are defensible, and both are wrong.

Christ is the measure of why these attitudes are wrong, and also of what is right. For,

...both alike are opposed to Christ ... The question of the Christian life will not, therefore, be decided and answered either by radicalism or by compromise, but only be reference to Jesus Christ Himself (251).

Bonhoeffer explains how this is true by using the triad that we have already met, Christ incarnate, crucified and risen:

In Jesus Christ we have faith in the incarnate, crucified and risen God. In the incarnation we learn of the love of God for His creation; in the crucifixion we learn of the judgement of God upon all flesh; and in the resurrection we learn of God's will for a new world (252).

As we have already seen, these are not three different options:

There could be no greater error than to tear these three elements apart ... It is quite wrong to establish a separate theology of the incarnation, a theology of the cross, or a theology of the resurrection ... it is equally wrong to apply the same procedure to a consideration of the Christian life (253).

Christ incarnate, crucified and risen, is both the means and measure of the Christian response:

Christ is incarnate, so the value of human life must be asserted, yet he was also without sin and lived in poverty, unmarried, and died as a criminal:

Thus the manhood of Jesus implies already a two-fold condemnation of man, the absolute condemnation of sin and the relative condemnation of the established human orders ... He allows [the human reality] to remain as a penultimate which requires to be taken seriously in its own way, and yet not to be taken seriously, a penultimate which has become the outer covering of the ultimate (254).

We discussed a similar idea in Barth in our study of the ambiguity of Christ in the first section of this thesis (p.130).

Christ is crucified, so God condemns the fallen creation:

The cross of Jesus is the death sentence upon the world. Man cannot glory now in his humanity, nor the world in its divine orders (255).

Yet if the Cross is the judgement of the Penultimate, it is also the place of the mercy of the Ultimate (256).

Christ rose again, so new creation and new life have begun:

Already in the midst of the old world, resurrection has dawned, as a last sign of its end and of its future, and at the same time as a living reality (257).

But the risen life is hidden, so "the resurrection does not annul the penultimate ... [but] wins its space for itself within it" (258).

So Christ is a sign that the Penultimate can neither be sanctioned nor destroyed. The encounter with Christ

... is an encounter beyond all radicalism and beyond all compromise. Christian life is participation in the encounter of Christ with the world (259).

Bonhoeffer is again not suggesting a "programme" of Imitation, but a participation in Christ which conforms to the style of his work in the world which is neither radical nor compromised. We spoke of this kind of Imitation earlier in our study of the ambiguity of Christ's witness and the transcendence of his character (pp.130 ff.). Bonhoeffer again writes of an Imitation of Christ, not of "Christlike" virtues or attitudes. His ethics of Imitation do not involve a reduction in Christology (Christ merely the example of virtues), but derive rather from a deliberate and strong Christological statement of Christ as the giver of reality to the world.

Bonhoeffer also develops the theme of the Imitation of Christ when he writes of "The Structure of Responsible Life" (Die Struktur des verantwortlichen Lebens) . Relevant material is found under the sub-headings of "Deputyship", "Correspondence with Reality", "Guilt", and "Conscience".

In his discussion of "Deputyship" (Stellvertretung), Bonhoeffer develops the theme of vicarious action which we found in Sanctorum Communio and Act and Being. Deputyship means responsibility for others,

and the underlying basis for Deputyship is Christ himself:

Jesus ... lived in deputyship for us as the incarnate Son of God, and that is why through Him all human life is in essence a life of deputyship ... In Him there is fulfilled what the living, the action and the suffering of men ought to be (260).

"Christ became man, and He therefore bore responsibility and deputyship for men", therefore human responsibility is essentially a relation of man to man (261). Careful thought is necessary if Jesus is to be rightly understood as example:

The fact that Jesus lived without the special responsibility of a marriage, of a family or of a profession, does not by any means set Him outside the field of responsibility; on the contrary, it makes all the clearer His responsibility and His deputyship for all men (262).

So then Christ is the basis and the model of Deputyship, and an Imitation of him which perceived him in terms of irresponsibility would be unfounded.

In "Correspondence with Reality", Bonhoeffer repeats the point he made earlier that reality is only discovered in Christ, and now states that action in imitation of Christ is in accordance with reality.

For,

... in Jesus Christ, the real man, the whole of reality is taken up and comprised together; in Him it has its origin, its essence and its goal. For that reason it is only in Him, and with Him as the point of departure, that there can be an action which is in accordance with reality. ... Our conclusion from this must be that action which is in accordance with Christ is action which is in accordance with reality (263).

Christ is both the basis and model of actions of reality. This striking development of the importance of Imitation derives from Bonhoeffer's Christology, the Christ who is Lord and Saviour of the World. It is inherent in the idea in Sanctorum Communio, that all human community exists in Christ.

In "The Acceptance of Guilt", Bonhoeffer restates a theme that is now familiar, that responsibility involves the acceptance of guilt. This is so, because of the work and example of Christ:

He is concerned solely with love for the real man, and for that reason He is able to enter into the fellowship of the guilt of men and to take their burden of guilt upon Himself ... In this Jesus Christ, who is guilty without sin, lies the origin of every action of responsible deputyship ... Through Jesus Christ it becomes an essential part of responsible action that the man who is without sin loves selflessly and for that reason incurs guilt (264).

This association of Imitation and guilt-bearing will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Under "Conscience", Bonhoeffer refers again to the idea of the sicut deus man, the one who knows good and evil, and who thus lives according to his conscience (265). The man who lives by his conscience attempts to conform to a universal law of good, and the man who allows another to be his conscience has turned to something which is a direct parallel to Christian truth and yet an extreme contrast with it (266). Christ is Lord of conscience, so responsibility is bound by conscience, and conscience is liberated by responsibility (267). So Bonhoeffer does not allow for the possibility that we discussed in Chapter Three in our study of Imitation and man's ethical responsibility (pp. 94 ff.); because of his Christology, the Imitation of Christ represents what every man ought to do: there is no conflict between man's moral responsibility and the Imitation of Christ.

The final reference to the Imitation of Christ in Ethics occurs in the last chapter, in which the subject is the Church's responsibility to the world. It is a negative reference: in answer to the idea that the Church has at her disposal a Christian solution for all worldly problems, Bonhoeffer claims that Jesus did not concern

himself with the solution of worldly problems:

Instead of the solution of problems, Jesus brings the redemption of men and yet for that very reason He does really bring the solution of all human problems as well ... (268).

A simplistic view of Imitation does not provide the answer, but theological reflection on the meaning of Christ does, and it is in this way that the Imitation of Christ operates in the sphere of man's behaviour in the world.

In this study of the theme of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's Ethics we have not attempted to deal with all the issues that the book raises, nor even with all the material in it. There are many sections of the book in which the notion of Imitation does not occur. Nevertheless we have demonstrated that Ethics is in part an attempt to describe an Imitation of Christ ethic, albeit an Imitation ethic understood in a precise and particular sense, in a way which derives from Bonhoeffer's Christology. The significance of his contribution to the Imitation tradition will be discussed in the next chapter. We now turn to a study of the theme of Imitation in Letters and Papers from Prison.

This book is of course an edited version of material in an unusual form for theology, that of letters written from prison, which were for a private rather than public reception. Letters and Papers from Prison is one of Bonhoeffer's most widely read documents, and its notions of the Imitation of Christ have been widely influential. It is the idea of Imitation that is our subject, and so this is not intended to be an investigation of all the theological themes of the book. However the Imitation theology of the book does impinge on other theological issues, and attention to those relevant issues will shed light on Bonhoeffer's development of Imitation, as indeed understanding his theology of Imitation increases our comprehension of those

other themes.

The extent to which Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation in Letters and Papers from Prison is a contribution to the Imitation tradition will be discussed in the next chapter. In our investigation of it here we will discover that the ideas of Imitation in this book are both creative and also a development from the theology of Imitation we have found in his other writings.

Before we study those comments on Imitation in Letters and Papers which are its creative contribution to the idea of Imitation and to Christian theology, we will give a brief summary of those references to Imitation which can be regarded as conventional both in terms of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, and of the Imitation tradition.

Christians should love others and not despise them for "God himself did not despise humanity, but became man for men's sake" (269). Similarly, his theme for marriage is "'Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God' ... accept each other as you are, and forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts" (270). Bonhoeffer still speaks of Christ being "formed" in a community (271), and in a letter written before the prison period but included here for convenience, he refers again to the idea of the Ministry in terms of an Imitation of Christ the Shepherd (272).

Bonhoeffer also speaks in familiar terms of the call to suffer after the example of Christ:

Christ kept himself from suffering till his hour had come, but when it did come he met it as a free man, seized it, and mastered it ... We are certainly not Christ: we are not called on to redeem the world by our own deeds and sufferings ... We are not Lords, but instruments in the hand of the Lord of history; and we can share in other people's sufferings only to a very limited degree. We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians, we must have some share in Christ's large-heartedness by acting with responsibility ... The Christian is called to sympathy and action ... (273).

Bonhoeffer here continues to demonstrate an awareness of the difference in status and work between Christ and his imitators and also the need for Christians to participate in what Christ does by means of Imitation. Imitation of Christ takes the form of suffering in responsible action (in verantwortlicher Tat), a theme of Ethics, as we have seen.

Bonhoeffer later develops this theme of suffering in Imitation in a new way, as will become evident below. This concludes our survey of the more conventional elements of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology in Letters and Papers from Prison.

The question of "who Christ really is, for us today" (274) can be seen as in part at least, the recognition of a need to restate the notion of the Imitation of Christ. For the idea of Christ as exemplar is a significant dimension to Bonhoeffer's Christology so the attempt to re-think Christology will also involve an attempt to restate the notion of Imitation. As we have seen, Bonhoeffer has already established a new vocabulary of Imitation (Füreinander, vicarious action, Gleichgestaltung, Stellvertretung), and he does so yet again in Letters and Papers. Bonhoeffer has to ask the question of the meaning of Christ for today because of his discoveries in the area of theology (the need for a non-religious interpretation, the world come of age, the suffering of God), and so he develops his theology of the Imitation of Christ with new vocabulary in response to this new situation. We cannot attempt to do justice to all the implications of these new discoveries or to the debate which surrounds them, but will rather study them as they relate to the theme of Imitation.

This last development of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation is studied under the following headings: (i) Jesus and man's weakness, (ii) Jesus and this world, (iii) Gethsemane and suffering with God, and (iv) Jesus, the man for others.

(i) Jesus and man's weakness.

On several occasions, Bonhoeffer looks at the example of Christ when he is considering the subject of dealing with man's weakness.

Firstly, he notes that Jesus did not take advantage of men in their weakness:

As we were lying on the floor last night and someone exclaimed 'O God, O God' ... I couldn't bring myself to offer him any Christian encouragement or comfort ... I felt that it was wrong to force religion down his throat just then. (Incidentally, Jesus didn't try to convert the two thieves on the cross ...) (275).

Secondly, when Bonhoeffer is discussing and rejecting the policy of attacking men for God at the point of their weakness, and devaluing their strengths, he points again to the example of Christ:

Jesus did not make everyone a sinner first ... Neither did he question a man's health, vigour, or happiness, regarded in themselves, or regard them as evil fruits ... (276).

The first quotation includes a reference to Bonhoeffer's hesitation about "religion", and he later developed this in terms of Christianity for "religionless" people. The notion of "religion" which is being rejected is probably best understood as an attitude to God which is an emergency device, intended to deal with man's weakness rather than challenge or form his strengths, which is inward and individualistic, otherworldly and intellectually dishonest (277). It is in dealing with this issue that Bonhoeffer asks the question of the meaning of Christ for today (278). One reason why Bonhoeffer rejects the "religious" approach to people, playing on people's tendency to "religion", is, as we have seen, because of the example of Christ.

A particular problem that is raised for Bonhoeffer by the practice of "religious" Christianity is that only a few people are susceptible to it:

Are they [the religious] to be the chosen few?  
 Is it on this dubious group of people that we are  
 to pounce in fervour ... How can Christ become the  
 Lord of the religionless as well? (279).

This concern for the Universal value of Christ for all men, "religious" and "religionless" alike reflects some of Bonhoeffer's Imitation themes: the theme of recapitulation, which Bonhoeffer reiterates in Letters and Papers (280), and which is a basis for an appeal to Imitation as we have seen (pp.135 ff.), and the theme of Christ as the "form" of the world, in Ethics. If Christ is Lord of all, then his ministry to all should be reflected and imitated in the Church. So from the perspective of the Imitation of Christ, if for no other reason, the "religious" expression of Christianity is suspect.

The second quotation occurs in the context of a suggestion that the "religious" approach ought to be replaced by one that acknowledges a world "come of age by Jesus Christ" (281), another important idea in Bonhoeffer's thought, and the positive expression of the need for "religionless" Christianity. Bonhoeffer supports a notion of a "world come of age" in part, as we have seen, by an appeal to the example of Christ in his dealings with men:

Jesus claims for himself and the Kingdom of God the whole of human life in all its manifestations ... let me just summarize briefly what I'm concerned about - the claim of a world that has come of age by Jesus Christ (282).

Bonhoeffer's notion of the Imitation of Christ in Ethics in terms of responsibility and deputyship indicates that he has a model of Imitation that uses men's strengths and abilities, their mature responsibility. It is found also in the "image" notion in the Imitation tradition (pp.63 ff.); man at his created best and most integrated is an Imitator of Christ. The connection between "religionless" Christianity, the world "come of age", a "this-worldly" understanding

of Christianity, and "suffering with God", will become evident as we proceed with this study.

So then the example of Christ in his treatment of men indicates that he does not take advantage of their weakness or attempt to force them from strength to weakness, and, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer has already stated a model of Imitation for mature and responsible men. Bonhoeffer uses the example of Christ in support of his ideas of "religionless" Christianity and the world "come of age".

(ii) Jesus and this world.

Bonhoeffer's rejection of "religion" and his assertion of the world "come of age" lead him to assert the value of this world, as opposed to the attempt to think of God in terms of inner experience or of other-worldly promise. For,

... the 'heart' in the Biblical sense is not the inner life, but the whole man in relation to God (283), and because the Bible speaks of historical redemption, in this life, rather than beyond (284).

And a "this-worldly" interpretation of Christianity is right, because:

God is no stop-gap; he must be recognized at the centre of our life, not when we are at the end of our resources; it is his will to be recognized in life, not only when death comes ... The ground for this lies in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He is the centre of life ... (285). Belief in the resurrection is not the 'solution' of the problem of death ... God is beyond in the midst of our life (286).

We have met the concept of centre before in our study of Bonhoeffer's Imitation tradition in the terms Mitte and Mittler in Creation and Fall and Christology, and Bonhoeffer's use of these terms of Christ as the one at the centre of the human community who enables human relationships, the ordinary life of mankind, and whose existence for

others is a paradigm of human relationships. In this way the notion of God in Christ at the centre in Letters and Papers has a basis in Bonhoeffer's earlier theology of Imitation.

But a more explicit reason for an involvement in this world is the example of Christ in his actions in which Christians participate, and which forms the basis of their Imitation of him:

The Christian, unlike the devotees of the redemption myths, has no last line of escape available from earthly tasks and difficulties into the eternal, but, like Christ himself ('My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'), he must drink the earthly cup to the dregs, and only in his doing so is the crucified and risen Lord with him, and he crucified and risen with Christ. ... Christ takes hold of a man at the centre of his life (287).

So Christianity must be practised in this world because Christ is at the centre of life and because the Christian, like Christ, must live in the real world. This argument from the example of Christ is reminiscent of the argument in Ethics that we have already studied, that man's responsibility is in this world and for men because God became man in Christ. It is reflected too in the use of the Imitation of Christ described in Chapter Two as a test of the presence of Christianity (pp.30 ff.). The Imitation of Christ must be practised in the real world because Christ the exemplar lived in the real world.

The idea, mentioned in the above quotation, that life in the real world involves suffering for his followers, is our next subject.

(iii) Gethsemane and suffering with God.

The Imitation of Christ in suffering is part of the Imitation tradition, as we have seen in the first section of this thesis (pp.33 ff.), and we have studied its occurrence in Bonhoeffer's earlier writings, especially in The Cost of Discipleship. Here, in Letters and Papers it is expressed in the following terms:

The poem about Christians and pagans contains an idea that you will recognize: 'Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving'; that is what distinguishes Christians from pagans. Jesus asked in Gethsemane, 'Could you not watch with me one hour?'... Man is summoned to share in God's sufferings at the hands of a godless world (288).

Barth comments on these ideas:

... what he says about sharing in the suffering of God, and so on, seems to me to be clearly a variation of the idea of imitatio which he rightly stressed (289).

Two features of Bonhoeffer's words need comment, the idea of the suffering of God, and the use of Gethsemane. Bonhoeffer refers to the suffering of God in a previous letter. He writes:

The God who lets us live in the world without the working hypothesis of God is the God before whom we stand continually ... God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross ... Christ helps us, not by virtue of his omnipotence, but by virtue of his weakness and suffering ... only the suffering God can help (290).

It is clear that the terms God and Christ are being used interchangeably, so sharing in God's sufferings is a form of Imitation of Christ. This concentration on the weakness of God in Christ is an expression of "condescension" or "kenotic" Christology of which we saw the roots in Christology. The combination of Kenosis and Imitatio is a strong one (291), and does provide another way of solving the problem of how men can imitate a Divine being, which we discussed in Chapter Four (pp.111 ff.). For it is not the strength of Christ which should be imitated, but his weakness, his powerlessness. This is perhaps similar to the idea of conformity to the Crucified in Ethics, (though see below), and if that is so, should be complemented with some idea like conformity to the Risen One (292).

However now it is Gethsemane, not Golgotha, which is the point of the "movement" of Christ to which men must conform (293). The significance of this change is not easy to determine. It may be

that Golgotha means suffering that achieves, whereas Gethsemane refers to the weakness of suffering that does not achieve (294), or that the call to Gethsemane should be interpreted as man's responsibility to suffer in preparation for sacrifice (even death?) even if he does not know when or how that sacrifice will take place. Or is Gethsemane used because there the agony of Christ's decision is so vividly portrayed? There is unfortunately nothing in the letter to indicate what special significance Gethsemane has in this context.

To return to the letter:

To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way ... but to be a man ... the man that Christ creates in us. It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the sufferings of God in the secular life. That is *metanoia*: not in the first place thinking about one's own needs, problems, sins, and fears, but allowing oneself to be caught up into the way of Christ, into the messianic event ... This being caught up into the messianic sufferings of God in Jesus Christ takes a variety of forms in the New Testament. It appears in the call to discipleship. ... [Bonhoeffer gives a number of examples] ... The only thing that is common to all these is their sharing in the suffering of God in Christ (295).

There is a variety of Imitation language here, and perhaps also the idea of identifying with Christ in the poor and needy, which we have met before in Bonhoeffer. The clearest reference to Imitation is in the idea of being caught up into the messianic sufferings of Jesus. What does this mean?

From our study of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, it is most likely that it is a reference to that cluster of ideas to which we have referred several times, that of guilt-bearing, imitation, and martyrdom. The basic idea is that an innocent man is called, after the example of Christ, to suffer shame and rejection and guilt on behalf of his brethren. This has been expressed in a variety of ways in Bonhoeffer's writings, but what is distinctive in this ~~place~~ is

the emphasis on the context of secular involvement, suffering in the world and for the world, in powerlessness and weakness (296). The idea of becoming guilty on behalf of others in the secular world is in my opinion of considerable importance in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology. Because Letters and Papers are autobiographical in theological style, it is my opinion that the meaning of the cluster of ideas will be further illuminated by a study of Bonhoeffer as an Imitator of Christ. We will investigate this topic in Chapter Seven, in an attempt to complete our understanding of Bonhoeffer's notion of Imitation and of his place in the Imitation tradition.

The last quotation has indicated again how closely related are the themes of "religionless" Christianity, the world "come of age", this-worldly Christianity and suffering with Christ, and how all of them are related to the notion of the Imitation of Christ. To underline this point we give a quotation from another letter which draws together these various themes:

During the last year or so I've come to know and understand more and more the profound this-worldliness of Christianity. The Christian is not a *homo religiosus*, but simply a man, as Jesus was a man ... [I mean] profound this-worldliness, characterized by discipline and the constant knowledge of death and resurrection ... By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves unreservedly into the arms of God, taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world - watching with Christ in Gethsemane. That, I think, is faith; that is *metanoia*; and that is how one becomes a man and a Christian (297).

This quotation, with its references to Jesus as man and to the idea of becoming a man, is reminiscent of our study of Imitation and the Humanity of Christ in the earlier section of this thesis (pp.177 ff.), and also serves as a link to our next subject.

(iv) Jesus, the man for others.

This final strand of Imitation theology occurs in "Outline for a Book," near the end of Letters and Papers from Prison. In it Bonhoeffer uses the ingredients of his theology of Imitation in a way that further clarifies his understanding of the Imitation of Christ. He writes:

... [A] transformation of all human life is given in the fact that 'Jesus is there only for others' [Jesus nur "für andere da ist"]. His 'being there for others' [Für-andere-Dasein] is the experience of transcendence. It is only this 'being there for others', maintained till death, that is the ground of his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Faith is participation in this being of Jesus (incarnation, cross and resurrection) ... our relation to God is a new life in 'existence for others', through participation in the being of Jesus. The transcendental is not infinite and unattainable tasks, but the neighbour who is within reach in any given situation. God in human form ..[15] 'the man for others' [der Mensch für andere] and therefore the Crucified, the man who lives out of the transcendent (298).

The meaning of these sentences is perhaps best conveyed by reference to expressions of Imitation in Bonhoeffer's earlier writings. The notion of the moral transcendence of Christ and of the neighbour is reminiscent of Sanctorum Communio and Act and Being, as is participation in the being of Jesus. The description of the being of Jesus is reminiscent of the Ethics idea of conformation to the Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen, and the concentration on the person of Christ first found clear expression in The Cost of Discipleship. Mention of Jesus as the man, the articulation of the meaning of transcendent, and the emphasis on the death of Christ reminds us of early documents in Letters and Papers. The idea of für-andere-Dasein is of course reminiscent of Sanctorum Communio (Füreinander and vicarious actions) and Ethics (Stellvertretung). The reason for making these connections is to indicate the essential continuity in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, and to indicate the depth of meaning of the expressions in

this quotation.

It is important to do this because, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer was conscious of rejecting wrong notions of Imitation as he put forward his own theology of Imitation, and his understanding of Imitation is theologically sophisticated. So it would be quite wrong to interpret a phrase like "The Man for others" for instance, in a way which suggested nothing more than that Jesus exhibited good-will to all whom he met. Our study of Bonhoeffer's Imitation tradition has made us aware of the resonances of the expression 'for others' in terms of the structure of the world, Christology, the Incarnation and the Cross. And our study of both the imitation tradition in general and Bonhoeffer's thought in particular have made us aware of the significance of the description "The Man". It speaks of an Imitation tradition that values the created nature of man, and that has a close connection between Imitation and Humanity.

Bonhoeffer continues in his Outline:

The church is the church only when it exists for others ... It must tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others (299).

Here it is still the Church which must conform to Christ. Throughout his theology, Bonhoeffer has employed the notion of Imitation in both ecclesial and individual terms. And finally:

It [the Church] must not under-estimate the importance of human example (which has its origin in the humanity of Jesus and is so important in Paul's teaching); it is not abstract argument, but example, that gives its word emphasis and power (300).

In our study of the Imitation tradition we noted the significance of human examples for the Imitation tradition, and also developed the theme which Bonhoeffer mentions here, namely the significance of the humanity of Christ for the theology of Imitation (See above pp. 101 ff, and pp. 177 ff.).

In Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology of the Third Period we have noticed many features that originated in his earlier writings, for example the sicut deus and image ideas, the notion of love, the emphasis on Grace, the use of "recapitulation", and the concentration on humanity. Development was discovered in "image" theology in terms of Conformation, and in the delineation of love and vicarious action in terms of Responsibility. The previous notion of Christ was elaborated in terms of the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen One, and there was a new concentration on the significance of the World, though without neglect of the Church and the individual. Bonhoeffer's use of Gethsemane was noticed, as also the culmination of the Imitation, martyrdom, guilt-bearing cluster in the idea of suffering with God. Bonhoeffer's recurrent interest in the Humanity of Christ received its final expression in his Imitation theology of "the Man for others". This language provided a notable instance of Bonhoeffer's desire to forge a new vocabulary of Imitation.

In this study of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation we have demonstrated the value of our previous study of the Imitation tradition in providing a context in which Bonhoeffer's ideas can be discerned and evaluated. We have shown the continuity of Bonhoeffer's notion of Imitation throughout his theological writing, and also his development of that theme in various ways. In the next and final chapter we will use the results of this investigation as we continue to discover the nature of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ, and to assess his contribution to the Imitation tradition.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

In this the final chapter we continue our investigation of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation of Christ in an attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of that theology of Imitation in itself, and also in the context of the general Imitation tradition. So this chapter is both the completion of the second section of the thesis, in which we have been studying Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation, and also the completion of the thesis as a whole, in which our inquiry has been of the nature of the Imitation of Christ in general.

In the first part of this chapter we consider the topic Bonhoeffer - an Imitator of Christ?, and in the second we complete our study of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ in the context of the general Imitation tradition.

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer - an Imitator of Christ?

This may seem an unusual question to ask in a theological work, but in answering it we will both come to a better understanding of what Bonhoeffer meant by the Imitation of Christ, and also be better able to understand his contribution to the Imitation tradition.

In asking the question we have in mind a particular issue, a particular action in Bonhoeffer's life, that of his political involvement and the events that resulted from that involvement. Was Bonhoeffer

imitating Christ when he returned to Germany and confrontation with the established political power in 1940? Can Bonhoeffer's death be described as a martyrdom after the example of Christ? Bonhoeffer's political involvement and death is a controversial issue (1), and study of it in terms of the Imitation of Christ will shed light both on the significance of Bonhoeffer's action, and on what he understood by the Imitation of Christ.

It is my opinion that, according to his own theology, Bonhoeffer was an Imitator of Christ, and that understanding his political involvement as an act of Imitation sheds light on what he meant by Imitation. To suggest that according to his own theology he was engaged in the Imitation of Christ is not to accuse Bonhoeffer of pride, but to say that his actions reflect what he regarded Imitation to be. For he was aware of the danger of the pride that seeks a martyr's crown (2). But did the notion of the Imitation of Christ function in this particular decision?

We have already seen that at the time of his decision to return to Germany from America in 1940 he was aware of "the Christlike life" as a topic for contemporary theological discussion (3), and in his diary for that period there is also an account of a sermon which impressed him on the subject of "our likeness with Christ". Bonhoeffer comments: "A completely biblical sermon - the sections on 'we are *blameless* like Christ', 'we are *tempted* like Christ' were particularly good" (4).

Perhaps more significant is the way in which the writings of the Third Period can be regarded as autobiographical, in the sense that in them we see a discussion which is in part informed by Bonhoeffer's own life of political involvement. So in Ethics he writes of "responsibility", as we have seen, in terms of the Imitation of Christ,

and there he discusses the political dimensions of "responsibility", including the idea that in the case of "extraordinary necessity" lies both the test and the freedom of "responsibility". "Responsibility" for the neighbour here clearly includes political responsibility (5). Bonhoeffer also writes of the Church's guilt in not hindering "the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people...", and adds that "the confession of guilt is the re-attainment of the form of Jesus Christ who bore the sin of the world" (6). Bonhoeffer here implies that the exercise of individual and corporate political "responsibility" is a form of the Imitation of Christ. He appears to have abandoned his earlier belief in non-violence (7).

From Letters and Papers, hints of the dilemma of Bonhoeffer's situation and of the meaning of his action may be found in the ideas of participation in the suffering of God in this world, following in the way of the messianic sufferings of Christ, and in the idea of Jesus' "being there for others" maintained till death (8).

But perhaps most significant is that cluster of ideas which we have noted a number of times in Chapter Six which associates the ideas of guilt-bearing, martyrdom, and Imitation of Christ. In a brief re-statement of some of these references, we can see the development of this cluster of ideas from what might be called the religious sphere to the secular, from the overtly "Christian" to the more ambiguous expression in terms of worldly activity. In each reference, the general context of thought is of the Imitation of Christ. So from Sanctorum Communio: "We are required to intercede vicariously for the other man in everyday matters, required to give up any claim to goods or honour, even to the whole of life itself" (9), and: "He relieves the other's conscience of its guilt and lays it upon himself" (10). Bethge quotes

from a sermon of 1932, in which Bonhoeffer is speaking of possible martyrdom; "but this blood ... will not be so innocent and clear as that of the first who testified. On our blood a great guilt would lie: that of the useless servant who is cast into the outer darkness" (11). From The Essence of the Church; "Because Paul wished to be abandoned for the sake of his brethren, he stayed in the deepest fellowship with the will of God. That is the imitatio Christi" (12). In The Cost of Discipleship, the call to Discipleship is a call to "the utterly impossible and ethically irresponsible situation" (13); for "the Christian also has to undergo temptation, he too has to bear the sins of others; he too must bear their shame and be driven like a scapegoat from the gate of the city" (14). And "He whom they follow must die accursed on the cross, ... But the disciple is not above his master, he follows in his steps" (15). And to suffer for righteousness sake is to suffer "in a just cause" (16).

In Ethics, as we have seen, "responsibility", (Vervantwortlichkeit) includes political action, and also involves the taking of guilt:

Jesus took upon Himself the guilt of all men, and for that reason every man who acts responsibly becomes guilty. If only man tries to escape guilt in responsibility he detaches himself from the ultimate reality of human existence, and what is more he cuts himself off from the redeeming mystery of Christ's bearing guilt without sin ... He sets his own personal innocence above his responsibility for men, and he is blind to the more irredeemable guilt which he incurs precisely in this: he is blind also to the fact that real innocence shows itself precisely in a man's entering into the fellowship of guilt for the sake of other men (17).

Guilt-bearing here certainly involves political activity, and, as we have seen above, Bonhoeffer thinks that extraordinary political action is defensible in an extraordinary political situation.

From Letters and Papers, the ideas we have already cited are relevant: man's sharing in God's suffering in a godless world, and being caught up in the messianic suffering of Jesus, being "a man" like Christ, a man for others. Bonhoeffer regarded his imprisonment as for the cause of Christ: "... I became certain that the duty had been laid on me to hold out in this boundary situation", after which he quotes 1 Peter 2:20 (19). Bethge regards the following verses as also relevant to the topic of Bonhoeffer's own suffering, and they both relate to our topic of Imitation. From "Jonah":

'Cast me away! My guilt must bear the wrath of God;  
the righteous will not perish with the sinner!'  
They trembled. But with hands that knew no weakness  
they cast the offender from their midst. The sea  
was there (20).

And from "The Death of Moses":

To punish sin and to forgiveness you are moved,  
God, this people I have loved.  
That I bore its shame and sacrifices  
And saw its salvation - that suffices.

Bethge comments: "By 'its shame' he did not mean Christ and by 'his people' he did not mean the Church, but Germany" (21). Bethge also quotes from Bonhoeffer's play lines which associate our subject with the idea of silence:

Let us learn for a time to do the right thing without  
words ... Anyone who knows that his death is near is  
determined, but he is also silent. Without words,  
misunderstood and alone if need be, he does what  
is necessary and right, he makes his sacrifice (22).

These words may indicate that the idea of Imitation towards which Bonhoeffer was moving reflected his idea of "arcane discipline". It was to be an Imitation in deed, not describable or defensible in words, a deed in questionable circumstances, a solitary and silent action.

The point of this collation of material is to demonstrate the existence of this set of ideas in Bonhoeffer's thought, an

association of guilt-bearing, Imitation and martyrdom. Such an association is not new in Christian thought, but what is important is what Bonhoeffer meant by these ideas. In my opinion, the meaning of these ideas is illuminated by Bonhoeffer's political action and involvement in Germany in plotting the overthrow of Hitler's government: and conversely, Bonhoeffer's actions can thus be better understood by studying them against this background of his understanding of the meaning of the Imitation of Christ. The assumption of the guilt of his people was for Bonhoeffer an action after the example of Christ.

Thus the meaning of the Imitation of Christ in Bonhoeffer's theology is illuminated by asking the question of the connection between his own activities and his writing on Imitation. This is because the Imitation of Christ is in essence an action, and only secondarily a subject of theology. And even if Bonhoeffer was not consciously engaged in the Imitation of Christ, we have shown that in the light of his theology his actions can be so described. For we argued in Chapter One of this thesis that "Imitation of Christ" may be legitimately used to describe a situation, even if that motive is not in the consciousness of the subject of the actions (p. 14).

The purpose of asking the question about Bonhoeffer as an Imitator of Christ was not to evaluate him or to come to a conclusion about his self-image, but to further our understanding of his Imitation theology. This we have now done, in that we have shown the significance of that cluster of ideas which we have often observed in Chapter Six, of guilt-bearing, martyrdom, and Imitation.

## 2. Bonhoeffer and the Imitation of Christ Tradition.

Now that we have concluded our detailed study of Bonhoeffer's

theology of the Imitation of Christ by the exegesis of his Imitation material in Chapter Six, and by our inquiry into the connection between his life and his theology in the first part of this chapter, we are in a position to shed more light on the significance of his theology of Imitation in the context of our description of the general tradition of Imitation of Christ in the first section of this thesis.

The purpose of providing that theological investigation was not to establish a precise formulation of the Imitation of Christ against which to evaluate Bonhoeffer's notion of Imitation, but rather to create an awareness of the scope of the Imitation tradition, its variety of expression, its theological shape, the kind of issues that it raises for other theological doctrines, and its place within Christianity. That awareness of the general tradition of the Imitation of Christ has informed our discovery of Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, and enabled us both to discern what material is relevant to a study of Imitation and to discuss that material in a theological framework. We have not attempted a comprehensive survey of Bonhoeffer's theology, only a study of this one theme, though the nature of Bonhoeffer's theology, especially its continuity, has been illuminated by a study of this one element of it. And while we have not intended to produce a new way of understanding Bonhoeffer, we have established the importance of Imitation in his theology.

What then are the characteristic features of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ? To answer this we will highlight certain important discoveries of Chapter Six.

Firstly, Bonhoeffer has precise ideas of the nature of Imitation in that he consciously rejects notions of Imitation that he regards as wrong or dangerous, and forges new vocabulary both to avoid the unacceptable connotations of the traditional language, and to

express what Imitation means in a new historical situation. So the notion that Christ is only an example is dangerous and leads to despair (23), and Imitation cannot be practised by following Jesus' actions without further reflection (24). For instances of his forging of new vocabulary, see Füreinander in Sanctorum Communio, "Conformation" in Ethics, and "The man for others" in Letters and Papers (25). Though he uses new vocabulary, he is also able to develop more traditional language, most notably in his study of "Image" in Cost of Discipleship (26). Though he is creative with the traditional ideas, especially in his contrast of imago dei and sicut deus, in which he indicates both the creation basis of Imitation, and the dangers of its practice (27). Bonhoeffer is aware of the Imitation tradition, aware of its dangers, creative in its use.

Secondly, the exemplar for Bonhoeffer is the present, suffering Lord.

Christ is present, so Bonhoeffer is not concerned about historical study of the New Testament (28), because the Exemplar is present. He exists as the Church (29), he is the Centre, the Centre of the church and the world (30).

Christ is the suffering Lord. The Lordship of Christ means suffering service, as the rule of God means limitless serving (31). Christ's presence is a serving and saving presence, it is presence pro me, in vicarious acts on behalf of humanity; it is "for others" (32). His "responsibility" involves the acceptance of guilt on behalf of men (33). He is the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen Lord, and men must suffer after his example, watch with him at Gethsemane, and share in his suffering in the world (34).

Christ is the Lord because he is the centre of all things, and because all things, and especially all mankind, are "recapitulated"

in him (35). This constant doctrine of Bonhoeffer's is part of the basis of his idea of Christ as a model for all men. The Lordship of Christ is a suffering Lordship. This derives from his Christology of condescension (36), and results in the theology of the suffering God in Letters and Papers (37). This Kenotic Christology (38) is influential in Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology, as we have seen. In Christology, Bonhoeffer frequently quotes Luther's saying: "You should point to the man and say, this is God" (39). The association of a Kenotic or condescension Christology with the notion of the Imitation of Christ results in an Imitation theology which concentrates on weakness and powerlessness, in obscure suffering.

Christ the Lord is also the man: "The name Jesus contains within itself the whole of humanity and the whole of God" (40). So conformity to Christ is to the Incarnate, the real man (41); "Man becomes man because God became man" (42). This emphasis on the importance of humanity is found throughout Bonhoeffer's theology, from the Adam-Christ sections of the early documents, through the "Image" language of Creation and Fall and The Cost of Discipleship to the "Jesus the man" of the Letters and Papers (43). The significance of this for Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation cannot be underestimated, for as we saw in Chapter Five (pp.177 ff.), Imitation and the Humanity of Christ are closely related. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's strong and creative notion of the Imitation of Christ is a product of his emphasis on the Humanity of Christ.

Thirdly, Bonhoeffer writes of Imitation in terms of activity within the Church community, of individuals, and of the church as a whole. Imitation of Christ occurs within the community in terms of vicarious acts of forgiveness, love, intercession, and welcome (44). Imitation of Christ by the individual is a form of Discipleship, and

finds expression in solitary sin-bearing for others (45). The Church as a whole should also act as an Imitator of Christ in the community: it should be the Church "for others" (46). Bonhoeffer speaks of man in the image of God both in terms of the community and of the individual (47). So Bonhoeffer's notion of Imitation is both ecclesial and individual, and he also looks for the formation of the world in Christ (48).

Fourthly, Bonhoeffer has a strong emphasis of what in the first section of this thesis we have called the Grace of Imitation, and the Means of Grace. The Grace of Imitation is reflected for example in his notion that the vicarious acts and ministry of the Church are based on the action of Christ, in the ideas of "Image" and "Conformation," and in the idea of suffering with, (rather than for), God in the world (49). The Means of Grace of Imitation are the Word and the Spirit, Baptism, and the Eucharist (50). Men can be "for others", because Christ has been and is "for others" (51).

Fifthly, the place of Imitation is the world, according to Bonhoeffer. As he is opposed to a Docetic Christology, so he is emphatic that the bodiliness of humans points to their worldly responsibility (52). "Responsibility" is exercised in the real world, and it is in this world that Christians participate in the sufferings of God (53). This idea is linked with Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the manhood of Christ, and the significance of human society, and finds its most notable expression in the idea of the Imitation of Christ in terms of suffering political guilt for the sake of others.

These then are the characteristic features of Bonhoeffer's Imitation of Christ theology. How does this theology relate to the general Imitation of Christ tradition? This question has been answered in part in Chapter Six, but we now answer it in another way by

indicating in general terms how Bonhoeffer's theology relates to the description of the Imitation of Christ tradition given in the first section of this thesis.

In terms of the issues raised in Chapter One, the study of Bonhoeffer, as one would expect, indicates the value of the two points of methodology made in that chapter. The Bonhoeffer material supports the view that the study of Imitation must extend beyond the study of "imitate" and its cognates (cf. pp.13ff.). Bonhoeffer's vocabulary of Imitation includes traditional terms (e.g. Image) and he also establishes a new vocabulary for Imitation, as we have seen. Then too, Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology supports the view the Imitation of Christ extends beyond the boundaries of A'Kempis' De Imitatione Christi (cf. pp.16ff.). Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology indicates the value of these two methodological points of Chapter One.

With regard to the various issues raised in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer represents the Ethical and Religious Imitation tradition, rather than the Mystical, though it might be considered that his idea of "participating in the suffering of God" has a mystical dimension (cf. pp. 73ff.). In terms of Ethical Imitation, Bonhoeffer attempts to produce an Imitation - Ethic. in Ethics, as we have seen. He appeals to the theology of Christ rather than to specific actions of the historical Jesus (cf. pp. 26ff.). He uses Imitation as a test of the presence of Christianity (cf. pp.30 ff.), particularly in The Cost of Discipleship and in Letters and Papers, in which two documents he also develops the theme of Suffering and Imitation (cf. pp. 33ff.). Imitation also involves Service, both within the Church and outside it, and in "the man for others", Bonhoeffer portrays Christ as the Ideal of Humanity (cf. pp. 42ff., and pp. 45ff.). In terms of Religious Imitation, Bonhoeffer uses the ideas of following the "movement" of Christ,

e.g. Conformation to the Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen, the Gethsemane experience, and being caught up in the way of Christ (cf. pp. 56ff.); the idea of "Image," Imago dei - sicut deus, "Image," and "Conformation"; the idea of the Model Son, Man come of age. (cf. pp.63 ff.), also the idea of Imitation in religious actions in the reading of the Psalms (cf. pp. 71ff.). As we have suggested, participation in the suffering of God may have a mystical dimension, though this is doubtful. If it does not, Bonhoeffer has no notion of Mystical Imitation. Neither does he appear to have an idea of Christ as model receiver of the Spirit (cf. pp. 68ff.).

In terms of the issues raised in Chapter Three, we have seen that Bonhoeffer does not regard Imitation as inimical to creativity, self-expression, personal integrity, or moral responsibility, (cf. pp.86 ff.), though it must be admitted that he meets the problem by theological assertion rather than argument. He has a theology of the Imitation of God (cf. pp. 98ff.), but his concentration is of course on God in Christ. At the end of his writings he is moving towards an understanding of the value of human example (cf. pp. 101ff.) (54).

As far as Chapter Four is concerned, Bonhoeffer's views are as follows: The Divine nature of the Exemplar is not a problem for Bonhoeffer because of his Christology of condescension, and because the assumption of humanity means that Christ is example to all men. The Incarnation solved the problem of man's need to live as the Image of God (cf. pp. 111ff.). The Saving purpose of the Exemplar is an issue to which Bonhoeffer is sensitive, and he attempts to assert both the vicarious significance of Christ's actions and the reality of vicarious actions done by men in imitation of Christ and based upon his work. His notion of participation in the messianic suffering of Christ is a development of this theme (cf. pp. 123ff.). Bonhoeffer

asserts the Perfection of Christ, but does not appear to think that this diminishes his usefulness as Example. Indeed his Perfection heightens the significance of his assumption of human guilt (cf. pp. 126ff). Bonhoeffer resolves the problem of the Ambiguity of Christ's witness by writing in terms of love, or pro me, i.e., concentrating on one aspect of Christ's character (cf. pp. 130ff.). He asserts the Universal value of the Christian exemplar in terms of Christ's cosmic significance, the doctrine of "recapitulation", and the assertion of the Humanity of Christ (cf. pp. 135ff.). Bonhoeffer does not meet the problem of the distance of Christ from his present-day imitators because his concentration is on the present Lord, rather than the Jesus of history (cf. pp. 142ff.).

In terms of the other doctrines studied in Chapter Five, Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation derives from his theology, so corresponds to its general shape. He has a strong emphasis on the Grace of Imitation and the Means of Grace (cf. pp. 166ff.). The only time at which he approaches perfectibility is in his discussion of περιεσσο in The Cost of Discipleship (cf. pp. 169ff.). There is no great development of Imitation and future Eschatology, though <sup>there is</sup> a strong emphasis on present Eschatology (cf. pp. 171ff.). Bonhoeffer has a strong notion of Imitation and the Church (cf. pp. 174ff.). He does not develop Imitation and the Trinity, because of his emphasis on Christology (cf. pp. 176ff.). The connection between Imitation and the Humanity of Christ is as we have seen, of fundamental importance to his Imitation theology (cf. pp. 177ff.).

These are some of the ways in which Bonhoeffer develops the theme of the Imitation of Christ as they were described in the first section of this thesis. Our study of the general Imitation tradition

aided our awareness of the relevance of these themes in Bonhoeffer's theology, and our study of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation has demonstrated the usefulness of that analysis. Although there is not an exact correlation between the Imitation tradition as we described it in the first section of this thesis and Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation, they are close enough to indicate that the tradition as outlined was not an artificial production, as its general shape is evidently so clearly expressed in the theology of this notable exponent of the notion of Imitation.

What then can we say about the contribution of Bonhoeffer to the Imitation of Christ tradition? His contribution lies not so much in the discovery of a new kind of Imitation as in the new development of already existing traditions. His forging of new vocabulary is a good example of this, and this vocabulary of Imitation (especially "the Man for others") is symptomatic of his desire to express Imitation in contemporary terms. This vocabulary also uses this-worldly terms ("Conformation", "Responsibility", "for others"), and this reflects Bonhoeffer's desire to see Imitation of Christ in "worldly", rather than 'religious' terms.

In terms of Bonhoeffer's influence on popular thinking about Imitation, the focus of attention is in the writings of the Third Period, particularly Letters and Papers. There are four elements in his popular appeal.

The first is Bonhoeffer's emphasis on Jesus the man, and the consequent call to humanity, after the example of Christ, to live "for others". This interconnection between Humanity and Imitation has been seen as a universally appealing and accessible form of Christology, and to make a practical and relevant appeal to action.

The second is the language that Bonhoeffer uses in describing the nature of Imitation and its demands. Expressions like "the Man for others" have simplicity and directness, and avoid the unfortunate overtones of more conventional Imitation vocabulary.

The third is Bonhoeffer's association of Christian responsibility with active political involvement in an Imitation of Christ which relates to the reality of the modern world in terms of morally ambiguous action.

The fourth is that Bonhoeffer not only wrote convincingly of the Imitation of Christ, but can be seen to have practised it, both in his life and in his death. In the words of Barth: "[Bonhoeffer] 'having written on discipleship, was ready to achieve it in his own life, and did in his own way achieve it even to the point of death' (55).

Bonhoeffer then can be viewed as a major exponent of the Imitation of Christ tradition in the Twentieth Century, and as one who has made an important contribution to it, in re-expressing it in contemporary terms, and in his discovery of its implications.

Through this study of Bonhoeffer's theology of the Imitation of Christ we have demonstrated the value of the analysis of Imitation set out in the first section of this thesis, and discovered the place of Bonhoeffer in terms of the context of that general tradition. By this study of the Imitation of Christ tradition, and of Bonhoeffer's theology of Imitation as a particular instance of Imitation Theology, we have illuminated both the Imitation tradition and Bonhoeffer's Imitation theology.

Having begun with the question of the nature of the Imitation of Christ, we have now answered it in terms of Christian theology in general, and Bonhoeffer's theology in particular. Thus we end our

study of the Practice of the Imitation of Christ with special reference  
to the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

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Endnotes to Chapter One.

In all quotations, italics and emphases are those of the original authors.

1. Full bibliographical details for this and for subsequent documents is given in the Bibliographies at the end of this thesis.
2. E. J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, pp. 31 ff., pp. 67 ff.
3. E. F. Jacob, Gerard Groote and the beginnings of the New Devotion in the Low Countries, and Bernard Spaapen, "A new look at an old Classic", in Edward Malatesta, editor, Imitating Christ, pp. 87-106.
4. Bernard Spappen, p. 87, claims that the incipit De Imitatione Christi indicates the theme of the four books that make up the document. This is a common view.
5. The edition and translation used in this thesis is Of the Imitation of Christ by Thomas A' Kempis, London, Nelson. The name of the translator is not given. The document will however be referred to by its Latin title, to avoid confusing the title and the doctrine. Editions vary in their arrangement of the four books. In this edition the book on the Eucharist is book four.
6. The six chapters in which the Imitation of Christ is the main theme are 1:1, 2:12, 3:13, 18, 56, 4:8. Other references are found in 1:20, 2:11, 3:17, 37, 54, 4:5.
7. Sidney Lee in his introduction to C. Bigg's translation of De Imitatione Christi, p. vi.
8. A' Kempis, pp. 11 (1:2), pp. 172, 3 (3:32), p. 18 (1:6), p. 20 (1:8), p. 192 (3:44), pp. 22, 3 (1:10).
9. A' Kempis, pp. 42-5 (1:20), pp. 21, 2 (1:9), pp. 93-5 (2:11), pp. 48-52 (1:22).
10. A' Kempis, pp. 69-73 (2:1), pp. 239-86 (Book 4).
11. A' Kempis, pp. 177-9 (3:35), pp. 143-5 (3:19).
12. A' Kempis, pp. 9-11 (1:1).
13. A' Kempis, pp. 114-7 (3:5).
14. A' Kempis, pp. 217-24 (3:54, 5).
15. A' Kempis, p. 96 (2:12).
16. A' Kempis, pp. 95, 93 (2:12, 11).
17. A' Kempis, pp. 260, 1 (4:8).

18. A'Kempis, pp. 181, 2 (3:37).
19. A'Kempis, p. 182 (3:37).
20. A'Kempis, p. 42 (1:20).
21. A'Kempis, pp. 141-3 (3:18), pp. 133-4 (3:13).
22. A'Kempis, p. 143 (3:18).

Endnotes to Chapter Two.

1. Mark 10:43-5.
2. E. J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, Chapter 7 and Eduard Cothenet, Sacred Scripture, in Imitating Christ, edited by Edward Malatesta, pp. 1-36.
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56. Passmore, op. cit., p. 29.
57. Contra Barnabas Lindars, "The Imitation of God and Imitation of Christ", in Duty and Discernment, edited by G. R. Dunstan, p. 100.
58. W. P. De Boer, The Imitation of Paul, and David Stanley "Become Imitators of Me", Biblica 40, pp. 849-77.
59. This language is again taken from Passmore, op. cit., p.29.
60. Van der Leeuw, op. cit., pp. 483-5, and E. J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, pp. 27, 8.
61. Hans D. Betz, Nachfolge und Nachahmung, pp. 5-189, distinguishes between Nachfolge a Palestinian concept, and the mystery cults' "Mimesis", introduced by Paul into Christianity. Whether this is correct or not, mystical following of Christ is part of the Imitation tradition.
62. Romans 6:3-12, Colossians 3:1-17, Luke 9:23-7.

Endnotes to Chapter Four.

1. Matthew Arnold, Literature and Dogma, Preface to the Popular Edition, pp. x, xi.
2. Arnold, pp. 138, 9.
3. Arnold, p. 143.
4. Matthew Arnold, Literature and Dogma, First Edition 7:89, quoted in W. Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, p. 127.
5. Arnold, chapters 2, 9.
6. Arnold, Literature and Dogma First Edition 7:20, quoted in Robbins, op. cit., p. 134.
7. Robbins, p. 135, and Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p. 340.
8. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 160, 1.
9. Robbins, op. cit., p. 118.
10. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 160, 1.
11. Mrs Humphrey Ward, Robert Elsmere, p. 332.
12. Ward, pp. 478-80.
13. George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, pp. 312-7. See Basil Willey, Nineteenth-Century Studies, pp. 258-60. In fact the quotations from A' Kempis in The Mill on the Floss do not make specific reference to the Imitation of Christ.
14. H. P. Liddon, The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, pp. 494ff.
15. Liddon, p. 494.
16. Liddon, p. 494.
17. Liddon, p. 495.
18. John A. T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, pp. 110-2.
19. Liddon, op. cit., p. 501.
20. Philippians 2:5-11, 2 Corinthians 8:9.
21. Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, pp. 42, 3, quoting from Commentary on 1 Peter 2:21 and Sermon on Matthew 4:2-4.
22. Mark 10:42-4, Philippians 2:5-11, 2 Corinthians 8:9.

23. Paul Sponheim, Kierkegaard on Christ and Christian Coherence.
24. Sponheim, pp. 173-5. The quotation from Kierkegaard is on p. 173, and is from Samlede Vaerker XI, p. 69.
25. Sponheim, p. 177.
26. Sponheim, pp. 197, 8 and p. 296. The quotation from Kierkegaard is on p. 198, and is from Samlede Vaerker X, p.48.
27. Sponheim, p. 184. The quotation from Kierkegaard is from Papirer IX A 101.
28. Sponheim, p. 254.
29. Sponheim, p. 185, a quotation from Kierkegaard Samlede Vaerker X, p. 46.
30. Sponheim, p. 189, quoting Samlede Vaerker XII, p. 60.
31. "It is true for the first time in Christ that God is man's goal and measure", Samlede Vaerker XI, p. 224, quoted in Sponheim, p. 13.
32. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics II 2, pp. 413, 4.
33. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, p. 166.
34. Robert E. Willis, The Ethics of Karl Barth, pp. 72, 3.
35. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, p. 84.
36. Barth, Church Dogmatics II 1, p. 665, and III 1, pp. 201, 2.
37. Barth, Church Dogmatics II 2, p. 517.
38. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 452, 620.
39. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 3 2nd half, pp. 792, 3.
40. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 752, 3.
41. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 12, 3.
42. Barth, Church Dogmatics III 1, pp. 184, 5.
43. Vladimir Lossky, In the Image and Likeness of God, p. 139.
44. It is probably helpful to think of the imitation of God in terms of the communicable attributes.
45. Barnabas Lindars, in "Imitation of God and Imitation of Christ" in Duty and Discernment, edited by G. R. Dunstan, pp. 100-10, raises the question of the value of the imitation of Christ in the context of the imitation of God. He suggests (p. 100) that if the basis of Christian ethics is the imitation of God, then the Incarnation must imply the revelation of new, previously

45. (Contd.) unrecognised qualities. He objects to this view because it reduces the Incarnation to quality in God for men to copy. But even if the imitation of God is basic to Christian ethics, the Incarnation need not reveal new qualities; it may as well reveal old qualities in a new and more comprehensible way. And the idea that the Incarnation reveals qualities of God does not necessarily reduce it to a mere example.
46. The argument made in the text for the imitability of God will be complemented below by some observations on the inimitability of the transcendent Christ.
47. Kierkegaard, Papirer X 1 A 132, quoted in Sponheim op. cit., p. 190.
48. E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter, p. 180.
49. For example Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics II 2, pp. 94ff. includes ideas of substitution and example.
50. William Law, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, p. 217 (Chapter 12).
51. Richard E. Weingart, The Logic of Divine Love, pp. 120-46.
52. John Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and The First and Second Epistles of St. Peter, in Loc. p. 278.
53. Selwyn, op. cit., pp. 90-101.
54. Sponheim, op. cit., p. 197, note 98, and Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers, edited by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, p. 337 (Papirer X 3 A 552).
55. Hong and Hong, pp. 353, 4 (Papirer X 4 A 491).
56. Hong and Hong, pp. 327, 8 (Papirer X 3 A 276).
57. This description is rejected by John A. T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, p. 71.
58. Robinson, p. 68, quotes Grillmeier in evidence of this.
59. Robinson, pp. 86, 7.
60. G. C. Berkouwer, The Person of Christ, pp. 246ff.
61. Robinson, op. cit., p. 94.
62. This is not the same as vicarious penitence, for it assumes that Christ himself has sinned.
63. R. L. Ottley, "Christian Ethics" in Lux Mundi, edited by Charles Gore, p. 358.
64. Stephen W. Sykes "The Theology of the humanity of Christ", in Christ Faith and History, edited by S. W. Sykes and J. P.

64. (Contd.) Clayton, especially p. 71, and John Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ, p. 113.
65. Stephen W. Sykes "Transcendence and Christology", The Modern Churchman, XVI, pp. 55-69, and John Knox, op. cit, pp. 113, 4.
66. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 173-9.
67. Bushnell, quoted in Harry E. Fosdick, The Manhood of the Master, p. 152.
68. Fosdick, p. 151.
69. Malachi Martin, Jesus Now.
70. Stephen W. Sykes, "Christ and the Diversity of Humanity", in The Modern Churchman, XIV, pp. 182-91, especially pp. 185, 6.
71. Aimée Solignic, "The Imitation of Christ in Daily Life", edited by Edward Malatesta, p. 85.
72. Don Cupitt, "One Jesus, many Christs?" in Christ, Faith and History, edited by S. W. Sykes and J. P. Clayton, p. 137.
73. Cupitt, pp. 135, 6.
74. Cupitt, pp. 143, 137.
75. Cupitt, p. 143.
76. Stephen W. Sykes, "Transcendence and Christology".
77. A. Schweitzer, quoted in Robinson, op. cit., p. 13.
78. Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, pp. 47-71, especially p. 67, "The ethical demands made by Jesus are incapable of fulfillment in the present existence of man. They proceed from a transcendent and divine unity of essential reality, and their final fulfillment is possible only when God transmutes the present chaos of this world into its final unity."
79. Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers: Foundations, pp. 1-106.
80. Carl G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 310
81. E. J. Tinsley, "Some principles for reconstructing a doctrine of the Imitation of Christ", S.J.T. 25, p. 52.
82. J. D. Salinger, Franny and Zooey, p. 134.
83. J. A. T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, p. 73.
84. Robinson, p. 72.
85. Sykes, "Christ and the Diversity of Humanity", p. 186.

86. Sykes, p. 187.
87. See also Sykes, p. 190.
88. Sykes, pp. 188, 9.
89. Jaroslav Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, p. 144.
90. Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, III 22 3, III 21 10, III 18 1, III 16 6, as quoted in The Early Christian Fathers, edited by H. Bettenson, pp. 81-3.
91. Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses II 22 4, as quoted in Bettenson, p. 80.
92. Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 52.
93. Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, pp. 212, 3.
94. Niebuhr, pp. 224, 6-7.
95. Niebuhr, p. 218.
96. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, p. 452; III 2, pp. 55-71; IV 2, pp. 20ff.; III 2, pp. 132ff; IV 2, pp. 89ff.; III 2, pp. 55ff., pp. 203ff. The idea of "for others" will recur in the second section of this thesis.
97. See, for example, Dennis E. Nineham, "New Testament Interpretation in an Historical Age", chapter 10 of Explorations in Theology.
98. Philippians 2:3-11, 2 Corinthians 8:9, Ephesians 4:32- 5:2.
99. 1 Timothy 6:13.
100. 2 Corinthians 10:1.
101. Edward Cothenet, "Sacred Scriptures" in Imitating Christ, edited by Edward Malatesta, p. 22.
102. E. J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, p. 141.
103. G. N. Stanton, Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching, Chapter 4.
104. C. H. Dodd, The Founder of Christianity, Chapter 3.
105. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, pp. 67-171.
106. A. Michael Ramsey, Jesus and the Living Past, pp. 17-9.
107. See The Characters of Theophrastus, edited by R. C. Jebb. I am indebted to Professor S. W. Sykes for this reference.

108. Article "Etheria" in The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, H. V. Morton, In the Steps of the Master, Philip. N. Hillyer, op. cit.,
109. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 112, 3.
110. C. M. Sheldon, In His Steps: What would Jesus do?
111. Sheldon, p. 25.
112. William Law, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, p. 216 (Chapter 13).
113. Note also the problem of "idolization", mentioned earlier in this Chapter.
114. Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, edited by W. H. Longridge, p. 85.
115. Joseph Sittler, The Structure of Christian Ethics, p. 36.
116. Romans 6:3ff., Colossians 3:5-11.
117. 2 Corinthians 3:18.
118. 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:9.
119. J. R. Seeley, Ecce Homo, p. 263.

Endnotes to Chapter Five.

1. James Gustafson, Christ and the Moral Life, p. 183.
2. Hans Küng, On Being a Christian, p. 551.
3. 1 John 2:6. See Trevor Rowe, St Augustine: Pastoral Theologian, p. 14.
4. J. N. D. Kelly, Jerome, p. 210.
5. Walther von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross, p. 222.
6. Ian D. K. Siggins, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ, p. 159.
7. Gustav Wingren, Was bedeutet die Forderung der Nachfolge Christi in evangelische Ethik? , p. 385.
8. Siggins, op. cit., pp. 156ff.
9. Louis Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines, p. 222.
10. Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics, I, pp. 96, 185-6.
11. William Law, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, pp. 78-98 (Chapter 6) and pp. 215-32 (Chapter 13).
12. It is expressed in slightly different terms in Jeremy Moiser "Dogmatic Thoughts on Imitation of Christ", in S.J.T. volume 30.
13. Thielicke, op. cit., pp. 186-94.
14. Thielicke, pp. 186-92.
15. Thielicke, p. 192.
16. Quoted in Thielicke, p. 194, from Martin Luther's 1519 Commentary on Galatians.
17. Quoted in Bernhard Lohse, A Short History of Christian Doctrine, pp. 165-6, from Luther's Preface to the New Testament.
18. Siggins, op. cit., pp. 186-9.
19. Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians (3:27), pp. 339-41. The quotation is on p. 341.
20. Siggins, op. cit., p. 159.
21. Siggins, p. 162.
22. Soren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves, pp. 201-5.
23. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 86ff.

24. Robert E. Willis, The Ethics of Karl Barth, pp. 152, 162.
25. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 3 2nd half, p. 757.
26. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 4, pp. 18-22.
27. Quoted in Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, 2, p. 247, from P.T. Forsyth, God the Holy Father.
28. Romans 8:29.
29. Thomas A. Smail, Refelected Glory: The Spirit in Christ and Christians, pp. 24-9.
30. Matthew 28:19-20.
31. Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit, p. 257.
32. Pace Reginald E. O. White, Into the Same Image, pp. 46-9.
33. Thomas A' Kempis, De Imitatione Christi, p. 260 (4:8).
34. Augustine, City of God, p. 380, (Book 10, Chapter 6).
35. E. L. Mascall, Corpus Christi, p. 195.
36. Thomas F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction, pp. 250, 249.
37. See for example, Philippians 2:3-11, John 13:1-15, 34.
38. John Passmore, The Perfectibility of Man, pp. 137-9, Harald Lindström, Wesley and Sanctification, pp. 126-54.
39. John Passmore, p. 139, from John Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.
40. Lindström, op. cit., pp. 131, from A Plain Account and a sermon On Perfection.
41. Lindström, p. 147, from a letter of 15 September, 1762.
42. Lindström, p. 159.
43. Trevor Rowe, op. cit., p. 14.
44. Rowe, p. 14, from Augustine's Enchiridion, ch. 14.
45. E. J. Tinsley, "Some principles of reconstructing a doctrine of the Imitation of Christ", p. 55.
46. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion I, p. 702 (3.8.1).
47. See also Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics I, for the eschatological dimension of imitation in terms of a teleological view of the imago, pp. 152ff.

48. Ephesians 4:12-16.
49. 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 7; 2:14.
50. Gustav Wingren, The Christian's Calling, pp. 171-84  
(though he undervalues Imitation in his concern for Vocation,  
and Aimé Solignac, "The Imitation of Christ in Daily Life",  
pp. 82-4.
51. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, pp. 12-3, III 1, pp. 184-5.
52. John E. Sullivan, The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence, pp. 140-2.
53. Matthew 5:43-8, and a possible interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3:18.
54. Augustine, City of God, pp. 431-2 (Book 11, Chapter 2).
55. C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves, p. 11.
56. See, for example, G. L. Prestige, Fathers and Heretics, pp. 280-1.
57. See, for example, John A. T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, pp. 99-125.
58. E. Leen, In the likeness of Christ, p. ix.
59. 1 Corinthians 15:20, 49, Philippians 3:21.
60. E. J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, p. 29  
notes this element in Philo. Jacques Hourlier, "The Medieval Masters", p. 40, describes it as Dionysian.
61. G. L. Prestige, op. cit., Lecture 8 Eros: Devotion to the Sacred Humanity, pp. 373-426, Jacques Hourlier, "The Medieval Masters", pp. 38-42, and Rowan Williams, The Wound of Knowledge, pp. 108-15.
62. Hourlier, "Medieval Masters", pp. 39-40.
63. Thomas de la Cruz, "The Carmelite School", pp. 92-7 and Williams, op. cit., pp. 159-76.
64. de la Cruz, pp. 87-92.
65. Revelation 14:4
66. See C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves, p. 11.
67. Hans Küng, On Being a Christian, p. 602.
68. Thomas F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction, p. 248.

Endnotes to Chapter Six.

Abbreviations of Bonhoeffer's works.

- A.B.        Act and Being, translated by E. Noble, London 1962.
- C.            Christology, translated by John Bowden, London 1971.
- C.D.        Cost of Discipleship, translated by R. H. Fuller, London 1959.
- C.T.        Creation and Temptation, translated by J. C. Fletcher and Kathleen Downham, London 1966.
- E.            Ethics, edited by Eberhard Bethge, translated by N. H. Smith, London 1971.
- G.S.        Gesammelte Schriften I-VI, edited by Eberhard Bethge, Munich 1965-74.
- N.R.S.      No Rusty Swords, edited by Edwin H. Robertson, translated by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, London 1965.
- L.P.P.      Letters and Papers from Prison, edited by Eberhard Bethge, translated by R. H. Fuller, et al., London 1971.
- L.T.        Life Together, translated by John W. Doberstein, London 1975.
- S.C.        Sanctorum Communio, translated by R. G. Smith, London 1963.
- T.P.        True Patriotism, edited by Edwin H. Robertson, translated by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, London 1973.
- W.F.        The Way to Freedom, edited by Edwin H. Robertson, translated by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, London 1966.

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1.        See for example the study of Bonhoeffer's interpretations in James W. Woelfel, Bonhoeffer's Theology: Classical and Revolutionary, pp. 279-302, and André Dumas, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality, pp. 236-80.
  2.        John A. Phillips, The Form of Christ in the World, Ernst Feil, Die Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers, especially pp. 137-220, James W. Woelfel, Bonhoeffer's Theology, p. 160ff., Walter Pabst (editor), Kirche für andere, especially pp. 7-10.
  3.        Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian, Christian, Contemporary, p. 763.
  4.        Godsey, op. cit., p. 280.

5. Ronald A. Carson, The Motifs of Kenosis and Imitatio in the Work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, With an Excursus on the Communicatio Idiomatum
6. Gustaf Aulén, Dag Hammarskjöld's White Book: An Analysis of Markings, pp. 124-38 "Some Comparisons: Luther, Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer".
7. Martin Kuske, "'Kirche für andere' in der 'mündigen Welt'" in Kirche für andere, edited by Walter Pabst, p. 89, my translation.
8. These are mainly in the form of unpublished theses. Those mentioned in the bibliography of secondary material in U.S.Q.R. XXXI no. 4, 1976, include the following: John P. Beal, Men for Others: Bonhoeffer's Reflections on the Ministry, Henry J. Ehlen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Worldly Christianity: His Proclamation of the concrete servanthood of Christ and the Church in the World, and James A. Todd, Participation: an overlooked clue; Bonhoeffer's description of the Christian life-style. Those mentioned in Manfred Kwiran, Index to literature on Barth Bonhoeffer and Bultmann, include the following: E. C. Gardner, A Critique of Christo-centric Models of Ethical Analysis, D. Hamilton, Christology and Ethics: A Discussion of the Theological Foundations of Christian Ethics with special reference to the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and W. O. Smith, Christ and Ethics in D. Bonhoeffer. I have not consulted any of these works.
9. Eberhard Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and theology", in Ronald Gregor Smith (editor), World Come of Age: A Symposium on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 22-92. Bethge's division is on p. 25
10. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian, Christian, Contemporary, pp. 29-253.
11. S.C., p. 22.
12. S.C., p. 36
13. S.C., p. 36.
14. S.C., p. 42.
15. S.C., pp. 82ff.
16. S.C., pp. 84, 5.
17. S.C., pp. 98, 9.
18. S.C., pp. 107, 8. This is similar to the idea of the recapitulation of humanity in Christ.
19. We have noted how these images have been used elsewhere in the Imitation tradition.

20. S.C., pp. 112, 3.
21. S.C., p. 114.
22. S.C., pp. 118, 9.
23. S.C., pp. 123ff.
24. S.C., pp. 126, 7.
25. S.C., p. 127.
26. S.C., p. 129.
27. N.R.S., p. 148.
28. S.C., p. 127.
29. S.C., p. 129.
30. S.C., p. 136.
31. S.C., p. 41.
32. S.C., p. 127.
33. S.C., p. 168.
34. Clifford J. Green, Bonhoeffer: The Sociality of Christ and Humanity, pp. 106-12.
35. A.B., p. 120.
36. A.B., p. 121.
37. A.B., pp. 124, 131.
38. A.B., p. 122.
39. A.B., p. 121.
40. One of the references is to Galatians 3:27. See also the reference to Baptism in A.B., p. 183.
41. For others, see Green, op. cit., pp. 130, 1.
42. A.B., p. 181.
43. Das Wesen der Kirche is recorded in G.S. V, pp. 227-75.
44. G.S. V, pp. 241-3.
45. G.S. V, pp. 243-5.
46. G.S. V, pp. 247-9.
47. G.S. V, pp. 261-70.

48. S.C., p. 131.
49. G.S. V, p. 265.
50. The expression *Imitatio Christi* is unusual in Bonhoeffer's writings.
51. G.S. V, p. 267.
52. G.S. V, pp. 269, 70.
53. C.T., p. 9. This edition includes both Creation and Fall, and Temptation. The latter will be studied as a document of the Second Period.
54. C.T., p. 10.
55. C.T., p. 18.
56. C.T., p. 34.
57. C.T., p. 35.
58. C.T., p. 36.
59. A translation from Green, op. cit., p. 240, of Bonhoeffer's comments on Genesis 1:26ff.
60. Green, p. 238.
61. The phrase analogia relationis is noted and used by Barth.
62. C.T., p. 38.
63. C.T., p. 39.
64. C.T., pp. 60-2.
65. C.T., pp. 62, 3.
66. C.T., p. 71.
67. A translation from Green, op. cit., p. 246, of Bonhoeffer's comments on Genesis 3:2ff.
68. C.T., pp. 73, 4.
69. C.T., p. 71.
70. Does Philippians 2:6 suggest that this is achieved by the rejection of the sicut deus?
71. C.T., pp. 46, 7. Bonhoeffer is commenting on "And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being".
72. C.T., pp. 46, 7.

73. C., pp. 38, 9.
74. Bonhoeffer's forging of new vocabulary to meet a new situation is a common feature of his writing.
75. C., p. 43.
76. C., pp. 117, 8.
77. C., p. 111.
78. C., p. 118.
79. C., pp. 112, 3.
80. C., p. 43.
81. G.S. III, p. 178.
82. As for example in Sanctorum Communio (German edition), p. 92.
83. C., pp. 37-40, 44ff.
84. C., pp. 71ff. The problem of access to the historical Jesus was discussed in Chapter Four.
85. C., p. 47.
86. C., pp. 48, 9.
87. C., pp. 49-61.
88. C., pp. 49-53.
89. C., pp. 53-9.
90. C., pp. 59-61.
91. C., pp. 61-7.
92. G.S. III, p. 192
93. C., p. 63.
94. C., p. 61.
95. Green, op. cit., p. 262.
96. J. A. Phillips, The Form of Christ in the World, pp. 77-9.
97. C., p. 71.
98. C., p. 75.
99. C., pp. 78-85. He later rejects Ecclesiological Docetism. T.W.F., pp. 42ff, which is similarly inimical to the Imitation of Christ.

100. C., pp. 85-8.
101. C., pp. 97-102.
102. N.R.S., pp. 190-204.
103. N.R.S., p. 196.
104. N.R.S., p. 197.
105. N.R.S., p. 199.
106. N.R.S., pp. 202-4.
107. L.P.P., p. 383.
108. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 254-582.
109. C.D., pp. 29-91.
110. C.D., p. 29.
111. C.D., p. 32.
112. C.D., p. 32.
113. C.D., p. 31, 35ff.
114. C.D., pp. 54ff.
115. C.D., p. 37.
116. C.D., p. 38.
117. C.D., p. 41.
118. C.D., pp. 39-41.
119. C.D., p. 267.
120. C.D., p. 267.
121. C.D., p. 268.
122. C.D., p. 48.
123. C.D., p. 48.
124. C.D., p. 66.
125. C.D., p. 49.
126. C.D., p. 50.
127. C.D., p. 54.
128. C.D., p. 53.

129. C.D., p. 84.
130. C.D., pp. 85-8.
131. C.D., p. 275.
132. C.D., p. 91
133. C.D., p. 201.
134. C.D., p. 164.
135. C.D., p. 77.
136. C.D., p. 79.
137. C.D., pp, 76, 8.
138. C.D., p. 79.
139. C.D., p. 79.
140. C.D., p. 80.
141. C.D., pp.81, 82, 80.
142. C.D., pp. 79, 80.
143. C.D., p. 100. See also p. 103.
144. C.D., pp. 98, 101.
145. C.D., pp. 127ff.
146. C.D., p. 153.
147. C.D., p. 79.
148. C.D., p. 102.
149. C.D., p. 34.
150. C.D., p. 106.
151. C.D., p. 107.
152. C.D., p. 118.
153. C.D., p. 132.
154. C.D., p. 134.
155. C.D., p. 135.
156. C.D., p. 137.
157. C.D., p. 138.

158. C.D., pp. 113, 4.
159. C.D., p. 201.
160. C.D., p. 241.
161. C.D., pp. 235, 8.
162. C.D., p. 244.
163. C.D., p. 214.
164. C.D., p. 214.
165. C.D., p. 206.
166. C.D., p. 207.
167. C.D., p. 209.
168. C.D., p. 210. See also p. 249.
169. C.D., pp. 185, 4.
170. C.D., p. 180.
171. C.D., p. 182.
172. C.D., p. 187.
173. C.D., p. 193.
174. C.D., p. 197.
175. C.D., pp. 269.
176. C.D., pp. 269-71.
177. C.D., pp. 271, 2.
178. C.D., pp. 273, 4.
179. C.D., pp. 274, 5.
180. Compare C.T., p. 96, and Bethge, *op. cit.*, p. 374.
181. C.T., p. 98.
182. C.T., p. 101.
183. C.T., p. 107.
184. C.T., pp. 121-3.
185. C.T., p. 122.
186. Bethge, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

187. L.T., pp. 10-3.
188. L.T., p. 74.
189. L.T., p. 78, 9.
190. L.T., p. 89.
191. L.T., pp. 57, 8.
192. L.T., p. 71.
193. L.T., pp. 31, 2.
194. L.T., pp. 33, 4.
195. L.T., p. 31.
196. L.T., p. 30.
197. Green, op. cit., p. 279.
198. Green, pp. 279, 80, quoting from G.S. IV, p. 182.
199. C.D., p. 223.
200. C., pp. 78-85.
201. T.W.F., p. 42.
202. T.W.F., p. 232.
203. Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 583-836.
204. E., pp. ix-xvi.
205. E., p. 3.
206. Andre Dumas, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Theologian of Reality, p.155.
207. E., p. 3.
208. E., p. 4. See also p. 211.
209. Dumas, op. cit., p. 154.
210. E., p. 5.
211. E., p. 22, quoting Romans 12:1.
212. E., p. 23.
213. E., p. 23.
214. E., pp. 60ff.
215. E., p. 23.

216. E., p. 24.
217. E., p. 26.
218. E., p. 34.
219. E., pp. 35, 6.
220. E., pp. 36, 7.
221. E., pp. 46-51.
222. E., p. 52.
223. E., pp. 53, 4.
224. E., p. 58.
225. E., p. 59.
226. E., p. 59.
227. E., p. 60.
228. E., p. 23.
229. E., p. 60.
230. E., p. 61.
231. E., p. 61. The underlined words are in italics in the original.
232. E., p. 61.
233. E., pp. 61, 3.
234. E., p. 61.
235. E., pp. 61, 2.
236. E., p. 62.
237. E., p. 62.
238. E., p. 62.
239. E., pp. 62, 3.
240. E., p. 108.
241. E., p. 63.
242. E., p. 63.
243. E., p. 64.
244. E., p. 64.

245. E., pp. 64-6.
246. E., pp. 66-8.
247. E., pp. 161-84.
248. There is no room here to study Bonhoeffer's long description of how the form of Christ has affected the Western World, E., pp. 69-89.
249. E., pp. 103-5.
250. E., 107, 8.
251. E., p. 108.
252. E., p. 108.
253. E., p. 108.
254. E., pp. 108, 9.
255. E., p. 109.
256. E., p. 109.
257. E., p. 109.
258. E., p. 110.
259. E., p. 111.
260. E., p. 195.
261. E., p. 196.
262. E., p. 195.
263. E., p. 199.
264. E., p. 210.
265. E., p. 211.
266. E., p. 212.
267. E., p. 216
268. E., p. 319.
269. L.P.P., p. 10.
270. L.P.P., pp. 46, 38.
271. L.P.P., p. 359.
272. T.P., p. 106.

273. L.P.P., p. <sup>3</sup>14.
274. L.P.P., p. 279.
275. L.P.P., p. 199.
276. L.P.P., p. 341.
277. Green, op. cit., pp. 313-5, and L.P.P., pp. 281, 2.
278. L.P.P., p. 279.
279. L.P.P., p. 279, 80.
280. L.P.P., p. 170.
281. L.P.P., pp. 341, 2.
282. L.P.P., p. 342.
283. L.P.P., p. 346.
284. L.P.P., p. 336.
285. L.P.P., p. 312.
286. L.P.P., p. 282.
287. L.P.P., p. 337.
288. L.P.P., p. 361.
289. Karl Barth in World Come of Age, edited by Ronald Gregor Smith, p. 91.
290. L.P.P., pp. 360, 1.
291. Cf. Philippians 2, and R. A. Carson, op. cit.
292. See L.P.P. pp. 11, 391, for a view complementary to that of the weakness of God.
293. Cf. the references to Gologotha in The Essence of the Church, and the references to conformity to the Crucified in Ethics.
294. Though the text of the letter includes references which suggest achievement through suffering, as we shall see.
295. L.P.P., pp. 361, 2.
296. L.P.P., pp. 361, 2.
297. L.P.P., pp. 369, 70.
298. L.P.P., pp. 381, 2.
299. L.P.P., pp. 382, 3.
300. L.P.P., p. 383.

Endnotes to Chapter Seven.

1. Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr, pp. 117-136, 155-166.
2. C., p. 118. Bonhoeffer's prison copy of A' Kempis De Imitatione Christi has a mark against some words from Book 3 Chapter 7 which may mean that they were significant for him. The words are "Some unadvised persons, by reason of their own earnest desire of the grace of a devoted life, have overthrown themselves: because they attempted more than they were able to perform, not weighing the measure of their own weakness, but following the desires of their heart rather than the judgement of their reason" (Translation from Nelson edition). Bonhoeffer's A' Kempis was given to Bishop Bell after the war, and is now at the Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Kirche, London.
3. T.W.F., p. 232.
4. T.W.F., p. 231.
5. E., pp. 204ff.
6. E., pp. 93, 4.
7. C.D., p. 129.
8. L.P.P., pp. 361, 2, 381.
9. S.C., p. 130.
10. S.C., p. 135.
11. Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr, p. 132.
12. G.S. V, p. 265.
13. C.D., p. 53.
14. C.D., p. 80.
15. C.D., p. 100.
16. C.D., p. 102.
17. E., p. 210.
18. L.P.P., pp. 361, 369, 382.
19. L.P.P., p. 129.
20. Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, p. 727.
21. Bethge, p. 791.
22. Bethge, Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr, p. 127.

23. C., pp. 38, 9.
24. E., pp. 61, 319.
25. E.g., S.C., pp. 127ff., E., pp. 60ff., and L.P.P., p. 382.
26. C.D., pp. 269ff.
27. E.g. C.T., pp. 69ff. and E., pp 4ff.
28. C., pp. 71ff.
29. E.g. S.C., p. 138.
30. C., pp. 61ff., E. pp. 63ff.
31. S.C., p. 41.
32. E.g. C., pp. 43ff., S.C., pp. 106ff., L.P.P., p. 382.
33. E.g. E., pp. 209, 10.
34. E., pp. 62ff., C.D., pp. 76ff., L.P.P., pp. 361ff.
35. For example the Adam-Christ discussions in the earlier writings, the idea of Conformation in Ethics, and L.P.P., p. 170.
36. C., p. 114.
37. L.P.P., pp. 360, 1.
38. Ronald A. Carson, The Motifs of Kenosis and Imitatio.
39. E.g., C., p. 81.
40. E., p. 54.
41. E., pp. 61, 2.
42. E., p. 63.
43. L.P.P., pp. 369, 382.
44. E.g. S.C., pp. 126ff., L.T., pp. 69ff.
45. E.g. C.D., pp. 76ff., G.S. V, p. 265.
46. L.P.P., pp. 382, 3.
47. E.g. C.T., pp. 34ff., C.D., p.275.
48. E.g. E., pp. 63ff.
49. E.g. S.C., pp. 106ff, C.D., pp. 269ff., E., pp. 60ff., L.P.P., pp. 361, 2.

50. E.g. S.C., pp. 178, 9 , C.D., pp. 215ff., S.C., p. 168.
51. L.P.P., p. 382.
52. C., pp. 78ff., C.T., pp. 46,7,
53. E., pp. 66ff., L.P.P., p. 361.
54. L.P.P., p. 383.
55. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, p. 534.

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