

‘God As Mask-Wearer’ – R. S. Thomas’s Annotations in Paul Tillich’s ‘Theology of Culture’

JOHN G. McELLHENNEY

The text of a book belongs to the copyright holder, the white spaces to its readers. But some readers seldom, if ever, exercise their rights. Only infrequently did the Welsh poet-priest R. S. Thomas jot something in the margins. So the annotations in his copies of Paul Tillich’s writings point to his high regard for the German-American’s theological explorations.

RS and I discussed Tillich, our chairs pulled up to an electric fire, on a damp November afternoon in 1994. I asked: When did you begin reading Tillich? RS wasn’t certain, but thought it was in the mid-1960s. Since 1963 was the year of publication for *Honest to God* by J. A. T. Robinson, which popularized Tillich’s term for God – the Ground of Being – I wondered: Did *Honest to God* prompt him to start reading Tillich’s own works.¹

RS’s response veered away from my question. He said that he read *Honest to God* because people were talking about it and because the Sunday papers were exclaiming, “Our image of God must go!” But Robinson’s book was not important to his theological development. Tillich’s own writings were, however. In a letter to his friend Raymond Garlick, RS proposes select company for Tillich: “You ask where should one go from Kierkegaard and I can only think back to Pascal, Augustine, Plato, except for Tillich, perhaps?”²

I have no reason to doubt RS’s assertion that Robinson’s book was not significant in the development of his thinking about God. But the fact is, the copies of the three Tillich books that RS owned and annotated are 1964 reprints. So the flutter in newspapers and pulpits at the time *Honest to God* appeared may have nudged RS to purchase Tillich’s own writings.

It is impossible to say whether Tillich’s theology concentrated RS’s mind on the God-question, or whether that was already the case during the 1960s. What is clear is, his first book of poems published in the 1970s, *H’m*, opens with a poem that features “God” as its first word.³ In retrospect, it can be read as a signal – a signal that for the remainder of his life, RS would be wrestling, like Jacob, with the Mysterious Stranger, who, he came to believe, wears a mask or, perhaps, many masks.

Thomas’s Annotations in Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*

RS’s annotations in volumes 1 and 2 of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* give us clues to what was going through his mind, but it would be brash to assume we can see *all* that was in his mind. What, for instance, do two lines drawn in the margin mean? That he agrees with Tillich? That he disagrees? That he wants to be certain he can find the passage again?

Here are some examples: Tillich argues for “semantic rationality” in theology, which means keeping theology uncontaminated by “words which are used in philosophical, scientific, and popular language.” RS underlines semantic rationality and writes “for poetry?” in the margin.⁴

On the next page, RS underscores “poetic” in this sentence: The theologian “must avoid conceptual ambiguity and a possible distortion of the Christian message by the intrusion of anti-Christian ideas in the cloak of a philosophical, scientific, or poetic terminology.” RS underlines poetic, and pencils a question mark in the margin.⁵

RS draws double lines beside Tillich’s definition of “paradox”: “The term ‘paradox’ should be defined carefully, and paradoxical language should be used with discrimination. Paradoxical means ‘against the opinion,’ namely, the opinion of finite reason. Paradox points to the fact that in God’s acting finite reason is superseded but not annihilated.”⁶

Those annotations indicate that RS, the poet-priest, is considering the implications for poetry of Tillich’s thoughts. My hunch is that he agrees with Tillich’s definition of paradox, while questioning, or even disagreeing with, Tillich’s point about “semantic rationality”.

A number of RS’s annotations suggest that Tillich’s theologizing puzzled him. Tillich asserts: “The self without a world is empty; the world without a self is dead.” Below that sentence, RS asks: “where/what was the self when the world was forming?”⁷ Was there “a self” from the Big Bang onwards? If so, where was it? What was it? Or was the world simply dead until a creature with self-awareness evolved? In the second volume of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich says: “In the Genesis story it is the serpent which represents the dynamics of nature in and around man.” RS underscores dynamics of nature, and writes in the margin: “who created the ‘dynamics of nature’.”⁸ The obvious answer, using Tillich’s terminology, is: the Ground of Being – God.

Those examples reinforce something RS wrote on a postcard several months after I gave him my copy of volume 3 of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*: “I have nearly finished Tillich. I savour such wine slowly.” This relishing of Tillich’s writings does not mean, however, that we should look for a fully-formed Tillichian theology in RS’s poetry.

RS was a poet-theologian, not a prose-theologian. Prose-theologians move from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, spelling out their understanding of God as systematically as possible. Poet-theologians leap from metaphor to metaphor, image to image, expressing one theological insight after another, making no effort to harmonize them. Each poem captures a small God-truth. All of a poet-theologian’s poems create a collage of God-truths. But God remains a Mystery, with whom we wrestle.

If we are to understand what RS meant when he called Tillich his favorite theologian, we must remember what he told me about himself as a *reader*. He said that some readers spend hours perusing a book; they take copious notes and develop a comprehensive understanding of the writer’s thought. RS was not that kind of reader. He’d read a book until something in it prompted the first line of a poem to drift into his consciousness. Then, putting down the book,

he'd pick up his pencil, jot down the line, and wait to see how its sounds and rhythm would unfold into a poem.

His mind, he said, was not stocked with facts and theories, but rather with impressions, images, and metaphors. For example, he took hold of the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg and Bohr and used it in poems, giving the impression that he was well read in contemporary science. Likewise, he caught some of Tillich's theological insights, such as God understood as the Ground of Being, and translated them into poetry. This caused people to suppose that he was systematically Tillichian in his theology. Yes, he had read more Tillich than he had Heisenberg, but he remained a poet, not a systematic theologian.

Thomas's Annotations in Tillich's *Theology of Culture*

In the late summer of 2014, Professor Tony Brown, co-director of the R. S. Thomas Study Centre at Bangor University, happened upon the notes that RS penciled in the margins of his copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*. Professor Brown photocopied the pages, graciously making it possible for me, living in Pennsylvania, to study RS's annotations, which appear on 14 of the 213 pages in Tillich's book.

Five of these annotations are comments. Most are marks singling out certain passages. RS's first annotation is a question: "What of passive nationalism?"⁹ Tillich has been dealing with "the desire of any group of human beings to have a place of their own." A place they believe their god gave to them, and to them alone. This belief often leads to armed conflict with other groups who believe their god gave them the same land. Against this background of active nationalism, of armed to the teeth nationalism, RS wonders if people can be nationalistic without being bellicose. Whether "passive nationalism" – a simple love for the landscape and culture of one's native land – is possible.

The next four marginalia,¹⁰ mostly marks, add little to our understanding of RS. But the sixth one, two perpendicular lines drawn in the right-hand margin, draw attention to what Tillich is saying about religious language. Tillich writes: "There is no sacred language which has fallen from a supernatural heaven and been put between the covers of a book." But there are languages, "based on man's encounter with reality," that have been used over time in literature, poetry, and religion to express that which concerns human beings at the deepest levels of their lives. RS's scorings appear beside this sentence: "Religious language is ordinary language, changed under the power of what it expresses, the ultimate of being and meaning."¹¹

On the next page, RS has drawn a single perpendicular line adjacent to these sentences dealing with religious art: "An artistic style is honest only if it expresses the real situation of the artist and the cultural period to which he belongs. We can participate in the artistic styles of the past in so far as they were honestly expressing the encounter which they had with God, man, and world. But we cannot honestly imitate them and produce for the cult of the Church works which are not the result of a creating ecstasy, but which are learned reproductions of creative ecstasies of the past."¹²

RS's wife, Mildred Eldridge, was an artist of renown, trained at the Royal College of Art, who, by the time that RS marked Tillich's words, had created one of the few memorable British murals of the twentieth century, *The Dance of Life*, now at Glyndŵr University in Wrexham. We may wonder if RS responded to Tillich's assertion because of his wife's creative activity. Or was he applying it to the Church's hymns and liturgies, which often parrot the syntax and vocabulary of the past, or to his own efforts to be contemporary in the poems he was beginning to write? Clearly, his God-poems are not "learned reproductions of creative ecstasies of the past." They are the often recalcitrant offspring of his passionate relationship with the Great Absence he called God. "Why no!" he wrote, in the first of his God-obsessed books, *H'm*, "I never thought other than / That God is that great absence / In our lives, the empty silence / Within."¹³

RS's next marginal scoring reveals him continuing to think, with Tillich, about how to capture the different dimensions of reality in words that preserve the distinctive qualities of each level: ". . . there are levels of reality of great difference, and these different levels demand different approaches and different languages; not everything in reality can be grasped by the language which is most adequate for mathematical sciences."¹⁴

This concern with different languages reappears three pages later, where Tillich, discussing the relationship of poetry and philosophy, writes: "The temptation may often be to confuse the issue by bringing too many philosophical concepts into a poem. Now this is really the problem; one cannot do this. If one uses philosophical language or scientific language, it does not mediate the same thing which is mediated in the use of really poetic language without a mixture of any other language."¹⁵ RS, in his comment in the margin, is skeptical about Tillich's assertion: "Maybe but what is poetic language."

Between RS's annotations, Tillich provides additional clues to his thinking. He suggests that the languages of mathematics, science, and philosophy open up levels of reality that are accessible to probing, analyzing human intelligence – realities that can be counted, experimented with, treated logically. But there are other "levels of reality", ones that are closed to human rationality, which can only be opened up by poetry, visual art, and music.¹⁶ I can imagine RS saying: Yes, Tillich, that's all well and good, but you still haven't told me what poetic language is.

RS hints at his own answer in a poem that was published after his death. He didn't give it a title, so it appears under its first line: "Don't ask me". What we are not to ask about is his recipe for a poem. He doesn't have one. What he does have is this description: "Poetry / is a spell woven / by consonants and vowels // in the absence of logic. / Ask no rhyme / of a poem, only /that it keep faith // with life's rhythm." The poem concludes with: "Poetry is that / which arrives at the intellect / by way of the heart."¹⁷

In another poem released posthumously, RS wishes for a poem-catching method, similar to the way nets are positioned at bird observatories to catch rare birds, band them, and then release them back into the sky. RS has had no luck netting poems: "There are no trappers / of a poem. We only know / when one is about when it has drifted / by us, trailing a fragrance."¹⁸

RS seems to be saying that when you talk about poetic language or ask for a definition of a poem, you're making intellectual demands on an arena of human creativity that is not amenable to the operations of rational thought. You are scouring books for a formula, when you should be sniffing the atmosphere for a fragrance.

In RS's next annotation, his tenth, he adds three words to one of Tillich's sentences. Tillich writes: ". . . all of the polytheistic gods have died" RS, in the margin, adds "in the west."¹⁹ No doubt, RS was thinking about the many gods of Hinduism as compared with the monotheism of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Four pages later, RS calls attention to material that is essential to our understanding of the annotation that is at the heart of this essay: "The key is 'persona'. It is the mask God wears when playing to man."

Tillich has just said: "We could not be in communication with God if he were only 'ultimate being'" – if God were, to use Tillich's other term, only the Ground of Being. Tillich goes on: "But in our relationship to [God] we encounter him with the highest of what we ourselves are, *person*."²⁰ What follows, which RS emphasizes with parallel lines drawn in the margin, is this long assertion: "And so in the symbolic form of speaking about [God], we have both that which transcends infinitely our experience of ourselves as persons, and that which is so adequate to our being persons that we can say, 'Thou' to God, and can pray to him. And these two elements must be preserved. If we preserve only the element of the unconditional, then no relationship to God is possible. If we preserve only the element of the ego-thou relationship, as it is called today, we lose the element of the divine – namely, the unconditional which transcends subject and object and all other polarities."²¹

Tillich, the academic theologian, makes the point that the transcendence of God and the immanence of God must be held in tension. RS, the poet theologian, helps us see Tillich's point as a meeting of the Other and the human at the verges of each. He writes: "The silence we call God . . . is a presence . . . whose margins are our margins."²²

RS's twelfth annotation consists of a question mark neatly penciled in the margin. Tillich has been dealing with "the story of the virgin birth of Jesus," arguing "that it is theologically quasi-heretical. It takes away one of the fundamental" Christian doctrines, namely, "that the full humanity of Jesus must be maintained beside his whole divinity." The next sentence is the one RS questions: "A human being who has no human father has no full humanity."²³ I'd like to be able to ask RS why he drew an interrogation point adjacent to Tillich's assertion.

There are no annotations between pages 66 and 131, and for the moment, we'll skip over the one on page 131 and go on to RS's fourteenth annotation. Here Tillich, dealing with the question of how "to mediate between the world interpreted by modern science and the biblical idea of God," argues that "liberal Protestantism has adapted the God of the Bible to the It-world of modern technical civilization. This It-world, this realm of unrelated objectivity, of mere things, embraces nature as well as man, and man individually as well as socially."²⁴ RS has placed a line in the margin, with an arrow pointing to *adapted the God of the Bible to the It-world of modern technical civilization*.

It is likely that RS arrowed that line because of its similarity to what he means by “the machine” – the rationalized world; the world created by machinery, industry, and technology; the world of bytes, chips, and nets. For RS, the machine signifies the way of living that came into being when men and women allowed their roots in nature to rot. It is the culture of “streets, where the pound / Sings and the doors open / To its music, with life / Like an express train running // To time.”²⁵ It is the world where, because of M-roads, TGV trains, and passenger jets, travelers “arrive too speedily / to have grown wise on the way.”²⁶ The machine world is, as Tillich suggests, an “It-world” – a world in which a person is a *thing* to be manipulated, not a *living being* to relate to.

A number of RS’s poems deal with the church adapting “the God of the Bible to the It-world of modern technical civilization.” For example: God said: “Within the churches / You built me you genuflected / To the Machine” (1972).²⁷ “What anthem have our computers / to insert into the vacuum caused / by the break in transmission / of the song upon Patmos?” (1986).²⁸ “We have over-furnished / our faith. Our churches / are as limousines in the procession / towards heaven.”²⁹

RS’s Thirteenth Annotation: God as Mask-Wearer

RS’s thirteenth annotation, the one in which he refers to God as a mask-wearer, offers a clue to his theology – theology that is informed by Tillich’s concept of God as the Ground of Being.

During World War 1, Tillich was a German military chaplain, who gave more time to burying the dead than to sharing bread and wine. “I have constantly the most immediate and very strong feeling that I am no longer alive,” he confessed to a friend. This sense of being himself dead led to the conclusion that the “God” preached in most pulpits “had died on the battlefields of Europe.”³⁰

“After the war,” writes Diana Butler Bass, “Tillich made it his work to find dependable theological ground. Eventually, he proclaimed that God is the ‘Ground of Being,’ the ‘centered presence of the divine’; the ‘whole world’ is God’s periphery.”³¹ In the words of RS, God “is a presence . . . whose margins are our margins.”³²

Tillich writes that there are “three ways of interpreting the meaning of the term ‘God’.”³³ The first of these “separates God as a being, the highest being, from all other beings, alongside and above which he has his existence.”³⁴ From somewhere out there, beyond the beyond, God brought the cosmos into being at a particular time, five thousand or five billion years ago. God governs this creation, has a plan for its development, occasionally breaks into its everyday operations, and will bring it to a conclusion. This is the God of popular religion, often depicted as a grizzled male, majestically enthroned.

Tillich writes: “The second way of interpreting the meaning of the term ‘God’ identifies God with the universe, with its essence or with special powers within it. . . . God is not identified with the totality of things. . . . But he is a symbol of the unity, harmony, and power of being; he

is the dynamic and creative center of reality.”³⁵ Tillich says that the main argument against this understanding of God “is that it denies the infinite distance between the whole of finite things and their infinite ground, with the consequence that the term ‘God’ becomes interchangeable with the term ‘universe’.”³⁶ It ignores the age-old human experience of wonder in the presence of that which confronts men and women as *L’Autre* – the Mystery before whom we tremble in fascination and awe.

Tillich opens his description of the third way of understanding God with the assertion “that God would not be God if he were not the creative ground of everything that has being. . . . God is neither alongside things nor even ‘above’ them; he is nearer to them than they are to themselves. He is their creative ground, here and now, always and everywhere.”³⁷ God is the *Jet d’Eau* of life.

But “God as the ground of being infinitely transcends that of which he is the ground.”³⁸ Because of this paradoxical *grounding* and *transcendence*, human beings are free to face God or to moon God. “What makes you God,” RS ponders, “but the freedom // you have given us to bellow our defiance / at you.”³⁹ In another poem, God speaks about the created world: “And having built it / I set about furnishing it / To my taste.” Before long “the earth / Teemed. Yet still an absence / Disturbed me.” Then, in a dream, God visualized a likeness, woke up, and fashioned human beings. And finding himself in love with them, he gave them freedom to love him; “risking the disappointment.”⁴⁰ Here is Tillich making the same point in prose theology: “The divine transcendence is identical with the freedom of the created to turn away from essential unity with the creative ground of its being. Such freedom presupposes two qualities of the created: first, that it is substantially independent of the divine ground; second, that it remains in substantial unity with it.”⁴¹

Tillich knew that when people experience the Ground of Being, it is not an encounter with an abstract theological concept. It is, as RS describes it, a meeting with a young God. RS writes: “I was ‘in the Spirit’ and I had a vision, in which I could comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of the mystery of creation. . . . I realised there was really no such thing as time, no beginning and no end but that everything is a fountain welling up endlessly from immortal God. . . . It might have been the first day of Creation and myself one of the first men. Might have been? No it *was* the first day. The world was recreated before my eyes. The dew of creation was on everything, and I fell to my knees and praised God – a young man worshipping a young God, for surely that is what our God is.”

A young God: overflowing with energy, abounding in ideas, vibrating with questions, seeing a long stretch of possibility and uncertainty lying ahead. A God yearning for relationships, wondering if there will be responses to words of love, to touches of intimacy. RS writes about “trysts / In the greenwood at which / [God] was not welcome. Youths and girls, / Fondling the pages of / A strange book, awakened / His envy.”⁴² God envious of young lovers? Have we ventured too far from the abstract, from the nebulous, mysterious Ground of Being? No.

Tillich understood that because the “divine depth of our existence . . . is ‘inaccessible’ to any objectifying concept it must be expressed in symbols,” one of which is “Personal God”. He

continues: “It is the common opinion of classical theology, practically in all periods of Church history, that the predicate ‘personal’ can be said of the Divine only symbolically or by analogy or if affirmed and negated at the same time”⁴³ – God is personal / God is not personal.

In the margin, adjacent to Tillich’s words, RS has drawn parallel lines and an asterisk. There’s another asterisk in the white space at the bottom of the page, beside which he has written: “The key is ‘persona’. It is the mask God wears when playing to man.”⁴⁴

RS, a Latinist, knew that the English word “person” is derived from the Latin word “persona”. But “persona” does not mean “person”, it means “mask” – the masks put on by actors, the masks worn by each of us, for, as Shakespeare says, “one man in his time plays many parts.”⁴⁵

RS suggests that the mask of the “personal” is the mask worn by God when acting on the human stage. This could mean that the Ground of Being appears exclusively in human beings; for example, Jesus. Or, as RS’s poetry suggests, it could have a broader meaning. His poems point to a host of created things to which men and women respond in personal ways. These, too, are masks worn by the Ground of Being “when playing to man.” One God in eternity playing many parts.

In RS’s poem for radio “The Minister”, Melangell felt God’s “heart beating in the wild hare.” “God is in the sound of the white water / Falling at Cynfal. God is in the flowers / Sprung at the feet of Olwen.”⁴⁶ When we respond with all our being to anything in creation, we are interacting, as it were, with a mask worn by the Ground of Being; we are applauding God acting a part on the stage of human life. This view of God the mask-wearer is, I think, at the heart of RS’s theology.

Sometimes the Ground of Being wears, for RS, the mask of absence: “Why no! I never thought other than / That God is that great absence / In our lives, the empty silence / Within.”⁴⁷ At other times, the mask worn is that of “the serene presence.”⁴⁸ Sometimes the mask-wearer speaks, addressing RS “from a myriad / directions with the fluency / of water, the articulateness / of green leaves; and the genes, too, the components / of my existence. The rock, / so long speechless, is the library / of his poetry. He sings to me / in the chain-saw.”

The masks reveal that the Ground of Being is two-sided, both “mild and dire.” “You show me two faces, / that of a flower opening / and of a fist contracting / like the gripping of ice.”⁴⁹ In a much earlier poem, RS observes that God “holds us at bay with / His symbols, the opposed emblems / of hawk and dove.”⁵⁰

No matter how many masks the Ground of Being chooses to wear – a hare’s beating heart, the sound of a waterfall, a great absence, a serene presence, the voice of the genes and the rock and the chain-saw, a flower opening, a fist contracting, hawk and dove – the one we call God remains mysterious. This is true even when the masks are the venerated founders of the world’s great religions: Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammed.

Each of the masks “God wears when playing to man” tells us something true about God. But all of the masks taken together do not tell us the whole truth. For, as RS writes, God cannot

“be penned / In a concept.”⁵¹ No matter how comprehensive, how systematic a theology is, it is doomed to be flawed, to be incomplete. The Ground of Being is infinitely *more* than human intelligence comprehends – always *beyond* what human intelligence can comprehend.

In his poem “The Combat”, RS plays with the biblical story of Jacob’s wrestling match with a mysterious stranger, turning it into an image of our efforts to pen God in a cage of words.⁵² Scientists tell us the size and chemical ingredients of the cosmos. But all that information leaves us far short of being able to pen the great poem about God. For the more we try to see God, the more God belabors us with darkness. The more we implore God to speak the divine name, the more God falls silent. “We die,” RS tells God, “we die / with the knowledge that your resistance / is endless at the frontier of the great poem.”⁵³ God plays on the stage of our lives, wearing an infinite variety of masks, but even when taking a bow, God does not reveal her face.

All we dare hope for is, in RS’s words, that we “will be a little surer / of being a little nearer. / That’s all. Eternity / is in the understanding / that that little is more than enough.”⁵⁴

¹ John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

² Jason Walford Davies, editor, *R. S. Thomas: Letters of Raymond Garlick* (2009); Letter of 11 May 1970; 80.

³ “Once”; R. S. Thomas, *H’m* (1972), 1 – first line: “God looked at space and I appeared.”

⁴ R. S. Thomas’s copy of Paul Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 61. This volume and volume 2 are in the library of the R. S. Thomas Study Centre, Bangor University. Both volumes are identified in the following notes as RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*. I am grateful to Susan Fogarty for her research. She examined RS’s annotations, prepared notes, and photographed the pages.

⁵ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 62; James Nesbit & Co, 1953; RS had the 4th impression, published in 1964.

⁶ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 64.

⁷ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 189.

⁸ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, 45; James Nesbit & Co, 1957; RS had the 3rd impression, published in 1964.

⁹ R. S. Thomas’s copy of Paul Tillich’s *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964 reprint), 32; R. S. Thomas Study Centre, Bangor University; identified in the following notes as RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Theology of Culture*.

¹⁰ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Theology of Culture*, 36, 37, 43, 44.

¹¹ RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Theology of Culture*, 47.

¹² RS’s copy of Tillich’s *Theology of Culture*, 48.

¹³ “Via Negativa”; *H’m*, 16.

-
- ¹⁴ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 54.
- ¹⁵ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 57.
- ¹⁶ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 56-57.
- ¹⁷ "Don't ask me"; R. S. Thomas, *Residues* (2002), 69.
- ¹⁸ "Poems in Flight," R. S. Thomas, *Selected Poems* (2003), 343.
- ¹⁹ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 58.
- ²⁰ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 61.
- ²¹ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 61-62.
- ²² "But the silence in the mind"; R. S. Thomas, *Counterpoint* (1990), 50.
- ²³ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 66.
- ²⁴ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 190.
- ²⁵ "Invitation"; *H'm*, 5.
- ²⁶ "Come close. Let me whisper"; *Counterpoint*, 30.
- ²⁷ "Soliloquy"; *H'm*, 30.
- ²⁸ "Reply"; R. S. Thomas, *Experimenting with an Amen* (1986), 65.
- ²⁹ "Not the empty tomb"; *Counterpoint*, 37.
- ³⁰ Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded – Finding God in the World: A Spiritual Revolution* (2015), 17-18.
- ³¹ Bass, *Grounded*, 18.
- ³² "But the silence in the mind"; *Counterpoint*, 50.
- ³³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Chicago University Press, 1957), 5.
- ³⁴ Tillich, Vol. 2, 6.
- ³⁵ Tillich, Vol. 2, 6.
- ³⁶ Tillich, Vol. 2, 7.
- ³⁷ Tillich, Vol. 2, 7.
- ³⁸ Tillich, Vol. 2, 7.
- ³⁹ "Lord of the molecule and the atom"; *Counterpoint*, 51.
- ⁴⁰ "Making"; *H'm*, 17.
- ⁴¹ Tillich, Vol. 2, 8.
- ⁴² "Other"; *H'm*, 36.
- ⁴³ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 131.

⁴⁴ RS's copy of Tillich's *Theology of Culture*, 131.

⁴⁵ Shakespeare, "As You Like It", Act 2, scene 7.

⁴⁶ "The Minister"; R. S. Thomas, *Song at the Year's Turning* (1955), 78.

⁴⁷ "Via Negativa"; *H'm*, 16.

⁴⁸ "Llananno"; R. S. Thomas, *Laboratories of the Spirit* (1975), 62.

⁴⁹ "You show me two faces"; *Counterpoint*, 53.

⁵⁰ "After the Lecture"; R. S. Thomas, *Not That He Brought Flowers* (1968), 22.

⁵¹ "After the Lecture"; *Flowers*, 22.

⁵² Genesis 32:22-30

⁵³ "The Combat"; *Laboratories*, 42.

⁵⁴ "I think that maybe"; *Counterpoint*, 63.