By RICHARD BEST

Archbishop John A. T. Robinson, the bishop who revolutionized popular theology with his book "Honest to God" will come to Rice next Wednesday, March 31.

A member of an old clerical family, Robinson followed the traditional steps to the English episcopate: Trinity College at Cambridge, first class honors in the theological tripos, ordination in 1945, lecturer in a theological school, Dean of Clare College, at Cambridge, and Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Astound Believers

Well-known as the author of several competent and conservative works of New Testament scholarship, Robinson astounded believers and non-believers alike with the publication of his best-selling paperback "Honest to God" in 1963.

Since that time it has sold hundreds of thousands of copies and is now being translated into several languages.

Although the ideas presented are ultimately those of Tillich and the German theologians Bultmann and Bonhoeffer, the unusual factor was that their advocate is a bishop of the Church of England.

Search For Relevance

Searching for Christian relevance to the modern world, to man "come of age," Robinson rejected a conception of a God "up there" or "out there." God is the "beyond in the midst of life;" "the reality undergirding existence."

From this theological standpoint, Robinson went on to claim that faith must be stripped of outmoded symbolism and practices; in short, what he seeks is a "religionless Christianity."

The English prelate has been a forceful advocate of the so-called "New Morality" which de-emphasizes moral law and places responsibility on the individual for acting out of love in any given situation.

Radical Basis

After dining in Hanszen College, the bishop will speak in the Rice Chapel at 7:15 pm on the topic "Can a Truly Contemporary Man Not Be an Athiest?" Chairs and closed-circuit television will be set up in the Grand Hall for the expected overflow crowd.

After the Chapel service, Robinson will participate in a discussion session in the Hall. Then, Jones College is having a reception for him to which only Rice students and faculty are invited.