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The Living Fountain:
The Symbolism of Grace

By

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For Eric

In Memoriam

And he said unto me, It is
done. I am the Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end. I
will give unto him that is
athirst of the fountain of the
water of life freely.
Rev. 21:6

Dust to the dust: but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same . . .
Shelly. Adonais

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Preface

The term symbol is the Latin symbolus, symbolum, and the Greek sumbolon (sύμβολον), which mean sign or token. The Latin term is a combination of the preposition syn (together) and the noun b⇪lus (throw). The Greek term derives from the verb συμβάλλω (throw together), which, in turn, derives from the preposition σύν (sun - with, together) and the verb βάλλω (ball⇪ -

throw). The term symbol thus denotes a combining or a bringing together.

More precisely, a symbol is an element that is associated with another, and different, element in order to disclose the meaning and import of the latter element. Thus Leverett's Latin Lexicon defines symbolum: "any mark or sign by which one person gives another to understand anything, or which one has agreed upon with anyone."[1] The Liddell & Scott Greek-English Lexicon characterizes sumbolon as "a sign or mark to infer a thing by."[2]

There are other signs that, in common with the symbol, stand for something other than themselves. But they lack the generality of a symbol. They are more limiting forms of representation. Thus an emblem is restricted to pictorial representation. A type is limited to the function of foreshadowing something or someone to come and thus serving as its symbol until the reality appears.

Metaphor is quite distinct from the symbol. Like the symbol, it does, indeed, involve two elements. But the base element does not function as the means of opening up the meaning of the second factor in the equation. Rather, the metaphor is a word or phrase denoting one kind of object in place of the other so as to suggest a likeness or analogy between them, both being already understood. The symbol, in contrast, is an indispensable medium that is necessary to the revealing of the meaning of that which is designated by the symbol.

In clarifying the nature of the symbol, two important considerations must be emphasized: (1) a symbol is a special kind of sign, and (2) the symbol has an indispensable intuitive character.

(1) A symbol is a sign, but it is much more than a sign. A symbol has the property of being more in intention than it has in existence. It points beyond itself, means more than it is in itself. It is ideally self-transcendent. This is brought out in the definition of symbol in the dictionary: "something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; esp: a visible sign of something invisible."

Symbols must be distinguished from natural signs. In the world of nature one thing or happening can become a sign of another as soon as it is bound to it by some natural relation, particularly that of cause and effect. Smoke can become the sign of fire or thunder of lightning. But this kind of sign is merely designatory. It does not express anything. A symbol is always a significative sign.

Again, the symbol is not merely a signal. When the owner of a dog speaks the dog's name, the sound is a signal that the person is present and the dog pricks up his ears and looks for its object. The signal does not express or represent anything.

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[1]F. P. Leverett, ed. *Lexicon of the Latin Language* (Boston: Wilkins, Carter, & Co., 1850-51), p. 877.

[2]Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon, abridged, 24th ed.* (New York: Hinds, Hayden & Eldridge, Inc., 1901), p. 663.

Finally, the symbol is not merely an associative stimulus. Cloudy weather may because of its gloom occasion thoughts of death. A landscape seen from the window of a train may occasion thoughts of childhood. But the cloudy weather does not represent death, is not to be taken as a symbol of death. The landscape is merely an associative stimulus, acting on the person by some psychological association without representing or standing for anything.

(2) The symbol has an intuitive character. It is bound up with the intuitive and cannot be separated from it. The following passage brings this out:

> **In all symbolization, ideas taken from narrow although more intuitible relations are used as expressions for relations which, on account of their exaltedness and ideality, cannot be directly expressed.**[3]

There are here two considerations that may be noted, although their development must wait until later in this work. First, the intuitive character of the symbol is absolutely necessary to the meaning and import of the symbol. Thus it cannot be excised from the symbol. To do so is to destroy the symbol itself. Second, the symbol is necessary to the elucidation of the meaning of the reality symbolized. What this means is that the symbol, with its intuitive material, must be retained, if any understanding of the referend is to be accomplished. If we suppose that, once the symbol has been employed, it can be eliminated and replaced by non-symbolic conceptual knowledge, we are not only mistaken, but we lose the ideal insight that the symbol provides. To press this point, in reference to the general import of this work: the title, The Symbolism of Grace, indicates that it is from within the symbolism that our understanding of Grace is obtained. If we were to use the title, The Symbols of Grace, it might appear that we were advancing the notion that once the symbol is employed we can move beyond the symbol and achieve a purely intellectual and conceptual understanding of the significance of Grace. But that is not the case, for Grace is that which because of its "exaltedness and ideality, cannot be directly expressed."

There is, however, a process of expanding the symbol, without replacing the symbol. Expansion does, indeed, employ literal terms, in the sense of the opposite of figurative. The language of the expansion is more abstract and less metaphorical than the language of the symbol. But the expansion must always be embedded in and refer to the language of the symbol, that is, it must be confined to the ideal and universal relations that the symbol expresses indirectly. In no sense can the language of expansion move beyond the intuitive basis upon which the symbolism rests.

Kant has stated the nature of the rule of reflection that expansion employs:

> **All intuitions which we supply to concepts a priori . . . are either schmata or symbols of which the former contain direct, the latter indirect, presentations of the concept. The former do this demonstrably; the latter by means of an analogy (for which we avail ourselves even of empirical intuitions) in which the judgment exercises a double function; first applying the concept to the object of sensible intuition, and then applying the mere rule of reflection made upon that intuition to a quite**

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[3]Harald Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 201.

different object of which the first is only a symbol.[4]

The similarity between the symbol and the reality symbolized is not that of a picture. Immediately following the passage just quoted, Kant gives an illustration. A living body, he says, is a symbol of the state. Between the two there is no similarity. ". . . but there is a similarity in the rules according to which we reflect upon these two things and their causality. . . ."[5] In short, the symbol contains indirectly the concept of the referend and the manner of reflecting on the two is what brings about the expansion of the symbol and symbolic knowledge. This subject will be discussed in more detail in the sequel.

We are aware of the fact that, when Christianity entered the world, it faced alternative religious ideas and practices. The writer of the Hebrews addressed the question of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Christians today need not be reminded of this circumstance. But we may not be so cognizant of the fact that Christianity, at its inception, faced a plethora of Graeco-Roman religious mythic ideas and cultic practices.

This latter consideration is of special significance for this study. The pagan religions did, without question, afford a sense of redemption for the devotees of those religions. The mythic content and formulations of those religions bear some resemblance to and continuity with the distinctly Christian symbols. Here the further question is forced upon us, namely, is there, despite this continuity, a radical discontinuity between the two systems? If so, in what does that discontinuity consist? It is these questions that Chapter 1, "The Formation of Myth," addresses. The emphasis of the Chapter is an exposition of the subject of pre-Christian myth. A more detailed evaluation of the bearing of that mythic formation on Christianity must await development in later chapters.

It is often supposed that modern formal and empirical sciences yield literal knowledge, while religion as experience and conceptual formulation lacks objective cognitive import. It does, it is argued, consist of rich mythic content, but that content merely reflects certain conditions of subjective valuations. This question is addressed in Chapter 2, "The Symbolism of Science." It is argued that science itself is symbolic and therefore cannot become a basis for denying cognitive import to the formulations of religious symbolism.

Chapter 3, "The Symbolism of Grace," brings this study into the realm of religious symbols. The Chapter builds on the theme of the previous chapters. Attention will be given, again, to the nature of myth and the bearing of myth, particularly pagan myth, on the symbols of religion. The argument of Chapter 2, "The Symbolism of Science," has the consequence of establishing the general identity of the two symbolic forms, i.e., science and religion. Yet notwithstanding this consonance between the two symbolic forms, there is a vast difference between the two symbolisms. That difference must be set forth. But, as we shall argue, this difference is yet commensurate with the principle of symbolism as it pertains to religion. The symbols of religion

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[4]Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr. J. H. Bernard, 2nd ed., rev. (London: Macmillan, 1914), B. 248-49.

[5]*Ibid*., B. 250.

are cognitive. What may be termed the major and fundamental symbols of Grace will then be brought forward, with special reference to their unique cognitive significance.

The final chapter, "Existence and Significance: History and Discontinuity," sets forth, in a fuller respect than previously attempted, the philosophical principle upon which the cognitive import of the symbolism of Grace rests, and rests so as to quarantine those symbols from the charge that they are but mythic formations akin in principle to constructs of myth and, while having some subjective value, are valueless as cognitive of transcendent and spiritual reality.

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Chapter 1
The Formation of Myth

There is a level of experience consisting in a passive receptivity to an indeterminate outer material. It is an unformed, inchoate stream of sensory contents. This is the level of sensory consciousness.

Now, it is impossible to remain at this level of awareness. That impossibility is founded in the very nature of humanity. To be human is to be endowed with, not merely sensory consciousness, but spiritual consciousness. In this context, spiritual consciousness becomes an activity that seeks to find an order, a rule of law, that brings meaning to the flux of sensory experience. The diversity of forms are to be held together by a unity of meaning. In our time, empirical science has become the paramount formation in which this goal is achieved. But there have always been other formations directed to the securing of meaning. Myth and mythic thinking is one such effort.

In this chapter we shall consider certain mythic formations that have, historically, been developed in the effort, not only to impose meaning on the world of sensory consciousness, but, more importantly, to provide meaning to the process of life itself. Mythic constructs and ideas spring out of all of the accessible spheres of immediate experience. The great fundamental relations of nature and human experience—light and darkness, spirit and matter, life and death, good and evil, strength and weakness, exaltation and depression, joy and sorrow, hope and despair—are the material of myth.

The emergence of myth from these fundamental intuitive fields is strikingly evident in the pagan myths of the Graeco-Roman world into which Christianity was inserted. Some considerable attention will be devoted to this subject, since many of the elements in these myths resemble elements in the New Testament account.

The first century of our era witnessed the revival of the oriental cult of the monarch. Augustus (63 B.C. - A.D. 14) was deified. Elevated to this rank, he became, so it was claimed, the power to unify the various races living within the Roman Empire. More importantly, he was to become the means of delivering the masses of people from their wretchedness. But this promise of the imperial cult could not be fulfilled. The wars immediately preceding the Christian era had terribly depressed Roman society. The middle classes, the backbone of society, had all but been eliminated. There was also a bad social cleavage between the wealthy and aristocratic classes on the one hand,

and the masses, including the slaves, on the other. In his work, Pagan Regeneration, Professor Willoughby succinctly describes this condition:

> **Conditions were such that the classes had the opportunity of becoming more wealthy and prosperous, while the proletariat correspondingly became more destitute and wretched. Enormous sums of gold and silver, the accumulated wealth of the east, was disgorged on the Empire. This created a demand for luxuries, raised the standard of living, and multiplied the misery of the poor. Throughout the period the number of slaves was constantly being augmented. This lowered wages and drove free laborers to the idleness of cities where they were altogether too willing to be enrolled among the state-fed.[6]**

Accounts of that period show that, on the one hand, the wealthy classes became disgusted with life, a result of their self-indulgence and satiety. Gaius Petronius (1st cent. A.D.) gives an account of a dinner given by Trimalchio. It is a vivid description of the selfish hedonism of the wealthy classes. Chapter Five, which contains the account of the dinner, closes with a passage that depicts both the indulgence and satiety of the revelers:

> **After being duly complimented on this refinement, our host cried out, "Fair play's a jewel!" and accordingly ordered a separate table to be assigned to each guest. "In this way," he said, "by preventing any crowding, the stinking servants won't make us hot."**
>
> **Simultaneously there were brought in a number of wine-jars of glass carefully stoppered with plaster, and having labels attached to their necks reading:**
>
> **FALERNIAN; OPIMIAN VINTAGE**
> **ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD.**
>
> **Whilst reading the labels, Trimalchio ejaculated, striking his palms together, "Alackaday! to think wine is longer lived than poor humanity! Well! bumpers then! There's life in wine. 'Tis the right Opimian, I give you my word. I didn't bring out so good yesterday, and much better men than you were dining with me."**
>
> **So we drank our wine and admired all this luxury in good set terms. Then the slave brought in a silver skeleton, so artfully fitted that its articulations and vertebrae were all movable and would turn and twist in any direction. After he had tossed this once or twice on the table, causing the loosely jointed limbs to take various positions, Trimalchio moralized thus:**
>
> **Alas! how less than naught are we;**
> **Fragile life's thread, and brief our day!**
> **What this is now, we all shall be;**
> **Drink and make merry while you may.[7]**

There are, on the other hand, accounts depicting the condition of the poor masses. If the aristocrat felt depressed because he had too many pleasures, the poor freeman felt depressed because he had too few pleasures.

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[6]Harold R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c1929), p. 276.

[7]Gaius Petronius, The Satyricon, tr. Alfred R. Allison (New York: The Panurge Press, 1930), chap. v.

The need was so great that, in the closing days of the Republic, the office of consoler was developed. Consolation literature was printed and disseminated throughout the Empire. Cantor, who originated this type of literature, wrote a book for a bereaved parent, which Cicero termed "a golden book." When his own daughter died, he wrote a consolatio for himself. Seneca, the prince of counselors, made a study of individual cases and devised formulas of sympathy for calamities of all kinds: ill health, old age, financial disaster, confiscation of property, exile, and most of all for death itself. All classes of society were emotionally distraught, most particularly the inarticulate masses who had no way of expressing their misery.

The religions that came from the east promised the emotional satisfaction that the age demanded. These religions told of savior-gods who came to earth to work for and suffer for the people. The savior-gods knew the agony of parting from loved ones, of persecution, of mutilation, and, finally, of death itself. They had won salvation for humanity and now stood ready to help all who were in need. The rites of the mystery religions re-enacted the suffering and triumph of the savior-gods. The initiate felt himself participating in the archetypal experiences of his lord, felt himself lifted beyond his wretchedness and suffering and enjoying repose in an exalted sense of security. In the following days and years, the memory of his experiences, most importantly his initiation, provided continuing emotional stimulation through the experience of contact with a sympathetic savior.

The Eleusinian mysteries, of Greek origin, were widespread in the Graeco-Roman world. The mysteries are based on the Eleusinian myth. The myth is, first of all, a nature myth. It vividly depicts the action of life in the vegetable world with the changing of the seasons. But it is also a reflection of poignant human experiences, registering the joys, sorrows, and hopes of humankind in the face of inevitable death.

The myth is stated in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Its opening lines are:

> **I begin to sing of rich-haired Demeter, awful goddess--of her and her trim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus rapt away, given to him by all-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer.**[8]

According to the myth, Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, was stolen by Pluto and carried to the underworld to be his bride. Zeus was an accomplice in this theft. Demeter, frantic with grief, searched the earth for nine days, torch in hand, abstaining from eat and drink, in the effort to find her daughter. When she rested at "the maiden well of fragrant Eleusis," she was welcomed by the daughter of Celeus, who provided her with refreshment. In resentment to Zeus, Demeter brought famine upon the earth. No crops grew and no offerings were made to the gods. Finally an arrangement was made with Pluto and Persephone was restored to her mother. However, Persephone had eaten a sweet pomegranate seed in the underworld and was required to return there for a portion of each year. Demeter so rejoiced in the restoration of her daughter that she allowed the crops to grow once more and instituted in honor of the event the Eleusinian mysteries, which gave to mortals the assurance of a happy future life.

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[8]Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, tr. Hugh G. Evyln-White, *Loeb Classical Library* , No. 57 (London: Heinemann, 1929) 1.1-2, p. 289.

The myth became the pattern for the Eleusinian ritual. There were four stages: the katharsis, or preliminary purification, the sustasis, or preparatory rites and sacrifices, the telet❻, the initiation proper, and the epopteia, the highest grade of initiation. The first two rites were public, while the last two were strictly private. There is considerable information about the public rites, while the private rites are shrouded in mystery.

The "lesser mysteries" were celebrated at Agrae, a suburb of Athens, on the banks of the Illisus river. Six months later, in September, the "greater mysteries" were celebrated for a full week. The preliminary rites were held at Athens. There was a solemn assembly in the Stoa Poicil❻ (painted porch), where the hierophant gave a proclamation warning those who were unworthy of initiation to depart. Origin mentions this:

> **Those who invite to participation in other mysteries, make proclamation as follows: "Everyone who has clean hands, and a prudent [Hellenic] tongue;" others again thus: "He who is pure from all pollution, and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived well and justly." Such is the proclamation made by those who promise purification from sins.**[9]

On the following day the cry was given, "To the sea, O Mystae!" and the candidates for initiation marched to the sea, there to cleanse themselves in its salt waves. Each participant carried a suckling pig, which was purified by being placed in the sea. Later the pig was sacrificed and the blood sprinkled on the candidate for initiation. The mystae believed that this Eleusinian baptism had regenerative powers, constituting them new beings. Thus Tertullian writes, quoting Celsus:

> **. . . at the . . . Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries.**[10]

The initiates then marched to Eleusis, where the celebration of the festival was completed. Visiting holy places and performing ritualistic observances on the way, they reached Eleusis by torchlight late in the evening. There then followed a midnight revel under the stars. It was probably a mimetic ritual in which the revelers shared in the experiences of their goddess.

The climax of the festival took place in the telest❻rion, or Hall of Initiation. Only the initiates were allowed in the sacred place, and the events that occurred there are shrouded in mystery. The initiates were under the pledge of secrecy. There are, however, certain sources that indicate that the ritual was a religious drama. The priests were the actors and the initiates the spectators. The drama was a passion play, the subject matter being essentially the same as the Homeric myth. Clement of Alexander says:

> **Demeter and Proserpine have become the heroines of a mythic drama; and their wanderings, and seizure, and grief, Eleusis celebrates by torchlight**

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[9]Origin *Contra Celsum* iii. 59, tr. Frederick Crombie, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (10 vols.; New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), IV, 487.

[10]Tertullian *De Baptismo* 5, tr. S. Thelwall, *Ibid*., III, 671.

processions.[11]

Various writers provide additional information about the elements in the passion drama. The hierophant sounded a gong, this to represent the cry of Demeter when she called for aid upon the abduction of Persephone. The actors in the drama also offered lamentations, expressing the grief of the mother, the great goddess herself. The initiates then accompanied the priestess, who personified the goddess, in mimetic action signifying the search for the lost child goddess. Finally, in the closing scene of the drama, the two goddesses are united. The initiates who shared in the anxious wanderings of the mother now shared in her happiness at the recovery of her daughter.

There may have been a second drama, acted on the evening of the passion play. A first feature was a dramatic representation of a sacred marriage. Asterius, a fourth century Christian bishop, writes of:

> **the underground chamber and the solemn meeting of the hierophant and the priestess, each with the other alone, when the torches are extinguished, and the vast crowd believes that its salvation depends on what goes on there.**[12]

There is no reason to assume that the rite was illicit. It was probably but a liturgical fiction. The ritual assured the initiates of a direct and intimate communion with their goddess.

A second feature of the drama was the birth of a holy child. In his Saassenic sermon Hippolytus states:

> **(Now) by night in Eleusis, beneath a huge fire, (the Celebrant,) enacting the great and secret mysteries, vociferates and cries aloud, saying "August Brimo has brought forth a consecrated son, Brimus;" that is, a potent (mother has been delivered of) a potent child. But revered, he says, is the generation that is spiritual, heavenly, from above, and potent is he that is so born.**[13]

The name Eleusis is derived from the term eleusesthai, which means to come. Thus the initiates said of themselves, "we spiritual ones came on high." Their holy birth was, they affirmed, "spiritual, heavenly, and from above," a birth that translated them from the earthly, human sphere to the heavenly, spiritual realm.

The epopteia, the highest grade of initiation, took place a year after the telet❻. Only a single rite is known to us, and this on the authority of Hippolytus. He speaks of ". . . the Athenians, while initiating people into the Eleusinian rites, likewise display to those who are being admitted to the highest grade at these mysteries, the mighty, and marvellous, and most perfect secret for one initiated into the highest mystic truth . . . an ear of corn in

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[11]Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus ii*, *Ibid*., II, 175.

[12]Asterius *Encomium in sanctos martures* 113B. Quoted in Willoughby, *op. cit*., p. 53.

[13]Hippolytus *Philosophoumena* v, iii, tr. J. H. Macmahon, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V, 55.

silence reaped"[14] Their background being agricultural, a corn token was among the most sacred things of the Eleusinia. For this reason, its exhibition was "in solemn silence." The token was a symbol of birth and rebirth in man paralleling the vernal rebirth of nature. The rite gave the assurance of individual rebirth to a new life.

Clement of Alexandria writes of a formula suggesting the possibility of a different type of ritualistic observance. He says:

> **And the following is the token of the Eleusinian mysteries: I have fasted, I have drunk the cup; I have received from the box; having done, I put it into the basket, and out of the basket into the chest.[15]**

The elements of the rite are drawn from the Eleusinian myth. The fasting of the mystae corresponds to the mythic fasting of Demeter, the grain goddess, who "sat smileless, nor tasted meat nor drink, wasting with long desire for her deep-bosomed daughter." The drinking of the barley drink corresponds to the breaking of her fast, when, after having refused a cup of wine, "she had them mix meal and water with the tender herb of mint, and gave it to her to drink." In drinking a similar potation the mystae shared the cup from which the sorrowing goddess drank. By this participation in the experience of the goddess, they attained fellowship with the deity.

The eating of food from the chest was probably a sacrament of communion. Most likely this sacred food was a cereal. Its assimilation meant a union with Demeter, the goddess of grain. It meant an incorporation of divine substance into the human body. "Already emotionally united with Demeter through participation in her passion, the initiates now became realistically one with her by the assimilation of food and drink."[16]

In sum, the effects of the Eleusinian ritual upon the lives of the devotees were: (1) an emotional stimulation, (2) purification and elevation of the present life, and (3) assurance that, having shared in the sorrow of the goddess, they would share also in the triumph over death.

In the Baachae, Euripides calls Demeter and Dionysus the greatest of the gods:

> **Two spirits there be,**
> **Young Prince, that in man's world are first of worth,**
> **D⊗m⊗t⊗r one is named; she is the Earth——**
> **Call her which name thou will!——who feeds man's frame**
> **With sustenance of things dry. And that which came**
> **Her work to perfect, second, is the Power**
> **From Semel⊗ born. He found the liquid shower**
> **Hid in the grape. He rests man's spirit dim**
> **From grieving, when the vine exalteth him.**
> **He giveth sleep to sink the fretful day**
> **In cool forgetting. Is there any way**
> **With man's sore heart, save only to forget?**

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[14] *Ibid*.

[15] Clement of Alexandria *op. cit*. ii, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, II, 177.

[16] Willoughby, *op. cit*., p. 60.

Yea, being God, the blood of him is set
Before the Gods in sacrifice, that we
For his sake may be blest . . . .[17]

Dionysus was an earth-deity, a god of the peasantry. His father was Zeus, the sky- and rain-god. His mother was Semel☹, who was of the earth earthy. Before he was born, while in his mother's womb, Zeus destroyed his mother by lightning. As she was dying Zeus rescued the unborn child from her tortured body.

Till Zeus, the Lord of Wonder,
Devised new lairs of birth;
Yea, his own flesh tore to hide him,
And with claps of bitter gold
Did a secret son enfold.[18]

In the phase of his worship, Dionysus was preeminently a wine-god. It was he who made "the clustered vine" grow for the benefit of humankind. But he was more than the creator of wine; he was the wine itself. Euripides affirms that identity: "Yea, being God, the blood of him is set Before the Gods in sacrifice."[19] **Thus the identification of the god with the wine is absolute. Parallel to this identification is that of Christ and the consecrated wine of the Mass in Catholic thought. And in the religious system of the Vedas, the God Soma is identified with the soma drink.**

Dionysus was also the god of animal life. He is represented in various animal forms. The chorus of Bacchanals, for example, invoke their god in their moment of supreme anxiety:

Appear, appear, whatso thy shape or name
O Mountain Bull, Snake of the Hundred Heads,
Lion of the Burning Flame!
O God, Beast, Mystery, come![20]

Dionysus was thought of as being actually embodied in the bull. Thus the animal, like the wine, was the god.

The central experience of devotees of the god involved the wine. It played the prominent part in Dionysian worship. Baachic literature is filled with wine and the joys of intoxication. The chorus in Euripides Baachae sings:

He found the living shower
Hid in the grape. He rests man's spirit dim
From grieving , when the vine exalteth him.

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[17]Euripides *Bacchae* 274-86, tr. Gilbert Murray (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1904), p.19.

[18]*Ibid*. 94-99, p. 11.

[19]*Ibid*. 284. The identity of the god and the wine is explicitly stated in a variant translation: "And when we pour libations to the gods, we pour the god of wine himself . . . ." Tr. William Arrowsmith.

[20]*Ibid*. 1017-19, p. 59.

He giveth sleep to sink the fretful day
In cool forgetting. Is there any way
With man's sore heart, save only to forget?

The joy induced by the wine puts an end to woe:

In the music and the laughter,
In the vanishing of care,
And of all before and after;
In the God's high banquet, when
Gleans the grape-blood, flashed to heaven;
Yea, and in the feasts of men
Comes his crowned slumber; then
Pain is dead and hate forgiven![21]

It is clear that the essence of Dionysian religion was physical intoxication through drinking of the wine. But the devotees believed that the experience was something more and higher than physical intoxication. It was spiritual ecstasy. The wine was potent with spiritual power, and this because the god himself, and the quintessence of divine life, was in the wine. It was a matter of personal experience, when, after drinking the wine, they felt a strange new life within themselves. It was the life and power of the god. Their ecstasy was the experience of having the god within themselves, of being filled with and fully possessed by the god. Thus Euripides can say:

Oh, blessed he in all wise,
Who hath drunk the Living Fountain.,
Whose life no folly staineth,
And his soul is near to God.
Whose sins are lifted, pall-wise,
As he worships on the Mountain . . . .[22]

In addition to drinking of wine, the devotees of Dionysus observed a sacrament of eating. This rite was the "feast of raw flesh." The initiate into the mysteries of Dionysus was obliged to avow

I have . . .
Fulfilled his red and bleeding feasts.[23]

The feast of raw flesh was an orgiastic rite. The devotees tore the slain animal asunder and devoured the dripping flesh to assimilate the life of the god resident within it. Raw flesh was living flesh and had to be eaten quickly lest the divine life within it should escape. So the feast was a wild, frenzied, and barbaric event. In the Baachae Euripides describes the affair:

They swept toward our herds that browsed the green
Hill grass. Great uddered kine then hadst thou seen
Bellowing in sword-like hands that cleave and tear,
a live steer riven asunder, and the air
Tossed with rent ribs or limbs of cloven tread.

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[21]*Ibid*. 280-83, p. 19; 380-85, p. 23.

[22]*Ibid*. 72-77, pp. 10-11.

[23]Euripides *Fragmenta* 475, in Porphyry *De Abstinentia* iv. 19.

And flesh upon the branches, and a red
Rain from the deep green pines. Yea, bulls of pride,
Horns swift to rage, were fronted and aside
Flung stumbling, by those multitudinous hands
Dragged pitilessly. And swifter were the bands
of garbled flesh and bone unbounded withal
Than on thy royal eyes the lids may fall.[24]

The sacred dance was another means of inducing the divine possession, and usually accompanied the sacraments of drinking and eating. They prepared for this Baachic revel by equipping themselves with the gear of Dionysus. They carried the thyrus, a wand tipped with a pine cone and entwined with ivory. In their hair they twisted serpents and over their shoulders threw a sacred fawn-skin. The dances were held at night by the light of torches. There was weird music and the clashing of tambourines. The revelers added their own eerie shouts to this strange music. The dances were wild and irregular, characterized by a tossing of the head and violent, whirling bodily motion. All this induced a physical frenzy, assumed to be the divine possession itself. For such an ecstatic experience, the Baachae of Euripides yearned when they sang in chorus:

When they ever come to me, ever again
The long long dances,
On through the dark till the dawn-stars wane?
Shall I feel the dew on my throat, and the stream
Of wind in my hair?[25]

The philosophico-religious system bearing the name of Orpheus was a reform of the cruder religion of Dionysus. Orpheus may have been a mythical figure, or he may have been a real person. If the latter, he was a prophet, reformer, and a martyr. Whether mythical or real, he was the antitype of Dionysus the wine-god.

Classical writers provide considerable information about the Orphic movement. The Orphic tablets, from tombs in Italy and Crete, contain fragments of ritual hymns, and therefore yield valuable information, particularly about beliefs concerning the next world. The "Apulian" vase paintings depict the blessed dead in the society of the gods.

In his "Exhortation to the Greeks," Clement of Alexandria details in mythological form the fundamentals of Orphic theology. He probably had Orphic texts that have since been lost. According to the myth, a son, Dionysus Zagreus ("the hunter) was born to Zeus and Persephone. He was his father's favorite. The Titan were therefore jealous of him, and, urged on by Hera, they murdered him. They tore him to pieces and cooked and ate the pieces. The goddess, Athena, saved his heart and brought it to his father, who struck the Titans with his thunderbolts. Having received the heart from Athena, Zeus swallowed it. Later, when Semel⊗ bore Dionysus to Zeus, the new god was but Zagreus reborn.

The myth is significant as providing for Orphic thought a theory of the nature of man and of man's eternal destiny. Man was created from the ashes of

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[24]Euripides *Baachae* 736-47, pp. 42-43.

[25]*Ibid*. 862-85, p. 51.

the blasted Titans. But these Titans had already consumed the god Dionysus, and their ashes contained the vitality of divinity. Hence man was a compound of two natures, one Dionysian and immortal and the other Titanic and mortal. The soul was divine, but while in the body imprisoned in a charnel house. There appears on an Orphic tablet the words:

> **I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heaven;**
> **But my race is of Heaven.**[26]

Salvation, for the Orphic, is a process of purification from bodily taint. This was not merely salvation from the evils of a single existence, but, finally, salvation from a series of physical existence, i.e., release from the wheel of many reincarnations.

This was begun in the rite of initiation into the Orphic mysteries. On the threshold of this rite was the omophagy, or feast of raw flesh, which figured, as we have observed, in the Dionysian rite. It served two functions: communion and memorialization. It reinforced and enlivened the spark of divinity resident in man, and it was a ritual enactment of the ancient tragedy when their god was slain by the Titans. At this occasion, the Titans had smeared themselves with white clay or gypsum in order to conceal their identity. The Orphics did likewise, but in order to purify themselves of the stains of their physical nature.

Having been cleansed initially, the Orphics were then to lead a pure life of self-discipline. The life they led was one of austerity. There were rules concerning cleanliness and clothing. Food regulations prohibited the consumption of animal flesh. Having once partaken of the sacrament of raw flesh, the Orphic was forever forbidden to eat animal food. In his Cretans, Euripides speaks of the austerities of the Orphic life:

> **Robed in pure white I have born me clean**
> **From man's vile birth and coffined clay,**
> **And exiled from my lips alway**
> **Touch of all mean where life has been.**[27]

Personal purity, although ceremonial and ritualistic, was central to Orphism. It thus opened the way for the development of morality. Pindar believed that knowledge of the teachings of Orphism would help men lead good lives. Aristophanes, who was critical of Orphism, yet said of Orpheus: "First, Orpheus taught you religious rites, and from bloody murder to stay your hands . . . ."[28] **Presumably, this meant not only purification from blood but also abstention from murder. It was an early gospel of peace on earth. The author of the speech against Aristogeiton commends Orpheus:**

> **You must magnify the Goddess of Order who loves what is right . . . who, as Orpheus, that product of our most sacred mysteries, tells us, sits**

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[26]Kaibel, *Inscriptiones Graecae Sicilae et Italiae*, No. 638 (Berloni, 1890). Quoted in Willoughby, *op. cit., p. 97.*

[27]Euripides *Fragmenta* 475. Quoted in Willoughby, *op. cit*., pp. 102-03.

[28]Aristophanes *Ranae* 1032, tr. Benjamin Bickley Rogers, Loeb Classical Library, No. 178 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 393.

beside the throne of Zeus and oversees all the works of men[29]

It is also important to note that Orphism disallowed suicide. Since the soul inhabited the body as penance, one had no right to take one's life. Were he to do so, he would become a fugitive attempting to escape before God released him. In the Phaedo Plato represented Socrates saying just before his death:

> **Now the doctrine that is taught in secret about this matter, that we men are in a kind of prison and must not set ourselves free or run away, seems to me to be weighty and not easy to understand. But this at least, Cebes, I do believe is sound, that the gods are our guardians and that we men are one of the chattels of the gods.**[30]

But participation in the rites of initiation and a life of ascetic observance were not in themselves sufficient for a final and full salvation. There were certain rules of postmortem conduct that had to be observed as well. The Orphic tablets provide for the initiate a chart of the landscape of the next world, introduce him to the divine beings who determine their condition in the future state, inform him of certain ritual acts to be observed, and instruct him in the necessary formularies and confessions that need to be repeated under certain conditions.

The Petelia tablet mentions a nameless well-spring located at the left of the House of Hades. This is to be avoided. This spring was probably Lethe, or Forgetfulness. Because the Orphic has spent his life in purification, he had nothing to forget. But there was a well-spring from which he was to drink. It was the one flowing from the Lake of Memory. It was the counterpart of the "well of water springing up into everlasting life." The devotee was to use the formula in asking for a drink: "I am a child of Earth and Starry Heaven." It was a formula of divine origin. It would be sufficient to gain the desired reward from the guardians of the Lake of Memory:

> **Of themselves they will give you to drink,**
> **From the holy Well-spring.**
> **And thereafter among the other Heroes,**
> **You shall have Lordship.**[31]

Another tablet, the Compagno tablet, has the soul coming as a suppliant to the divine Persephone herself. She is addressed at the "Pure Queen of Them Below." As in the Petelia tablet, there is the affirmation of divine origin: "I avow me that I am of your blessed race." There is then a declaration of purity obtained by observance of Orphic practices:

> **Out of the pure I come. . . .**
> **I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel,**

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[29]Demosthenes *Aristogeiton* 11, tr. J. H. Vince, Loeb Classical Library, No. 299 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 521.

[30]Plato *Phaedo* 62b, tr. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library, No. 36 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 217.

[31]Kaibel, *op. cit*., No. 638. Quoted in Willoughby, *op. cit*., p. 106.

I have passed with eager feet to the circle desired.[32]

Orphism had real significance in the Graeco-Roman world at the beginning of the Christian era. It promised a regeneration in this life and a new birth into immortality consequent upon the release of the soul at the time of bodily death. Even those who did not believe in the efficacy of certain rites and practices, and refused to be frightened by the terrors of Hell, found the Orphic hope a real consolation in the time of trouble. Plutarch was one such man who shared the Orphic hope in the first Christian century.[33]

The cult of the Great Mother of the Gods came into the west from Asia Minor. The divinity was the Magna Mater Deum, who was regarded at the sources of all life and the personification of nature. She was associated with a hero divinity, Attis, who personified the life of the vegetable world particularly. Around these two there grew up a confused tangle of myths in explanation of their cult rites.

The myth states that the goddess-mother loved the youthful, virgin-born shepherd Attis. But Attis died, either slain by another or by his own hand. According to the latter view, he had been unfaithful to his mother and in recompense for his sin he emasculated himself and died. His mother mourned him and eventually effected his restoration. Thus he became a deity and immortal.

The cult ritual began on the Ides of March. On the following day the dendrophori, or tree bearers, cut a pine tree and took it to the temple of Cybele. According to the myth, it was under a pine tree that Attis mutilated himself and died. Changed to a pine tree, he was carried to the temple of Cybele, where the goddess mourned her dead lover. Thus the pine tree was regarded as the corpse of Attis and treated with divine honors.

The following day was a day of fast when the devotees mourned their god. It was a vegetable abstinence. As the cutting down of the pine tree symbolized that the god of vegetation was dead, so the vegetable world shared in the defunct condition of the god. To partake of vegetables would violate the broken body of the god.

The climax of the festival was held on the twenty-fourth of March, a day that was called the "Day of Blood." To the accompaniment of wild and barbaric music, the devotees, in a frenzy of emotion, staged a dance. They lacerated their bodies in mourning for the dead Attis. This would cause the Great Mother to know, when she saw the flowing blood, that they shared with her in her sorrow. Its ultimate purpose was to strengthen Attis for his resurrection.

The final act of consecration to the deity was self-emasculation. With this act the devotee became a eunuch-priest of the goddess. Even more, he became another Attis, mystically united as a divine lover to the Great Goddess. He participated in the resurrection of his god and realized the happiness of immortality.

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[32]*Ibid*., No. 641. Quoted in Willoughby, *Ibid*., p. 107.

[33]Plutarch *Consolatio ad Uxorem* 10, trs. Phillip H. De. Lacy & Benedict Einarson, *Plutrach's Moralia*, 16 vols., *Loeb Classical Library* No. 405 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), VII, 601-05.

Another rite of supreme importance connected with the rite of the Great Mother was the taurobolium, of sacrifice of a bull. A priest with a golden crown on his head and adorned with fillets descends into a trench that was covered over with planks. A bull, gleaming with gold and covered with a garland of flowers, is led on to the platform and stabbed to death by a consecrated spear. The blood flows out over the planks and down on the devotee in the trench.

> **Then through the many ways afforded by the thousand chinks it passes in a shower, dripping a foul rain, and the priest in the pit below catches it, holding his filthy head to meet every drop and getting his robe and his whole body covered with corruption. Laying his head back he even puts his cheeks in the way, placing his ears under it, exposing lips and nostrils, bathing his very eyes in the stream, not even keeping his mouth from it but wetting his tongue, until the whole of him drinks in the dark gore.**[34]

The initiate then emerges from the trench, drenched and dripping with blood. He presents himself to the assembled crowd, who honors him as a god, as one who has been born again to a divine life.

The rite was regarded as a rebirth to a new kind of existence. The bath of blood was believed to purify the neophyte and, in effect, make him a divinized human. The effect of the rite was thought to be everlasting and that the devotee was in aeternum renatus.

Very little is known of the secret rites of the Attis cult. The only extant source is Clement of Alexandria. According to him the confessional of the initiate was:

I have eaten out of the drum,
I have drunk out of the cymbal,
I have carried the Cernos,
I have slipped into the bedroom.[35]

The formula expresses to experiential elements. One is union with divinity by a mystic marriage. "I have entered the bedchamber." The votary entered the shrine of the goddess as a bridegroom. In that secret chamber humanity and deity were united in marriage and hence the devotee attained communion with his goddess. The second element indicates communion with the deity by the act of eating and drinking:

I have eaten out of the drum,
I have drunk out of the cymbal,

The drum and cymbal were the favorite instruments of the Great Mother. For this reason they were used as cup and plate in the ceremony.

The common meal was more than a communion with others. It was a communion with divinity. It was believed that this rite communicated divine life to the devotee and assured him of salvation.

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[34]Prudentius *Peristephanon* x. 1035-40, tr. H. J. Thompson, *Loeb Classical Library* No. 398 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 297.

[35]Clement of Alexandria *op. cit*. ii, II, 175. The cernos was probably a vessel containing poppy carried in sacrificial procession. For "bedroom" one can read "bridal chamber."

Two other pagan regenerative rites may be briefly noted. They employ elements similar to those found in certain of the cults discussed in the foregoing. Mithraism was of Persian origin. Mithra was the god of light. He appears in the Vedas as Mitra. The sanctuaries of the god were in deep caves of the mountains, where the devotees could feel themselves close to the divinity. Very little is known about the rites and ceremonies of this cult. Jerome, however, says that there were various degrees of initiation that conferred upon the initiates various grades of privilege.[36] One ceremony was the rite of the crown. It was enacted during the sacrament of the Soldier. With a sword pressed to his breast, the soldier was offered a crown, "as though in mimicry of martyrdom," Tertullian said.[37] The crown was rejected, the soldier affirming "Mithra is my crown!." Thereafter he never wore a garland or crown, and whenever a crown was offered him, he replied "It belongs to my god." In this refusal he offered proof that he was a soldier of Mithra. Another ceremony was the rite of sealing. A sign was burned on the forehead, signifying that the initiate was a soldier of Mithra.

A very distinctive rite of Mithraism was a simulated murder. The rite brought out the view that death was the precursor of life. The pretense of death qualified the neophyte for the regenerative experiences of baptism and sacramental communion that followed the ritual.

The Egyptian cult of Osiris and Isis emphasized the idea of resurrection. The myth that give rise to the cult has it that Osiris was murdered by his brother. Isis, his wife, after a long wandering to find his corpse, performed certain rites over the dead body and revived her husband. Thus Osiris was a dying and reviving god, giving assurance that life obtained beyond the mystery of death. Isis, like Demeter and the Magna Mater, was a mother-goddess, expressing the unquenchable hope that life triumphs in its conflict with death.

The pagan beliefs and practices were supported by the various aetiological myths. The term aetiological derives from the Greek αἰτία (aitia), which means cause or reason. Thus an aetiological myth is the conceptual element that provides the base upon which rites and practices are founded.

These myths constitute the material for the great redemptive themes that appear, not only in pagan culture, but in the developed religions, particularly in the Christian religion. These themes are the sorrow and sin of human existence, the dying and risen savior, the birth of a holy child, redemption and purification through the shedding and appropriation of blood, cleansing and newness through baptism, rites of communion with the deity by means of sacrament of wine and food and marriage, and, ultimately, resurrection as victory over death.

Now, it is obvious that the pagan themes bear at least a general resemblance to the elements of Christianity. When one reads the Pre-Nicene Fathers, it becomes evident that they wrestled with the pagan cults in their effort to establish the distinctive and unique superiority of the Christian

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[36]Jerome *Epistolae* cvii. 2. Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series*, (14 vols.; New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890-1900), VI, 190.

[37]Tertullian *De Corona* 15, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, 103.

faith, and to establish that faith as supreme in the Graeco-Roman world. From out of the ages of the long-ago past, one may hear even today the ring of the voice of Clement of Alexandria:

> **But the dramas and the raving poets, now quite intoxicated, let us crown with ivy; and distracted outright as they are, in Baachic fashion, with the satrys, and the frenzied rabble, and the rest of the demon crew, let us confine to Cith☞ron and Helicon, now antiquated.**
> **But let us bring from above out of heaven, Truth, with Wisdom in all its brightness, and sacred prophetic choir, down to the holy mount of God; and let Truth, darting her light to the most distant points, cast her rays all around on those that are involved in darkness, and deliver men from delusion, stretching out her very strong right hand, which is wisdom, for their salvation.**[38]

As a matter of history, that attempt proved successful. Christianity was officially recognized as a legitimate religion during the reign of Constantine the Great. That Rome should become Christian was thenceforth all but inevitable. Yet there are two observations that need to be made. First, notwithstanding the strident animadversions of the Fathers, the rites of pagan redemption were not all or always lacking in moral and ethical idealism. There were injunctions requiring of the devotees purity of life and action and the observance of justice. Second, the devotees did, without question, experience a sense of redemption and fulfillment. In especially their initiatory rites, they felt an achieved communion and unity with their deity. They enjoyed an assurance of a blessed and happy immortality, of the victory of life over death.

For individuals of the twenty-first century, the question of the distinctive integrity of the Christian faith is a subject of supreme importance. Contemporary writers on the subject of myth and religion almost invariably regard the content of the Christian faith as but a form of myth, possessing fundamentally the same status as that which pertains to other mythic formations. Thus, in writing about the ritual love-death of primitive mythology, in which the myth of the Eleusinian Mysteries is located, Joseph Campbell says:

> **Something of the sort can be felt in the Christian myth of the killed, buried, resurrected, and eaten Jesus, whose mystery is the ritual of the altar and communion rail. But here the ultimate monstrosity of the divine drama is not stressed so much as the guilt of man in having brought it about; and we are asked to look forward to a last day, when the run of this cosmic tragedy of crime and punishment will be terminated and the kingdom of God realized on earth, as it is now in heaven. The Greek rendition of the mythology, on the other hand, remains closer to the primitive view, according to which there is to be no end, or even essential improvement, for this tragedy (as it will seem to some) or play (as it appears to the gods.**[39]

Now, it is true, on the assumption that Christianity has only a mythic import, that certain important distinctions can be made between the "Christian myth" and pagan myths. As the above quote suggests, pagan myths emphasize the

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[38]Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* i, *op. cit*., II, 171.

[39]Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), pp. 182-83

immanence of deity in nature, to the extent that nature and its processes and forces are themselves deified. The "Christian myth," coming out of Jewish thought, emphasizes the transcendence of God over nature, albeit in that transcendence exercising a providential care over nature. Thus, as Professor Campbell suggests, pagan myth sees no end to the tragedies of history, while Christianity finds the ultimate redemption of history. That is, certainly, a valid and important distinction. But notwithstanding this insight, it yet remains, so it is alleged, that Christianity has but mythic status. Thus, if Christianity possess a distinctive truth and validity, beyond the borders of myth, an altogether different analysis is necessary.

It may be maintained that the sole significant element in myth is its value in informing experience. It enables the individual to find a sense of meaning in this life and to bring a measure of confidence for the future. Certainly, as the above has pointed out, the devotees of the various pagan myths found a sense of bliss. At the center of their being they found a renewal of life and an assurance of a happy immortality beyond death. It thus makes no difference whether or not the myth has significance beyond the scope of immediate experience.

Now, myth—its beliefs and practices—contains at least an implicit cognitive claim. It carries with it, perhaps but tacitly, the assumption that it holds a measure of truth and validity. It is highly questionable that primitive man made no tacit judgment as to the significance of his experience. When one reads the accounts of the Fathers of the Church, who give us today the greater portion of information about the pagan myths of redemption, it becomes quite evident that the devotees held beliefs regarding the import of their myths.

But there is no certification of the truth value and validity of those tacit claims and assumptions held by those who devoted themselves to myth. The felt immediacy of experience is no guarantee of the significance of that experience. And, as we hope to demonstrate, there is that in the myth that contravenes its claims and assumptions.

The same is essentially true with respect to Christian experience. Testimonies are incontrovertible that Christians, too, find renewal and assurance. But here also the validation of the experience, if such is possible, must derive from a context other than the immediacy of experience. What that context is and the manner of its functioning are themes that must wait consideration later in this work.

Myth, as we have noted, functions to order inner experience. But it also functions to order outer experience, the experience of the outer world. There are mythic formulations of the object, of causality, of whole and part, of space, time, and number. In our modern world, these formulations have been replaced by science. In the next chapter, we propose to discuss this subject in some considerable detail.

A second, and main, topic of the chapter is devoted to the subject of the symbolic nature of science. The point to be developed is that science is itself a symbolic construct and, accordingly, cannot claim a literalism that confers upon it a status superior to other forms of symbolism, particularly the symbolism of religion.

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Chapter 2
The Symbolism of Science

The awareness of the outer world is not the awareness of reality in itself. The object of our knowledge is not something transcendent behind our representations. On the contrary, the outer world as we apprehend it is a represented world. It obtains within the unity of the form-producing consciousness that orders the particulars of experience into a pattern of meaning.

In our day, science is the preeminent mode in which the outer world is formed within the activity of the human spirit. But there are, and have been, other modes of apprehension. Myth is one such mode.

There is the mythical consciousness of the object. Again, it must be emphasized that the object is not given as a thing in itself, but only as it is constituted the kind of object it is by the act of consciousness. The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer makes this point:

> **It is one of the first essential insights of critical philosophy that objects are not "given" to consciousness in a rigid, finished state, in their naked "as suchness," but that the relation of representation to object presupposes an independent, spontaneous act of consciousness. The object does not exist prior to and outside of synthetic unity but is constituted only by this synthetic unity; it is no fixed form that imprints itself on consciousness but is the product of the formative operation effected by the basic instrumentality of consciousness, by intuition and pure thought.[40]**

The perception of sensible contents is to some extent ordered, in the sense that they appear and reappear in certain combinations and sequences. If this degree of coherence and sequence were not, as it were, embedded in the stream of sensations, there could be no establishment, on the basis of the sensory given, of an objective world. Thus this level of sensory experience is a necessary condition of the object. But it is not a sufficient condition. What is further required is the act of thought, by means of which the sensory flux is reformed into a more fully ordered whole in accordance with a law that governs the series of sense presentations.

Scientific thought fulfills this purely intellectual activity by which the sensory given is molded to form the object and the object-world in what for modern man is a preeminent way. For the mythical consciousness and mythical thought, however, this process is set in motion in a rudimentary and undeveloped manner.

There are, in this regard, two main characteristics of mythical thought. In the first place, the various sensory contents given in perception are placed on the same footing, i.e., they all, without any distinction, possess the same force of reality. They are all designated as the real object. No distinction is drawn between items of sensory experience that are essential and those that are peripheral as regards the nature of the object.

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[40]Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, tr. Ralph Manheim (3 vols.: New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955-57), II, 29.

The second characteristic is one that is particularly significant for this study, and is one to which reference must be made repeatedly. Mythical consciousness and thought views the object of immediate presentation as the real object. Its contents are given an object form, as "real contents." This form is completely homogeneous and undifferentiated. No distinction is, or can be, made between different spheres of objects, and no line is, or can be, drawn between the world of truth and the world of appearances. In this regard Cassirer notes:

> **Myth lives entirely by the presence of its object—by the intensity with which it seizes and takes possession of consciousness in a specific moment. Myth lacks any means of extending the moment beyond itself, of looking ahead of it or behind it, of relating it as a particular to the elements of reality as a whole. Instead of the dialectical movement of thought, in which every given particular is linked with other particulars in a series and thus ultimately subordinated to a general law and process, we have here a mere subjection to the impression itself and its momentary "presence."[41]**

There is the view that the contents of the mythical consciousness are symbolic, that behind them is another, hidden sense to which they mediately refer. Both medieval and romance thought held, with some variation, this "allegorical" theory of myth. There is, they affirmed, an ideal content that can be glimpsed behind the imagery of the myth. But this is to view myth from the outside, from a reflection that reads into myth such a distinction. If we examine myth itself, what it is and knows itself to be, we find no such distinction between the real and the ideal, between immediate reality and mediate signification. In its fundamental and original form, myth perceives real identity:

> **The "image" does not represent the "thing"; it is the thing; it does not merely stand for the object, but has the same actuality, so that it replaces the thing's immediate presence. Consequently, mythical thinking lacks the category of the ideal, and in order to apprehend signification it must transpose it into a material substance or being.[42]**

It is for this reason of the identity of image and thing that myth is not symbolism. And this explains the import of the ritualism of the mystery cults, which has been dealt with in the preceding chapter. The ritual is not merely mimetic portrayal of the event; it is the event. When the Eleusinian initiates participated in the passion play in which the two goddesses, Demeter and Persepone, find happiness in their reunion, the initiates were not merely dramatizing the event; they were actually sharing in the reality of the event. When they in silence beheld the sacred corn, they were not merely dramatizing the new life; they were actually receiving and participating in that new life.

Scientific thought transforms the object of mythical consciousness. By a process of analysis the sensuous contents of experience are reduced into ultimate elements that can be apprehended only by thought. At the purely sensuous level the contents are a pure flux that have no fixed pattern or order. Thus they must be transformed by thought into conceptual elements. For example, the laws of motion cannot be formulated simply in terms of the flux of perceptible contents. Only when atoms are postulated as the true subjects and

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[41] Ibid., *p. 35.*

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

ideal elements of motion, can exact mathematical laws of motion be constructed. It is in this fundamental sense that the concept of the atom and the mathematical formulation of motion are symbolic: symbolic, not of "reality" as it is in itself, but of the structure of experience.

The second process is that of synthesis. We do, indeed, intuitively perceive objects in a spatial form. But there is nothing in the contents of simple sensations that discloses that form. It is established only by the intellect, by a judgment that situates the contents in a relationship and system. The sensory data are thus apprehended according to position, size, and distance. These relationships in which the data are ordered constitute the fixed structure of "objectivity."

The synthesis that positions sensory items is also a critical activity. As the context in which the particulars are ordered is progressively developed, data that are out of harmony with that context are rejected. What certifies objectivity is the unity of experience. Objective existence is now no longer, as it is in mythical thought, identified with the mere givenness of perception; it is identified with the system in which certain data are structured. And appeal is constantly made to the whole of experience as the determining ground of objective reality. The only meaning that can be given to empirical reality is from within the system of thought. And this system is a symbolic structure; not, again, of reality in its innermost nature, but as the reality constituted by and obtaining within the synthesis of judgment. The symbolism is a formation that elucidates the structure, displayed incipiently in the flux of the data, of perceptual experience. That is its symbolism.

Cassirer puts the matter cogently:

> What distinguishes empirical reality, the constant core of objective being, from the mere world of representation or imagination, is that in it the permanent is more and more clearly differentiated from the fluid, the constant from the variable. The particular sense impression is not simply taken for what it is and immediately gives; instead we ask: will it be confirmed by experience as a whole? Only if it stands up under this question and this critical test can we say that it has been received into the realm of reality and determinate objective existence.[43]

Another reference may be helpful in emphasizing the symbolic nature of science. Professor Eddington writes:

> Science aims at constructing a world which shall be symbolic of the world of common experience. It is not at all necessary that every individual symbol that is used should represent something in common experience. . . . It is like our experience in learning to read. That which is written in a book is symbolic of a story in real life. The whole intention of the book is that ultimately a reader will identify some symbol, say BREAD, with one of the conceptions of familiar life. But it is mischievous to attempt such identification prematurely, before the letters are strung into words and the words into sentences. The symbol A is not the counterpart of anything in real life. To the child the letter A would seem horribly abstract; so we give him a familiar conception of it. "A was an archer who shot at a frog." The letters are abstract . . . . In physics we have outgrown archer and apple-pie definitions of the fundamental symbols. To a request to explain what an electron really is supposed to be we can only answer, "It is part of the A B C of physics."

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[43] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

The external world of physics has thus become a world of shadows.[44]

Further, there is the mythical consciousness of causality. The two considerations that define mythical thought and set it apart from scientific thought are precisely those that relate to the category of the object. Just as every object presented to mythical consciousness is taken as real, so any event can indiscriminately be taken as a cause of another event. Anything and everything that stands in temporal or spatial contact with something else can become a cause. This means that for mythical thought the cause is derived from the mere presence of sensory elements. No intellectual judgment is required to establish a causal relation and order.

Further, mythical thought views the causal object, indiscriminately selected, as a real cause. Mythical thinking holds to the principle of causation, just as does scientific thinking. There is agreement between the two forms of thought at this basic level. The difference between the two consists in the interpretation of the manner of causation. Science is content when it demonstrates that an individual event in space and time is an instance of a general law. It does not ask why the individual event came under the aegis of the general principle of cause and effect. But myth asks just this question, i.e., it seeks to explain why the individual event happened to occur under the province of the general law. It explains this by postulating individual acts of will. A catastrophe is brought upon the land by the act of a demonic will. Science explains the death of an individual in terms of certain universal conditions of "nature." It leaves unanswered the question as to why just this particular individual died, or, if it addresses the question at all, calls it an "accident." But mythical thought knows no accident. The death of this individual is the result of the act of a demonic will. This means, in sum, that for myth causation is purposive action, not an instance of an event subsumed under a merely formal principle that leaves the existentiality of the event unexplained as accidental.

Scientific thought rejects the free and unrestrictive selection of the cause. The temporal and spatial co-presence of events does not signify or constitute a causal relation. The mere temporal precedence of one event over another does not mean that the former is the cause of the latter event. When one eats bananas and gets sick, that does not necessary mean that the bananas are the cause of the illness. Every wide-awake beginning Logic student learns about the fallacy, post hoc ergo proper hoc (after, therefore, because of). Thus common understanding, to say nothing of scientific understanding, turns away from the presuppositions of mythical consciousness and thought.

In establishing a causal relationship, science resorts to the judgment. There are two phases of this judgment: analysis and synthesis. These are the two phases of the judgment that creates the category of the object.

Through the act of analysis, the sensory contents are distinguished from one another and assigned to different sets of conditions. Regardless of how often an event B follows event A, it does not follow that A is the cause of B. A mediating judgment must intervene and isolate the factor a in A that links with the factor b in B, such that A and B can be linked together in the cause

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[44]A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. xiii-xiv.

and effect relationship. It is this analytical, discriminatory, judgment that constitutes the category of causation, that is prerequisite in determining the nature of causation.

There is also a synthetic judgment in regard to the causal principle. The principle of causality demands the independence of a consequent y upon an antecedent x. The demand is a purely formal one: if x, then y. This is the form of the synthetic judgment informing the principle of causality. And, as the above has indicated, it functions subsequent to the judgment that analyzes the sensory items.

Now, the formal schema, which is definitive of the causal principle, is applied to a concrete situation only if the values to be inserted for x can be determined by accurate measurement. The process of measuring utilizes, to be sure, mathematical values, but those values must be given a unit of measurement. For example, if the number one is assigned as the value of the weight of an object, there must first be specified a unit of measurement, say a pound. Otherwise, the mathematical value is meaningless as pertaining to fact. The same is true with respect to the formal principle of causality. It bears upon physical reality only when certain physical magnitudes—such as the place and momentum of an object—have been determined with accuracy. When the measured variables have been ascertained, the formal principle of causality can then be applied to the concrete situation. The predication can then be made that if x occurs, y will occur. Certainly, if the principle of causality is applied to matters of fact, observation and measurement of physical magnitudes are necessary. But the principle of causality that is applied to physical objects is a purely formal schema. And it is its formal nature that admits its general applicability to physical phenomena.

Now, all of this means that the formal principle of causality is symbolic in its nature. It is located, not, as in myth, in the material of perceptual reality, but in the mind, in spiritual consciousness. It is a symbol for the ordering of the felt continuities within the stream of perceptual contents. If the question is raised as to whether or not the causal principle, when impinged upon events, "really" discloses that a corresponding causal order and relationship "exists" in the "real" world, that question cannot be answered. It is an irrational question. The causal principle does not exist in the real world. It is purely and only a formation of the synthetic judgment. Its form does, indeed, inform and mold the continuities of sensory experience, and that is the extent of its applicability. It symbolizes the felt continuities of perceptual experience and gives a fuller measure of order to them that they, despite an indeterminate continuity, do not in themselves possess. It leaves unanswered "how" events produce other events. It is thus limited in its prescriptiveness.

Considerations pertaining to the physical world fall within the scope of empirical science. There are other considerations that are comprehended in formal science. The formal sciences are those of logic and mathematics. They are distinctive symbolic formations.

Logic is a normative science, i.e., it formulates the rules that are required for correct thinking. It is concerned with the intrinsic nature of the procedure of thought, regardless of the particular subject matter, the material, of thought. Its ultimate appeal is to the canon of consistency.

The "laws of thought" formulate explicitly this requirement of thought.

Traditionally, they are three in number: the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle. Leibniz (1646) formulated a fourth law, the law of sufficient reason.

The three traditional laws of thought admit of various interpretation and formulation. These interpretations, however, prejudge the question as to the nature and status of the laws. In order to avoid any such prejudgment, they need to be formulated in terms of their abstract symbolic character. Thus the law of identity reads: A ≡ A, A is equivalent to A. The law of contradiction reads: A ≢ ~A, A is not equivalent to Not-A. And the law of excluded middle reads: A v ~A, A or Not-A.

A realistic interpretation of the laws affirms that they are, eo ipso laws of being or existence. They formulate, even are, the basic aspects of the universe itself. They are, first and foremost, the essential traits of all things whatsoever. They originate in being as being. And for that reason they are capable of expressing the essential traits of anything that exists or may exist. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle held this view. He argued that the general nature of things is the ground for the correctness of reasoning and that this is expressed in the laws of thought. Since they have to do with anything that exists or may exist, they are formal in their nature. They are not restricted to any given subject matter. Instead they hold for anything whatsoever; they are universally applicable.

Aristotle's argument for the ontological priority of the laws of thought is as follows:

> **The fact of the being of a man carries with it the truth of the proposition that he is, and the implication is reciprocal: for if a man is, the proposition wherein we allege that he is is true, then he is. The true proposition, however, is in no way the cause of the being of the man, but the fact of the man's being does seem somehow to be the cause of the truth of the proposition, for the truth or the falsity of the proposition depends on the fact of the man's being or not being.**[45]

Now it is conceivable that the structural laws of thought are grounded in the structural principles of being. On that assumption, the laws are capable of disclosing the general properties of reality. But it is not possible to demonstrate either that thought yields the disclosure of reality or that reality is the ultimate ground of thought and its structural principles. Aristotle himself may have realized this, in his use of the adverb somehow: " . . . the fact . . . does seem somehow to be the cause of the truth of the proposition." The ontological view of logic is but an assumption, and an assumption that reflects a certain metaphysical prejudice, namely, that reality is ultimately mind-independent and that, as an alien object, may be known independent of and unmodified by the knower. This ontological view of logic and its structural principles meets in common with the realist theory of the symbol, that the symbol is the symbol of an independent reality, subsisting beyond mind and thought, and that the symbol function is a literal disclosure of being itself. There is, however, a difference, in that the ontological theory of logic does not argue that logic is symbolic of reality. It is, via its structural principles, of the nature of reality itself.

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[45]Aristotle *Catagorae, Chap. 12, in* Works, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1928), Vol. 1, p. 14[b].

Diametrically opposed to the realist theory, is the view that the laws of thought are stipulative conventions, purely man-made prescriptions for the use of names. As intelligence developed in the slow evolution of the human race, it was discovered that words had to be used with the same meaning. The principles of thought were developed to deal with this necessity. They do not indicate the structure of reality, nor are they derived from any ontological ground. If there should come a time when a more useful set of conventions is developed, the traditional laws will become obsolete and discarded.

The main difficulty with this theory is the essential arbitrariness that it gives to logic and the principles of consistent thought. It overlooks the circumstance that there is an irrefragable element of compulsiveness about the demand for consistency and those principles that express that demand. It is, to be sure, correct in questioning the claim of ontologism, that logic is grounded in the structure of being. But it leaves logic and its principles wholly unsupported; it finds nothing substantial in which to anchor them and thereby remove the caprice and arbitrariness that the theory gives them.

There must be a mediating position between the two extremes. The question becomes, then, "What is the locus of the force, the compulsiveness, that impinges upon thought and demands the consistency of meaning?

It is impossible to escape the role and force of presuppositions. The fate, which is our fate, that our systems of thought rest upon presuppositions has not always been breasted. In the past there have been philosophical systems whose evidential value have been taken for granted. Metaphysical prejudices that underpin systems have given them their semblance of authority, which remains intact as long as they lurk in the background without recognition and admission. The task, then, is not to find a beginning and foundation for thought that escapes all presupposition, but to push the necessary presupposition to the largest degree of generality that will provide the adequate foundation for logic and the demands of its structural principles.

The presupposition behind which we cannot proceed further is the presupposition of communication. The intent to communicate with others, and the activity of that communication, is the final foundation upon which thought and the canons of logic rest. This presupposition is not something arbitrary. It is not a mere man-made device that may at some later time be replaced by other canons. It is a requirement the necessity of which is disclosed in the very attempt to communicate our meanings. As long as we intend to communicate, as long as we engage in that activity, these canons must be accepted and embraced. They are, therefore, the morality of thought. They are values that must, in their context, be acknowledged.

Wilbur Marshall Urban was an American value theorist who was active during the first half of the twentieth century. In an article published in 1927, he insisted upon the view that logic is a normative, not a descriptive science. It describes neither psychological processes nor the structure of being. He wrote:

> Logic, I should maintain, is not, as in so many modern conceptions, the ultimate science of existence. It remains what it has always been, the science of correct thinking and of intelligible expression. Its material is not the existent,——that is the material of the special sciences,——but rather the meanings of the existent. Logic is the ultimate science of whatever is the case, but only in the sense that whatever is the case must be capable of being expressed; must, in order to enter into intelligible

> discourse, be capable of statement in logical form. As such, logic is die Moral des Denkens, the science of those absolute norms or values that must be acknowledged if judgments of truth and existence are themselves to have any intelligible and communicable meanings. As such, moreover, it is above all ontologies and all ontological prejudices.[46]

The purely normative character of logic does not imply, however, that it has no bearing upon reality. If we undertake to think and express reality via the formations of symbolism (as discussed in the foregoing), it is necessary to respect the canons of logic. Logic thus sustains this measure of ontological relevance as it governs the process of thought and expression. In a later work Urban made this point:

> [Logic] is the structural form of whatever we can intelligibly express . . . . Logic can give us the form of intelligible discourse, but never by itself determine its intelligibility. It can give us the scaffolding of an intelligible world, but can never by itself determine the ultimate character of that world.[47]

Logic, we have argued, is the demand of consistency. And that demand rests upon the intent to communicate. That intent forces the acknowledgment of the principle of consistence, and thus, of the laws of thought that inform logic. This intent, it must be emphasized, is the ultimate postulate of all thought and knowledge. It cannot be explained, and this because it is the presupposition of all knowledge and science. It can only be acknowledged.

Thus the law of identity, A ☞ A, or A is equivalent to, means that our concepts must have a degree of stability and distinctness of content. Concepts held before the mind must be retained, produced, and recognized as the same. The law of contradiction, A ⓪ ~A, or A is not equivalent to Not-A is the negative side of the law of identity. It stipulates that ideas held before the mind must be distinguished from one another. To apprehend A is to know that it is not not-A. The law of excluded middle, A v ~A, A or Not-A, specifies the relation between a concept and its contradictory. It asserts that of two contradictory assertions one is necessarily true. There can be no third possibility. In sum, the laws of logic impose the element of consistency on our concepts and judgments, and this only on the presupposition of the intent to communicate. But, given that intent, they are obligatory and binding.

Granted, now, that logic is a normative discipline, that its principles are obligatory in that they are necessarily grounded on the presupposition of intelligible communication. They are neither ontological nor merely conventional. What then, is the status of logic and its normative prescriptions?

It cannot be said that the principles of logic are symbolic of reality itself. Symbolism in empirical science, we have previously noted, does not function as a disclosure of the inner nature of reality as it is in itself. Its symbolic function consists strictly in its reference to perceptual

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[46]W. M. Urban, "Value, Logic, and Reality, in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, 1927), p. 288.

[47]W. M. Urban, *The Inte*lligible World: Metaphysics and Value (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1929), p. 103.

experience. Now, if logic is symbolic, its reference must be restricted to the givenness of experience. That givenness, however, cannot be the psychological process of thinking. Logic is not symbolic of any psychological process or fact. Were it so, it would be but a descriptive science and lose its normative character. Logic does not describe how thought occurs; it prescribes how thought ought to occur.

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which logic functions with symbolic reference. The question thus becomes: "What is the nature of that reference?"

The principles of logic express the demand for consistency of thought. We have developed this point at some length in the above. It is this feature of thought that creates and governs the symbolism by means of which the sensory items of experience are formed into the object of experience. The judgment of identity situates the perceptual items into a context of relationship and system. It is this system of relationships in which the data are ordered that constitutes the fixed structure of "objectivity." Objectivity is certified in the unity of experience.

Now, this system in which objectivity obtains is, as we have seen, one of symbolic form. Since the formal demands of logic create and empower the symbolism in which objectivity is secured, in that respect logic and its principles possess symbolic reference and significance.

The discipline of logic contains certain principles other than the traditional laws of thought. Among them is the logical relation of antecedent and consequent. This is the logical principle that constitutes the symbolic form of causality according to which the merely sequential items of perception are resolved into a system of cause and effect. Attention has been given to this subject in the foregoing. Here it is sufficient to indicate that in this bearing of the formal principle of antecedent and consequent lies the symbolic reference of the principle.

There remains, however, the question as to the status of the principles of logic. What is their mode of being. In some sense they do have reality. But their reality, we have pointed out, is not of an existential or ontological order. This order of being is antithetical to their function as norms. And that they are normative principles is without question.

These principles are, however, ideally objective. In the language of phenomenology, they are objectives. The idea of a principle of logic has a "content-element" that is the reference that the idea bears to a definite object, e.g., the law of identity. This reference is not intrinsic to the content-element itself, but is established by means of judgment. The judgment gives direction to the object. The judgment is a "that," that there is the law of identity. The is is not the is of existence or reality. Its mode of being is that of subsistence. It possesses a strictly ideal mode of being.[48]

Mathematics is the second of the formal sciences. We are here concerned with the concept of space and number, which fall, respectively, within the rubric of geometry and arithmetic. We turn first to the subject of space and geometry.

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[48]For a detailed account of the theory of objectives, see Alexius Meinong, *Über Annahmen*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Barth, 1910), pp. 52, 60-61, 69, 73.

The designation of the object is brought about by the judgment that fixes it as an identity above and beyond the flux of sensory items. This situation of the object, however, is within the framework of space.

Now the term space has at least three possible meanings: intuitive space, expressive space, and geometrical space. Here we must consider these meanings, if we are to come to some understanding of the symbolic nature of space.

Intuitive space is the space of perception. It is bound up inextricably with one's awareness of the body and the activity of speaking. The dimension, position, and direction of objects are determined in reference to the body. The object is large or small in comparison with the body, is here or there in reference to the body, is in this or that direction from the standpoint of the body. The parameters of the intuitive manifold are constituted from the center of the situation of the body. Further, when a person speaks to another person, the intuition of position and direction accompanies that act of language. I am "here," the other person is "there", and "there" is in that direction. Even here there is the beginning of a new standpoint. A bond is established between the subject and the object. It is a bond that brings the two together and yet keeps them separate. The positing of this twofold relationship yields an intuitive space where the factors of separateness and juxtaposition, of discreteness and combination stand in tensional equilibrium. Precisely this is the beginning of the representation of space as a schema of ideal relationships. Even in its incipiency the schema functions as the symbol of the real relationships in which things stand. The beginning of a spatial, a measurement, relation between them has been established, albeit but rudimentary and tentative.

Expressive space is the space of myth. It, like intuitive space, is bound to the object-world. The postulates of Euclidean space are continuity, infinity, and uniformity. None of these are realized in the character of perception. There is no perception of infinity, since it is necessarily confined within spatial limits. The same holds true for homogeneity. Geometric space is homogeneous in that its associated elements are mere determination of positions that have no independent content of their own outside of that relationship. The reality of the elements consists strictly in their reciprocal relation. In mythical space position and content cannot be separated. Position is always the position of a definite individual sensuous or intuitive content.

Although the space of myth is always object oriented, it is analogous to geometrical space in that it operates as a schema. It provides a schema in which to bring otherwise opposed elements into a relationship. In so doing, it marks off zones into which to place various groups of items or elements. The articulation is complex and lacks any selective and ordering principle. Totemism is a rudimentary form of this articulation. The Zu*is divide space into seven zones: north and south, east and west, the upper and lower worlds, and, finally, the center of the world. Every reality occupies its respective zone.

In science the principle of articulation is made on the basis of ideal, logical form. It ". . . establishes a determinate spatial order by relating the sensuous diversity of impressions to a system of purely logical, purely ideal, forms.[49] In mythical space, the principle of articulation is feeling.

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[49]Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

Feeling provides a value accent according to which the sacred is separated from the profane. The fundamental spatial zones are the sacred and profane. And these zones are not abstract zones; on the contrary, they are the abode of good and evil forces, of gods and demons. Here, as in intuitive space, space is bound to the substantive.

There is a foundation in perception that gives rise to the mythical opposition of the sacred and profane. That foundation is the perception of light. Thus light and space are intimately associated together. The directions of east, west, north, and south are not ideal forms, but entities with a life and a value of their own. The gods are the gods of direction: of north and south, of east and west, and of the lower and upper world. Each zone has a specific value quality: divine or demonic, friendly or hostile, holy or unholy. The east is the source of light and thus of life itself. The west, where the sun sets and darkness sets in, is the place of terror and death.

Geometrical space is the full development of representative space, whose beginning, we have earlier noted, lies in intuitive space itself. Geometrical space is posited when definite perceptions are singled out and selected as fixed points of reference. The flux of sensory items is halted and certain of these elements are placed in an enduring pattern. The pattern, when viewed as pattern, is the abstract schema of geometrical space, and, unlike intuitive space, assumes the attributes of continuity, infinity, and uniformity. It functions to represent, for example, the real form of an object, which until fixed by the analytic and synthetic power of thought is but a kaleidoscopic flux of sensations. It functions, also, to represent the actual relations that obtain between those objects. It is thus that geometrical space is representative. In short geometrical space is a symbolic construction. And, as elsewhere, it does not symbolize an absolute, ontological reality. It holds only for the formation of experience. Its form is subjective.

Some attention should be given to the subject of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries. Both orders of geometry are symbolic in nature. The differences that separate the geometries do not affect this factor. The basis upon which the differences rest is the frame of reference in which they function. Euclidean geometry rests on the presupposition of a flat surface. Given this presupposition, the postulates and theorems of Euclidian geometry "fit," i.e., symbolize, the world of intuited space. But they do not entirely fit the presupposition of a spherical space. Riemann's geometry, for example, redefines Euclid's definition of a straight line. In spherical space straight lines are the "greatest circles," which are, therefore, the shortest distance between two points. Since they all intersect, there are no parallel lines in this geometry. This geometry, too, symbolizes, not a lived intuition of spatiality, but a constructed spatiality. The final step in thinking about the nature of geometrical concepts was taken by David Hilbert. He proposed a formalism according to which all basic concepts are nothing but symbols that may designate anything from spatial entities to, as he put it, "angelic holiness."

The second branch of mathematics to which we turn our attention is that of number and arithmetic. As in the case of space and geometry, there are both sensuous and mythical beginnings to number and arithmetic.

For primitive man, the body is the basis and foundation of enumeration. In this regard, Cassirer notes:

> **The differentiation of numbers starts, like that of spatial relations, from the human body and its members, thence extending over the whole of the sensuous, intuitive world. Everywhere man's own body provides the model for the first primitive enumeration: the first "counting" consists merely in designating certain differences found in external objects, by transferring them, as it were, to the body of the counter and so making them visible.[50]**

Among these primitive peoples, there are various counting gestures. For example, the Ewe count on their outstretched fingers, beginning with the little finger of the left hand, then continuing with the fingers of the right hand. They then squat on the ground and count on their toes.

Language reflects the bodily gesture of counting. The Klamath Indians employ a variety of numerals formed from verbs of various bodily actions. One class of objects is placed on the ground to be counted; another class, piled in layers, and so forth.

Now what is significant of this bodily, intuitive method of counting is that a prescribe order, according to which objects are placed, is instituted. While the order is an intuitive schema, it nevertheless is the indispensable groundwork for the purely intelligible schema of number.

There is a more basic and essential role of the body in the development of the concept of number. Cassirer states that the idea of number does not originally arise from the perception of the placement of objects. It arises from the awareness of the opposition of the self and the other, the "I" and the "thou." Many primitive languages indicate that this opposition advances quickly to enumeration: from "one" to "two." The number three develops with the "person spoken of" is added. But beyond the number three, there are no additional numbers in the number "schema."[51]

For the mythical consciousness, mythical number, like mythical space, is attached to sensuous content. Number is not yet a universal specification applicable to any content whatsoever. To note an example: we have earlier seen that the expressive space of myth articulates space into zones, the fundamental zones being those of the sacred and profane. On the basis of the experience of light, the directions of east, west, north, and south become entities with their own life and value. Each zone has its own specific value quality. Now, these four directions, or spatial zones, are given a numerical value, the value of the number four. The four cardinal points of the world embrace the structure of the world and the world process. Thus the number four becomes the sacred number par excellence, expressing the fundamental form of the universe. And any particular thing that has a four-fold organization becomes a sacred object. Thus the number is not an abstract schema that may be applied to anything whatsoever, but is rather an intuitive schema that, expressing the nature of the universe, attaches to specific entities. And there are other numbers that likewise relate to the content of perception.

For the theoretical consciousness, number is disassociated from the given content of sensuous experience. It becomes an abstract and intelligible

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[50]Cassirer, *op. cit*., I, 229.

[51]*Ibid*, pp. 241-49.

schema, an entity that is absolutely homogeneous and uniform. It embraces various and dissimilar things and connects them withing the unity of the concept.

> **And just as number here serves as the true logical instrument for creating a homogeneity of the contents of consciousness, so number itself develops more and more into an absolutely homogeneous and uniform entity. The particular numbers disclose no differences over against one another, other than those arising from their position in the system as a whole. They have no other being, no other character and nature, than that which comes to them through this position, in other words through the relations within an ideal aggregate. . . . for mathematical thought numbers are nothing but an expression of conceptual relations; only in their totality do they represent the self-enclosed and unitary structure of number as such and of the realm of number.**[52]

Number is constituted through the synthetic activity of thought. This synthetic activity, through which number and the number series is constituted, means that ordinal number is logically prior to and thus the foundation of, cardinal number. We arrange the objects of our perception in a certain order: a first "something," a second "something," and so on. There is then a "one" and a "two," and so on.

Now the question becomes: granted that there are two orders of numbers, ordinal and cardinal, and that they are created by a synthetic and irreducible act of the mind, in what sense do numbers "exist"? The answer to this question is largely framed in terms of two opposing views: formalism and intuitionism.

Formalism is associated with the German mathematician David Hilbert (1862-1943), who was Professor of Mathematics at the University of Göttingen. According to him, numbers are but signs. They do not represent anything beyond themselves. They do not signify determinate ideal relationships. Pure mathematics is like chess, nothing but a game with arbitrarily devised rules. He writes:

> **I find the objects of the theory of numbers in the signs themselves, whose form we can recognize universally and surely, independent of place and time and of the special conditions attending the production of the signs as well as of insignificant differences in there elaboration. Here lies the firm philosophical orientation, which I regard as requisite to the grounding of pure mathematics, as well as to all scientific thinking, understanding, and communication. "In the beginning," we may say here, was the sign.**[53]

The function of the mathematician is to insure, so far as possible, that the formal system of signs is free from internal contradictions. In this respect, and only in this respect, is a mathematical system true. Beyond this, the mathematician and mathematics have no further role and import. There is nothing beyond the system of signs to which that system can orient itself.

Hermann Weyl proposed a remedy for the defect within a purely formal mathematics. Weyl was born in Germany in 1885 and died in Switzerland in 1955.

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[52] *Ibid*., II, 141.

[53] David Hilbert, *Neubegründung der Mathematik*, Abhandlungen zus dem mathematischen Seminar der Hamburgischen Universität, 1, 162. Quoted from Cassirer, *op. cit*., III, 380.

He had received his doctorate in mathematics under Hilbert, and taught, among other places, at Göttingen and Princeton. He advanced a theory of intuitionism.

He argued that mathematical signs have transient meaning, i.e., they refer to realities beyond themselves. The signs, he says, are symbols. Their symbolic reference is twofold: they function as symbols of the order in which physical events subsist and as symbols of a metaphysical world. Of the physical application of mathematical symbols, he states:

> **I do not find it [symbolism] unless I let mathematics fuse entirely with physics and assume that the mathematical concepts of number, function, etc. [or Hilbert's symbols] fundamentally partake in the theoretical construction of the real world, in the same way as do the concepts of energy, gravitation, the electron, etc.**

Yet Weyl believed that something more is required than the physical reference of mathematical symbols. The components of mathematics must have independent meaning beyond their physical application. Without that meaning they could not even function in reference to the physical. They must have a life of their own. But what that life is, he said, is something that we cannot see or know. It is something in which we must believe:

> **In theory, consciousness succeeds in "jumping over its own shadow," in leaving given matter behind it and in representing the transcendent; but it goes without saying that this can be accomplished only in the symbol. Theoretical formulation is something other than intuitive insight; its aim is no less problematic than that of artistic formation. Over the idealism that is destined to destroy epistemologically naive, there rises a third realism. . . . If I designate phenomenal insight as knowledge, then theoretical insight rests on faith—faith in the reality of one's own ego and that of others, or in the reality of the outside world or of God.[54]**

But now what of this "third realism," according to which mathematical signs are symbolic representations of transcendent objects? Is this the symbolic import of mathematics? At this point, Weyl is correct. If this theory of realism be true, its truth is beyond the certification of reason. It is a matter of faith only.

Now, mathematical signs are symbolic, but not in a realistic sense. A theory that makes the symbol symbolize something absolutely and utterly transcendent, beyond the pale of human ken, collapses upon itself. It is self-stultifying. For there is, as we have earlier argued, no way in which it can be known that there is indeed a reality beyond the symbolic function or that the symbol does indeed symbolize the alleged transcendent reality.

This brings us, again, to the question of the basic nature of symbolism. Language, physical science, logic, and mathematics are constructions of meaning developed in accordance with formative laws of their own. The traditional metaphysics propounds a dualism of two worlds: the world of "immanence" and the world of "transcendence." It defines the symbol as belonging exclusively to the immanence of consciousness. Its function is to mirror an independent, transcendent reality. But that is not, and cannot be, the role of symbolism. Instead, the symbol informs its content in virtue of its distinctive formative

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[54]Cf. Weyl, "Philosophie der Mathematik," pp. 53 ff.; *Symposion*, I, 30, ff. Quoted from Cassirer, *op. cit.*, III, 382.

principle, and that content is, in its own subjective form, the representation of reality. That is the reality. That is the only reality with which we have to do. Reality is available only as disclosure within the symbolic formation, and not as an external something to be mirrored. In the language of Plato, the symbol is a mode of "growing into being" (γένεσις εἰς οὐσέαν).

The objects of mathematics are neither free-floating signs nor transcendent objects. Rather they are objects of thought-formation. They have their place in the formative process of thought. The logical world consists of the categorical determinations of unity and otherness, identity and difference. It determines a world of pure, self-identical ideas distinguishable from one another. The mathematical world carries these pure logical determinations further, constituting the relations through and in which the objects of experience are ordered. Mathematical objects, accordingly, constitute the transition from the world of pure thought to the world of the empirical, physical object. Behind and within these activities is the fundamental unity of thought itself, which brings out of its depth the relational structures that yield the various orders of reality with which we have to do. And it is precisely this "yielding" in which symbolism consists and in which, accordingly, the world is presented as a knowledgeable world.

The careful reader will be troubled with this view of the nature of symbolism in science. Does not this view of the subject reduce objectivity—— the objectively real world——to but a factor of our own subjective experience? Is reality just what we experience and apprehend? Is there nothing more?

This consequence is not forthcoming from the circumstance that thought yields the relational structures of symbolism. Now, indeed, thought is of an object. It is intentional in its nature; it intends an object. Thus a presupposition of reality is a demand of thought. The presupposition of reality as such, or überhaupt, is a necessary presupposition of all thought and communication. But that presupposition cannot be realized in terms of any definite formation of experience. Our human predicament is that we are confined to the "community of subjective form." That is, we are held fast to the synthetic and relational forms in which our experience and experienced world are ordered. The notion that these symbolic forms somehow grow beyond themselves and literally disclose the inner nature of physical reality is untenable. But what is tenable is that it is these very forms, constructed from the spirituality of thought, that yield the ordering of experience that we call understanding and knowledge. And that very ordering is the symbolization that we call science. Beyond this symbolic function we cannot proceed. The truth that we obtain is found and certified, not in any isomorphism between symbol and presupposed reality, but in the continuing and on-going building up of a theoretical structure in which its elements are bound by the demands of consistency. For, again, it is in that structure that the empirical object-world is located. That, and that alone, is the object world of empirical science.

The English philosopher-scientist Arthur Eddington expresses the symbolic nature of physical science in the following manner:

> **The physical universe is the world which physical knowledge is formulated to describe, and there is no difference between the physical universe and the universe of physics.[55]**

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[55]Arthur Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (New York: The Macmillan

Again:

> **The few who have attempted to give it ["really exists"] a definite meaning do not always agree on the meaning. By defining the physical universe and the physical objects that constitute it as the theme of a specified body of knowledge, and not of things possessing a property of existence elusive of definition, we free the foundations of physics from suspicion of metaphysical contamination.[56]**

In this or another of his books, Eddington constructs what may be termed a "Robinson Crusoe" illustration. A man is cast on an island that he initially takes to be uninhabited by other human beings. He wanders along the shore and sees no other human individual. Soon he comes on human footprints in the sand. He is elated, believing that he has found evidence of the existence of another person. Some time later, after recognizing the reappearance of familiar surroundings, he realizes that he is walking in his own footprints. ". . . there is no difference between the physical universe and the universe of physics."

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Chapter 3
The Symbolism of Grace

> **Science does not give us literal truth about the cosmos whereas religion gives us symbolic. The scientific propositions are no less symbolic than the religious although the symbols are of a different type and constructed for a different purpose.[57]**

In the preceding chapter we have attempted to point up the respect in which the logical-mathematical and the empirical sciences are symbolic. In particular, attention was given to the way in which the symbolic constructs of the object and of causation formulate the relations in which the scientific world of nature is built up. While there is, indeed, the presupposition of reality as such, those formulations do not in any literal sense disclose the inner nature of physical reality. In short, symbolism is a scientific principle.

The purpose of the present chapter is to develop the concept of symbolism as it functions in the area of religion. The concern here will be devoted primarily to the Christian religion. The emphasis must, obviously, be placed upon the language of the New Testament. For that is the language in which the symbolism of Christian grace is expressed. The argument is that our understanding of the religion of grace is, and must be, through the symbols contained in that language. While, as we shall see, the symbols may be expanded in terms of the wider generalities of reason, that expansion can never replace the symbols as avenues of spiritual insight. Rather it is to vivify and enhance the intuitive content of the symbol, in which is obtained insight

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Co., 1939), p. 159.

[56]*Ibid*., p. 3.

[57]Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Humanity and Deity* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1951), p. 344.

into spiritual realities.

We have earlier observed that the pagan myths address the themes that are also addressed in Christianity: the sorrow and sin of human existence, the dying and risen savior, the birth of the holy child, redemption and purification through the shedding and appropriation of blood, cleansing and newness through baptism, rites of communion with the deity by means of sacrament of wine and food and marriage, and, ultimately, resurrection as victory over death.

This circumstance has led many scholars to adopt one of two views. One view is a purely reductionist one, that is, that the Christian themes are reformulation of the mythic material of paganism. This reformulation but changes the color of the older myths. Although the terms are modified, this modification still leaves them as myth.

In our era, the development of physical science occasioned the affirmation of its autonomy and, finally, of a dominance that excluded all forms of knowledge except that of "positive" science. Religion is regarded as identical with the mythical. Philosophy, this theory states, is at least partially in the mythical stage, while science has succeeded in moving completely beyond it.

Here it may be observed that this view of positivism as to its exclusive claim to knowledge is but an irrational presupposition that cannot be cognitively supported. The claim, which it makes, that myth is but a precursor of science does not represent the place of myth in human life and history. It certainly is not something that has been intentionally and consciously developed as a preparatory stage for something else. Those who lived and breathed in the mythical world has no such thought as to the significance of their myths.

The other view is one that regards the Christian themes, not as myths, but as symbols. While the material of the symbols is mythical, even in their reformulation, that material takes on a symbolic significance. The meaning of the symbol, then, is detached from its material base and referred to spiritual realities that transcend the existence-level of its material foundation. What the Christian religion says explicitly, then, must not be taken as literally true. Rather, what is true is what that religion says implicitly——what it says implicitly about the great themes of human existence and salvation. And this meaning must be formulated and explicated in rational terms. In sum, this view is an attempt to retain the primitive value of myth and yet go beyond that value to a level of greater significance.

This conception of the relation of myth to religion is set forth, for example, in the writings of Professor Urban:

> Moreover——and this is a still more important point of difference——the dramatic language of the myth and its categories are not permanent in religion as myth, but rather as a necessary symbolic form in which religion——itself not myth——is alone expressible . . . myth and religion are fundamentally different in essence . . . Myth simply furnishes the material for religious symbolism, for only the dramatic language of the myth can provide the appropriate symbols for the content of religion.[58]

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Here Urban follows Ernst Cassirer, whose treatment of myth in the modern era Urban calls "the most significant, as it is also the most thorough":

> **. . . myth and religion have within them their own source of motion, that from their beginnings down to their supreme productions they are determined by their own motives and fed from their own well-springs. Even where they pass far beyond these first beginnings they do not abandon their native spiritual soil. Their positions do not suddenly and immediately shift into negations; rather, it can be shown that every step they take, even in their own sphere, bears, as it were, a twofold omen. To the continuous building up of the mythical world there corresponds a continuous drive to surpass it, but in such a way that both the position and the negation belong to the form of the mythical-religious consciousness itself and in it join to constitute a single indivisible act. The process of destruction proves on closer scrutiny to be a process of self-assertion; conversely, the latter can only be effected on the basis of the former, and it is only in their permanent cooperation that the two together produce the true essence and meaning of the mythical-religious form.[59]**

The key concept of this latter view is "mythical-religious." Religion is not something completely disjoined from myth. Rather, it is the manner in which myth is utilized in consciousness. This view of the relation of myth to religion brings, obviously, the themes of Christianity into the sphere of myth. Its symbols become the material of myth. If this view be accepted, Christianity loses any claim to being the distinctive and unique religion of revelation. Indeed, it is the case that the scriptures speak symbolically of God and His relation to humanity. But does it follow that, finally, the terms of that speech are but mythical? Here it may observed that any similarity, at the categorial level, between the terms of myth and Christianity does not imply an identity of essential content. This problem will constitute the burden of the final chapter of this work. But now it must be held in abeyance and attention given to a consideration of the symbols that the scriptures do employ to register insight into the verities of spirituality.

We have earlier pointed up the basic nature of symbolism, by means of a reference to the work of Harald Höffding:

> **In all symbolization, ideas taken from narrow although more intuitible relations are used as expressions for relations which, on account of their exaltedness and ideality, cannot be directly expressed.[60]**

Thus symbols of religion share in this general characteristic of symbols. But religious symbols have additional features that other types of symbols do not possess. First, they are drawn from fundamental and pervasive regions of intuition. They are rooted in a deeper layer of human experience than the images employed in the formation of the symbols of science and art. Höffding describes those regions as ". . . the great fundamental relations of nature and of human life—light and darkness, power and weakness, life and death, spirit and matter, good and evil . . . .[61] Second, the more important feature of

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[59]Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, tr. Ralph Manheim (3 vols.: New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955-57), II, 237.

[60]Harald Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 201.

[61]*Ibid*.

religious symbols consists in their unique reference. The reference is to the infinite. The religious symbol, therefore, shines with a distinctive luminous quality. It is extremely rich in color and extremely toned with emotion.

In his book, The Idea of the Holy, the German philosopher Rudolf Otto devised a term to denote the unique character of the religious consciousness. He pointed out that the word "ominous" is taken from the Latin omen. There is no reason, he argued, why a new word "numinous" should not be formed from the Latin numen. "I shall speak, then," he wrote,

> **of a unique 'numinous' category of value and of a definitely 'numinous' state of mind, which is always found wherever the category is applied. This mental state is perfectly sui generis and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined. . . . it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind; as everything that comes 'of the spirit' must be awakened.**[62]

In the earlier chapters of the work, he develops the elements of the numinous. The experience of the numinous is a feeling of creature-hood. It is also a feeling of the divine majesty, which Otto calls mysterium tremendum. The tremendum involves the element of awefulness, of overpoweringness, of energy or urgency. And the mysterium involves the element of The Wholly Other, the unapproachable distance of God from humanity. All this Otto terms The Holy.

The Holy is an a-rational category. It cannot be equated with the moral category of the good. It is not a metaphysical category to be explicated through rational analysis. It is strictly a category of feeling, of intuition. It is, Otto says, "the feeling which remains where the concept fails." The terminology that is available for use here "is not any the more loose or indeterminate for having necessarily to make use of symbols."[63] **What is important for us here is the observation that the symbols will carry the burden of the numinous. It is precisely this burden that makes the symbols, drawn as they are from the intuitions of humanity, the symbols of religion. It should be noted here that this circumstance in nowise contravenes the concept of divine revelation. The meaning of revelation is that God speaks, but speaks in the terms of humanity, the only terms that we are able to comprehend. For in themselves ". . . how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"**[64]

Of this supreme experience of the numinous, Otto writes:

> **. . . the mysterium is experienced in its essential, positive, and specific character, as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but one whose real nature he can neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought, but may know only by a direct and living experience. It is a bliss which embraces all those blessings that are indicated or suggested in positive fashion by any 'doctrine of salvation', and it quickens all of them through and through, but these do not exhaust it. Rather by its all-**

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[62]Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd ed., tr. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 7.

[63]*Ibid*., Foreword.

[64]Rom. 11:33.

pervading, penetrating glow it makes of these very blessings more than the intellect can conceive in them or affirm of them. It gives the peace that passes understanding, and of which the tongue can only stammer brokenly. Only from afar, by metaphor and analogies, do we come to apprehend what it is in itself, and even so our notion is but inadequate and confused.[65]

The great religious symbols have their source in two areas: nature and human nature. We shall consider first certain of the symbols drawn from our experience of nature. We shall, in the main, restrict our consideration to the biblical record, with special emphasis placed on the New Testament.

Light.

In its function as symbol, the term φῶς (phōs), light, is what is known as a "tensive" symbol. A tensive symbol is one that strikes deeply into and expresses the tensions and contrasts of human existence. One of those tensions is that of light and darkness. The symbol light represents and expresses the positive pole of that all-pervasive tension of human existence.

Nowhere is that basic tension better stated than in the language of St. Paul: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). In this passage Paul uses the abstract form, σκότος (skotos), which means "darkness itself." The term conveys the thought that outside of Christ people are not only in darkness; the darkness is also in them. But now in Christ the whole nature of light belongs to them as did formerly the nature of darkness. They are now not only in the light, but they are penetrated by the light, so that they themselves are "the light of the world." They are truly the "children of light."

In its spiritual significance, the symbol of light has three basic meanings. First, light means illumination--the illumination of revelation. Second, it means holiness--the condition of life that is delivered from the selfish and grasping spirit. And, third, it means influence--the contagion that extends outward to others.

Light as illumination.

Light as illumination is one of the oldest of human symbols. In the third millennium B.C. a school flourished in Sippar in ancient Mesopotamia. Young men from all over Mesopotamia, and perhaps from outlying regions, congregated at this school. Some time before the Second World War a buried stone was discovered, which was probably the lintel to the main entrance of the school. The stone carried the characters, which could still be read, which mean: "May he who sits in the place of learning shine like the sun." Light is the illumination of knowledge and truth.

There is a passage in Ezekiel in which the writer alludes to light as the defining essence of the term glory. He says that the divine glory is as a

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[65]Rudolf Otto, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34. It may be appropriate to include here a passage from William James: "For the moment nothing but an ineffable joy and exaltation remained. It is impossible to fully describe the experience. It was like the effect of some great orchestra, when all the separate notes have melted into one swelling harmony, that leaves the listener conscious of nothing save that his soul is being wafted upwards and almost bursting with emotion. *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902), p. 66.

bright, fiery appearance that resembles a rainbow:

> As the appearance of the bow
> that is in the cloud in the day of
> rain, so was the appearance of the
> brightness round about. This was
> the appearance of the likeness of the
> glory of the Lord.
>
> Then the glory of the Lord
> went up from the cherub, and
> stood over the threshold of the
> house; and the house was filled
> with the cloud, and the court was
> full of the brightness of the Lord's
> glory.[66]

Here, then, is found the visual registration of God's glory. The glory of the Lord is manifest as brightness. The divine glory is the visible radiance of light, by which the divine presence is disclosed to the people.

Isaiah had spoken of God as "the light of Israel." In an oblique manner, Isaiah had designated God as light. But the designation is an indirect, and thus an imperfect, designation. The finally definitive designation is reserved for the New Testament. Accordingly, John defines God as essentially light: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Thus, in the final analysis, light is not merely a gift of God; it is the very nature of God.

Since light is of the essence of God, we now can understand why the writer of Genesis recalls God's first words at the dawn of creation: "Let there be light." And in the New Testament John speaks eloquently of the Eternal Christ, the everlasting Logos, who, being Himself deity, is "the true light" (John 1:9). But more: that Light, eternal in pristine radiance, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

One evening, in that long-ago time, the ancient people of Israel were celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles. The Court of the Women was brilliantly illuminated by the four golden candelabra. There was festivity and dancing. The glow there shining was perhaps a remembrance of the Pillar of Fire that had led the people out of their bondage into freedom. As he gazed upon the scene, there fell from the lips of Jesus words such as no man has ever dared to utter: "I am the light of the world." What an astounding announcement! What did, and what does, it mean? The occasion itself provides the answer. As the ancient people were led by the light into the realized promise of deliverance and freedom, so by the light of Him who is "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) the people are now led from the darkness of ignorance to the light of the knowledge and truth of God. The anticipation of Isaiah has now been realized: "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:2). We are, Paul wrote, "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; . . . delivered . . . from the power of darkness, and . . . translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:12-13).

Thou Sun of our day, thou star of our night,

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[66]Exek. 1:28; 10:4.

We walk by thy ray, we live in thy light;
Oh shine on us ever, kind, gracious, and wise,
And nowhere and never be hid from our eyes.

Light as purity, or holiness.

Throughout Scripture there is a marvelous collation of light and life. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:9). John is even more explicit in associating light and life: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

One result of modern science and technology is the disassociation of light and heat. The devices that give light and those that produce heat are not the same. But in the ancient world this disassociation had not yet come about. For those people light and heat were naturally regarded as inseparable aspects, manifestations, of a single entity. Something of this experience of fusion of light and heat, however, can still be felt by us today, when, on a cold winter's day, we feel the heat of the sun penetrating into even the marrow. And the light emanating from the hearth fire is also the power of warmth. Thus the symbol of light carries the connotation of fire as well as that of intellectual clarity. Fire possesses a warming power. In its spiritual connotations, then, light not only illuminates and instructs the mind, it also stimulates and enlivens the spirit. Light is an infusion of spiritual qualities within the character of the person. The comprehensive meaning of those qualities may be summed up in the spiritual quality of holiness.

There is a light that is the beauty of holiness. Harmony is the defining essence of holiness. Holiness is an inner harmony in which the various graces of the spirit are blended together so as to constitute a developed character. Holiness means that the excellences of character are harmonized. There should be no excess of one or defect of another. When inner harmony does not obtain, or when the beauty of holiness is lacking, a person may, for example, be upright but harsh. The ideal of Christian perfection, for which in its fuller realization we must always strive, requires that uprightness be combined with kindness and delicacy of feeling. We can be said to truly live--live as human beings ought to live--only when the moral excellences of the spirit are realized in balance and harmony. That is, finally, the meaning of personal salvation.

Heat, associated as it is with fire, enlivens what it touches. From that heat the seed is induced to germinate and develop into a living plant. The warmth of the human body connotes the powers of life and health. Thus there is a light that brings the warmth of life to the spirit. Further, the light of fire also purifies. In our natural, unredeemed state, our "silver is become dross." Yet God has promised: "And I will turn my hand on thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; . . . afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:22-26). It is this purging that brings that condition of life in which the moral excellences are realized in harmony, and in which, therefore, the life is free from selfishness and the grasping spirit. There is thus established the basis of the outward aspect of holiness, the beauty in which there is harmony with others. In both the inward and outward phases, holiness is the realization of life--life at its highest as realization of the spirit. The light of God, of Christ, is therefore, one with life.

Light as influence.

It is probable that, to men of an earlier time, the light of fire often appeared to come into existence suddenly and spontaneously and to increase and spread with dramatic rapidity. When controlled, fire can be multiplied from torch to torch, from hearth-fire to hearth-fire. As a symbol of the intellectual and the spiritual, fire suggests the ability of the mind and spirit to pass their intellectual and moral qualities along to others in spontaneous and quick contagion. The light, which is fire, is, in short, influence.

The contagion of the light is dramatically expressed in Psalm 110:3:

In the brightness
of the saints,
from the womb
before the day star
I begot thee.

The Revised English Bible translates the passage somewhat differently:

You gain the homage of your people
on the day of your power.
Arrayed in holy garments, a child of
the dawn,
you have the dew of your youth.

This beautiful passage carries the thought of the life-giving light that is entrusted to the people of God, whose work it is to convey that light to others. For God's people are the saints of brightness, arrayed in holy garments, the children of the dawn. This Psalm may have been composed in celebration of the festival when the ark of God was brought from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem. On that occasion David assumed the double function of king and priest. Here is typified that divine act in which the King, Jahweh, constitutes the Son, our Lord, "a priest forever."

As King-Priest, Christ brings the day of divine power in which the people are "made . . . kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6). The hosts of God now assemble to serve God willingly in cheerful self-surrender. Clothed in the beautiful garments of holiness, they are as bright and numberless as the dew of the early morning dawn, descending by a silent, mysterious birth from the star-lit heavens. They are "the dew of your youth," fresh and vital in regenerative and sanctifying newness of life, a host of goodness, willing volunteers in the service of Him who is forever King and Priest.

The import, then, of Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world," is his declaration that in Him and His way of life are found the illumination of the mind, the purity of spirit, and the contagion of influence that transmits that light to the world.

And now, "Ye are," Jesus further says, "the light of the world." The light symbol, first expressing God and His Christ, now defines the nature and work of Christians. There is thus a task in society that Christians are to fulfil: a task of disclosing the truth about humanity, of producing character in humanity, and of radiating that truth and character outward into all the walk-ways of human kind.

Now, this foregoing analysis of the import of the symbol light is an example of the expansion of the symbol. The language of the expansion is more abstract and less figurative than the language of the symbol. The images and ideas of the symbol are taken from are taken from the regions of intuition and are used to express ideal relations that because of their ideality cannot be expressed directly. There is a transference from one universe of discourse to another. Thus, in the case of the symbol light, the character of the experience of light is transferred to the context of the spiritual sense of divine presence. Light's powerful rays, its life giving qualities and warmth, becomes, then, a natural symbol for the quickening and illumination of the spirit and the mind. The fire, as it burns the dross, becomes the natural symbol for the purification of the inner spirit. The rapid spread of fire from place to place becomes the natural symbol of the influence of the saints of light. But in all this transference from the intuition to the abstract concept, the value of the symbol is not lost. Rather, the transference to the conceptual serves to enhance and vivify the symbol and allow it to function in yielding insight into the spiritual reality that it indirectly expresses. For in its very concreteness the symbol, as expanded, is the only context in which the full measure of the spiritual can be conveyed to the heart and mind.

Water.

From the earliest times the term ↑δωρ (hud↑r), water, has three meanings: the flood that surrounds the land, the dispenser of life, and the agent of cleansing. For the purpose of this work, attention is given primarily to water as the dispenser of life.

In the Greek world springs and rivers were regarded as divine. There is a rich mythology of the river gods and nymphs. In the Iliad Homer has Achilleus say that the Trojans will not be saved, regardless of how many bulls are dedicated to "your silvery-whirled strong-running river" (21:130). He addresses the river Spercheios as "the waters of your springs, where is your holy ground and smoking altar" (23:147-48). The nymphs of bodies of fresh water were the Naiades. They were intimately connected to the water. If the connection were broken, they were doomed to die. If the stream dried up, they also expired. The waters over which they presided were thought to be endowed with life-giving virtue. Thus the Naiades were worshiped by the Greeks.

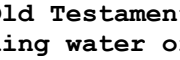
Yet, for the Greeks, the work of water in mediating life did not furnish life in the hereafter or bring one back from the underworld. According to the Adapa-Myth, even the wise Adapa was denied that benefit: "They brought him the water of life, he did not drink it" (II, 62). It was the drink of immortality for only the gods. The Babylonian Ishtar was brought back from the underworld by sprinkling with "living water."

The Old Testament statement about the vital necessity of water is rooted in the account of the desert-wanderings of the Children of Israel. The weakness of their faith is again and again recorded, particularly when they rebelled at the water of Meribah (Num. 20:23, Ps. 81:7). But God miraculously provides them with water: "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock , and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink" (Exod. 17:7).

God gives His chosen people the promise of water: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills" (Deut. 8:7). Here the water

is physical water. But even in the Old Testament, the context begins to change from the literal to the symbolic. Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters is a vision of the temple river of the eschaton, of the final, golden day of eternity in which redemption is secured forever. The water is the water of prophetic symbolism: "And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, withersoever the rivers shall come, shall live" (Ezek. 47:9).

The ability of water to quench thirst and nourish life is now a metaphor. It is no longer physical water that is in itself the subject. The qualities of physical water are now transferred, as a symbol, to God Himself. Through that transferred usage, God now becomes the source of living water. This Jeremiah states, in recording the Lord's contention with His faithless people: "they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2:13). God Himself is "the fountain of living waters."

This expression, "living waters," is most significant. It is rarely used in the Old Testament. The expression  **(khah'yim mah'yim) means the running water of a spring or fountain. It is contrasted with the stagnant water of a cistern, the type of water that, in the verse quoted, the people attempted to substitute for the living waters of salvation.**

The most complete Old Testament transference of the symbol to God is found in the promise of Isaiah 55:1. God Himself will give water and bread, i.e., that which is strictly necessary for life:

> **Ho, every one that thirsteth,**
> **come ye to the waters, and he**
> **that hath no money; come ye, buy,**
> **and eat; yea, come, buy wine**
> **and milk without money and without**
> **price.**

The desire for God or His Word is like the thirst for water, which is vitally necessary:

> **As the hart panteth after the**
> **water brooks, so panteth**
> **my soul after thee, O God.**
> **My soul thirsteth for God,**
> **for the living God: when shall I**
> **come and appear before God?**[67]

Again, the children of God are like the flock drinking the source of refreshing water:

> **The Lord is my shepherd;**
> **I shall not want.**
> **He maketh me to lie down in**
> **green pastures: he leadeth me**
> **beside the still waters.**[68]

The imagery speaks yet again. Those who belong to God are like the tree by the brook:

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[67]Ps. 42:1-2.

[68]Ps. 23:1-2.

> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.[69]

Finally, in the time of salvation the people shall "be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."[70]

The New Testament use of the symbol water is found preeminently in the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation. John's Gospel employs ideas more hellenistic in form, while Revelation adopts ideas that are more Old Testament in form.

John presents the symbol water in reference to Old Testament institutions and objects and then gives Jesus' antithesis to them in ideas that are more dualistic and Hellenistic in form. This is the setting of the incident at Jacob's well:

> Jesus answered and said unto her, whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.[71]

The Old Testament person no longer thirsts because he can come again and again to drink of the fountain. But the New Testament person no longer thirsts because he has the well of life within him. It is the gift of Jesus. His gift, the living water, becomes a well of water in himself. This gift is His Word: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[72] It is His Spirit: "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.)"[73] And it is He Himself: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."[74] The true water brings to the person a total renewal from within. In this new mode of expression, there is a fulfillment that surpasses all Old Testament prophecy.

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[69]Ps. 1:3.

[70]Isa. 58:11.

[71]John 4:13-14,

[72]John 15:7.

[73]John 7:39.

[74]John 14:20.

The permanence of the well of life within the New Testament person is but one feature of the water of life. The Samaritan woman questioned Jesus: "... from whence then hast thou that living water?"[75] Here the phrase "living water" is, in the Greek, τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν (to hudōr to zōn). This is the traditional sense of "flowing water," the sense employed in both ancient Greek and Old Testament thought. But in the preceding verse, where Jesus promises the water that he shall give her, the expression, in the Greek, is entirely different. It is ὕδωρ ζῶν (hudōr zōn). The absence of the article before the noun gives the reading, not "the water the living," but "water of life." This water is the water that mediates life, the water of life. It is now a symbol of a new reality, a spiritual reality of inward birth into life everlasting.

The use of the symbol of water in Revelation takes its departure from the Old Testament. Isaiah 49:10 reads:

> They shall not hunger nor
> thirst; neither shall the heat nor
> sun smite them: for he that hath
> mercy on them shall lead them,
> even by the springs of water shall
> he guide them.

Revelation echos this theme. The Lamb, who is now the Exalted One, will as Shepherd lead those redeemed from earth to "fountains of the water of life:"

> For the Lamb which is in
> the midst of the throne shall
> feed them, and shall lead them
> unto living fountains of waters:
> and God shall wipe away all
> tears from their eyes.[76]

Isaiah had said, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . ."[77] Based on this, the Revelator writes that God Himself shall give to the thirsty freely "of the fountain of the water of life."[78] The expression here is, in the original, ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς (ek tēs pēgēs tou hudatos tēs zōēs). Here it is explicitly asserted that the water is not the "flowing water" of earlier thought, but the water of life.

Coming from the eschatological river of Ezekiel, Revelation speaks of "a pure river of life:"

> And he shewed me a pure
> river of water of life, clear
> as crystal, proceeding out of the

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[75] John 4::11.

[76] Rev. 7:17.

[77] Isa. 55:1.

[78] Rev. 21:6.

throne of God and of the Lamb.[79]

That the water is of the river suggests the idea of fulness: the fulness of the life that God shall give His people. There is the thought of the restoration of the original Paradise. The tree of life, once barred from the people,[80] is now accessible to them. Yet in the final redemption that Paradise is transcended. For now the river of redemption does not part into four streams, as did the Paradisaical river.[81] It flows in its undivided fulness, bringing consummation to the works and ways begun at creation.[82]

Then comes the final promise of Revelation. The prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel refer to actual water. Revelation takes the term as symbol:

> And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.[83]

Here the language achieves the final transformation of the intimation in John's Gospel that the "living water" is, indeed the "water of life." Gone now are the allusions to the older form, that the water is but "flowing water." The phrase now is, in the language of the writing, →δωρ ζω✸ς (hud🡅r z🡅❻s: water of life.

Now, there is here a final observation that is significant for our understanding of religious symbolism. Revelation 7:17 combines three symbols: the Lamb, the Throne, and the Shepherd. He who furnishes the living waters is at once the Sacrifice, the Exalted One, and the Leader. As these He is "the pioneer of life." To these three symbols, Revelation 22:1 adds the symbol of the Bride. It connotes that He who is Sacrifice, Exalted, and Leader is also He who is with His people in fellowship. No such complex of elements, or nuances, can be admitted in literal language, which places its premium on specific identification. Only symbolic language can convey the rich complexity of the spiritual. The symbols may be expanded, but they are finally indispensable and irreplaceable. We may view them in terms of concepts, but the concepts must eventually reflect back upon those intuitions from which the symbols are derived. For we are earth-bound, and in our reach for God's reach to us, we must wait and allow the intuitions of earth to shine through to insight into the heavenly.

Blood.

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[79]Rev. 22:1.

[80]Gen. 3:22-24.

[81]Gen. 2:10.

[82]The river of the water of life is mentioned in only two places: Rev. 22:1 and John 7:38. There are no exact parallels in religious history.

[83]Rev. 22:17.

In the previous chapter[84] mention was made of "the feast of raw flesh," a rite of the Greek Dionysus cult. The slain animal was believed to be a sacred animal, temporarily having within it the divine life. It had to be devoured while warm, dripping with blood, before the divine life escaped. When thus eaten, the initiate received within himself that divine life and thus achieved communion with the god. In the taurobolium, a rite of the cult of Great Mother, the blood of the sacrificed bull pours down on the devotee who is in a trench under the platform of slaughter. He drinks of the blood and, he believes, is born into a new and divine life.[85]

A similar rite was practiced by the ancient Semites. They were a tribal people, organized as families and clans. The dominant social conception was that of the kin. According to this conception, the group was of one blood, participating in one blood that passes from generation to generation and circulates in the veins of every member of the group. The unity of the group is viewed as a physical unity, for the blood is the life--which is an idea found in the Old Testament--and it is the same blood that is shared by every descendent of a common ancestor.

Further, not only do the members of the kin share in a common blood, but the god also shares with the people in one life of life-blood. The place of the god in the community is conceived on the analogy of human relationships; thus the relationship is itself physical.

The animal that was offered in the semitic ritual of sacrifice was, not a gift to the god, but a means of establishing a communion "in which the god and his worshippers unite by partaking together of the flesh and blood of a sacred victim."[86]

Originally, the sacrificial meal was a feast of kinship, an act in which the common life is sealed and nourished. To refer again to Smith:

> **The sacrificial meal was an appropriate expression of the antique ideal of religious life, not merely because it was a social act and an act in which the god and his worshippers were conceived as partaking together, but because . . . the very act of eating and drinking with a man was a symbol and a confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligation. The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are commensals, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves.[87]**

The Semites slew the animal, drank of the blood, even stood in the pit while the blood of the animal placed above them flowed over them. The cultic practice is wedded to the existent object. It is in and through the very blood itself that sharing in the life of the divinity is achieved.

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[84]Supra, p. 11.

[85]Supra., pp. 17-18.

86 Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: First Series* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1914.

87 *Ibid*., p. 269.

Among the ancient Hebrews there is a "softening" of the idea of blood sacrifice. As it was for the pagan Semites, the blood is the bearer of life. It is therefore sacred. For this reason the eating of raw flesh and the drinking of blood was prohibited:

> **For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.**
>
> **Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.[88]**

The text indicates that there is a further reason for the proscription against the drinking of blood. Blood is the agency of atonement. Exodus 24 records the establishment of the Mosaic covenant. The Hebrew term covenant is ▭⌧ϑ◉❖ (ber-eeth), which means cutting. The term is used because the covenant, or compact, between the parties was made between cuttings of sacrificial animal flesh. And this involves the shedding of blood. The blood is sacred, and therefore cannot be drunk. On that great day of covenant-making, Moses served as the priest. He took half of the blood and threw it against the altar, which represented the active presence of God in the covenantal relationship. He then sprinkled the same blood on the people, thus uniting them and God in sacred fellowship. Here was enacted the sacred meal of fellowship, which, in distinction from earlier pagan Semitic times, did not involve the actual consumption of blood. There are here the beginnings of the symbolizing process that molds the physical in clearer service of the spiritual.

In the New Testament the concept of blood assumes its greatest significance in relation to the death of Christ. In that context, the blood of Christ is the means of justification through atonement and sanctification through grace:

Regarding the former, the passages in the fifth chapter of Romans are extremely instructive:

> **Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**
>
> **For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**
>
> **And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.[89]**

88Lev. 17:11-12.

Here it is explicitly stated that justification is accomplished by the blood of Christ. The text also asserts that reconciliation to God is accomplished by the death of Christ.[90]

These verses also refer to sanctification through grace. There is not only justification, but final salvation:

> **No clearer passage can be quoted for distinguishing the spheres of justification and sanctification than this verse and the next—the one an objective fact accomplished without us, the other a change generated within us. Both, though in different ways, proceed from Christ.[91]**

By reference to blood, sanctification through grace is expressed:

> **Wherefore Jesus, also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.[92]**

Again,

> **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.[93]**

We now come to the question of the meaning of the phrase, "the blood of Christ." In Hebrews we read:

> **How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?[94]**

Here the writer means that the phrase, "the blood of Christ," is to be understood in a literal, although not mechanical or magical, sense. He affirms that "The offering Christ made was in the realm of reality, as tangible and real as blood, as central and decisive as life (blood)."[95] In keeping with the

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89Rom. 5:9-11.

90The term *atonement* in vs. 11 is in the original *reconciliation*.

91Sandy, William & Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 11th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906) p. 329. In *The International Critical Commentary*.

92Heb. 13:12.

931 John 1:7.

94Heb. 9:17.

95*The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c1955), XI, 692.

view that life resides in the blood, the New Testament finds the significance of the blood of Christ in relation to His death. The interest is not in His material blood, but in His shed blood as the life offered for the redemption of humanity and world. The blood is a graphic term for the death of Christ. This means that the phrase "the shedding of blood, requires us to come to an understanding of the salvific significance of the death of Christ. That is the important issue.

The second significant phrase of the text is "through the eternal Spirit." This phrase, too, is to be understood literally. It signifies a transmutation of Christ's offering on the plane of animal existence into an eternal redemption. While the shed blood, the loss of life, did in fact occur as historical event, these in themselves are not the finally sufficient condition of redemption. With these alone, what Christ did and underwent would have, as many believe, only an ethical significance. They thus must be brought within a new scope, the scope of "the eternal Spirit." We have here a form of the distinction between existence and significance that is essential to religion, and in particular to the Christian religion. But in this form of the distinction, existence is not abrogated; rather, it is preserved and yet elevated into an eternal significance.

The expression, Πνεύματος αἰωνίου (Pneumatos aiōniou), is, literally, Spirit eternal. It is in the genitive case. Some biblical scholars interpret the phrase as "the Holy Spirit." But this is not the usual designation of the Holy Spirit. Were the Holy Spirit meant, the term ἁγιου (hagiou), holy, would in all probability have been used by the writer. In addition, the definite article, which ordinarily is present in designatg the Holy Spirit, is lacking. The eternal Spirit is the divine element in Christ. The emphasis is thus placed on the spiritual aspect of the atonement. Its especial virtue is not the mere suffering or the shedding of blood or the death upon the cross, but the perfect obedience of Him who stood for humanity and in whom "the eternal Spirit" triumphed over the weakness of humanity. The language answers to earlier designations: that He is a High Priest forever, made so according to the power of an indissoluble life, and that He lives forever to make intercession for His people.[96] The expression, "who by an eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God," when added to the expression, "the blood of Christ," expands the effect of that blood, representing it as an ever-living and valid effect. And this expansion is necessary, if the physical fact is to be lifted up into a spiritual and eternal sphere of redemptive significance. The atonement is valid only on the basis of the Incarnation.

The Lamb.

The term lamb (ἀμνός amnos) occurs four times in the New Testament (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19). It is always applied to Jesus, who is compared with a lamb as One who suffers and dies innocently in behalf of humankind.

The cry of John the Baptist is representative of the New Testament usage of the term: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[97] There is reference here to the suffering servant of Isa. 53:

96Heb. 7:16, 17, 25.

97John 1:29.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.[98]

The passage in Isaiah pictures the lamb as patiently enduring suffering. The symbol of the lamb connotes patience, gentleness, innocence, harmlessness, and purity. This is, certainly, one aspect of the Baptist's designation of Jesus by the symbol lamb. The Baptist seems here to have called to mind the words of the Old Testament prophet.

But there is another aspect expressed in the Baptist's words. It is that the lamb is the lamb of God! Here is a new dimension, for nowhere in the Old Testament is the symbol of the lamb as the lamb of God found. In the Aramaic language, which is the language spoken by the New Testament figures, the word ✏⌧📫🖎 (mal'yah) means servant. When the Baptist used the word, it carried, accordingly, a reference to Isaiah. It is quite probable that John so understood that reference. But the Aramaic has another meaning, which is lamb. This second meaning of the term allowed the Greek translation of the term ✏⌧📫🖎 (mal'yah) as lamb. Thus the Isaiahic expression that fell from the lips of the Baptist, the Servant of the Lord, takes on a new meaning, the Lamb of God. This new meaning carries the thought, not merely of meekness and patience, but of sacrifice. It is probable that John himself grasped this new meaning, even in the Isaiahic reference, for he goes on to characterize this Servant of God, now the Lamb of God, as the One "which taketh away the sin of the world." The Servant-Lamb is thus the Paschal lamb of the New Covenant. There are three elements in the Servant-Lamb: the patience of His suffering (Acts 8:32),[99] His sinlessness (1 Pet. 1:19),[100] and the efficacy of His sacrificial death (John 1:29, 36).[101]

The word lamb as it appears in Revelation is ❿ρνίον (arnion). It originally signified a little lamb, but did not retain that significance in New Testament times. In Revelation the lamb (❿ρνίον, arnion) is also depicted as "slain." Thus the statements of Revelation cannot be separated from what the New Testament says about Jesus as the sacrificial lamb (❿μνός amnos). Those statements depict Him as Redeemer and Ruler and in so doing bring out all the most significant elements in his title as Deliverer.

The Lamb bears on His neck the mark of his slaughtering:

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of

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98Isa. 53:7.

99"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth."

100"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

101*Sup*., p. 72.

the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain . . . .[102]

His blood flowed in atonement for sin:

And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.[103]

Notwithstanding this, the Lamb overcame death and is omnipotent:

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.[104]

The Lamb is also omniscient:

. . . and in the midst of of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.[105]

He assumes the government of the world as He opens the book of destiny in the heavenly council (Rev. 4:2 ff.), receiving divine adoration (Rev. 5:8 ff.), establishing the rule of peace on the heavenly mountain (Rev. 7:9; 14:1), subduing all alien powers (Rev. 17:14), exercising judgment (Rev. 6:16 f.; 14:10), and making distinctions on the basis of the book of life (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

The Lamb is victor as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings:

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.[106]

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,

102Rev. 5:6.

103Rev. 5:9.

104Rev. 5:5.

105Rev. 5:6.

106Rev. 17:14.

KING OF KINGS, AND LORD
OF LORDS.[107]

The Lamb celebrates His marriage festival with the community of the redeemed:

> And he saith unto me, Write,
> Blessed are they which are
> called unto the marriage supper
> of the Lamb.[108]

Finally, the Lamb governs His own as partner of the throne of God:

> And he shewed me a pure
> river of water of life, clear
> as crystal, proceeding out of the
> throne of God and of the Lamb.
>
> And there shall be no more
> curse: but the throne of God
> and of the Lamb shall be in it;
> and his servants shall serve him.[109]

Now, it is here, in the symbolism of Revelation, that the irreplaceable power of symbolism is disclosed. The figure of the Lamb embraces nuances of meaning that cannot be expressed in the abstractions of logical conceptions. The power of conceptual thought lies, we have seen, in its insistence upon the self-identity and self-consistency of meaning. A conceptual element must be held before the mind as a self-identical object. But no such ideal is required for symbolic expression. Here meanings which, at the abstract level, appear contrary and even contradictory of each other, can be brought together in one context. And that is what happens with respect to the symbol of the Lamb. For now the values of meekness, patience, weakness, suffering, sacrifice, and isolation and defeat and death, are combined with those of victory and triumph, power and authority, governance and fellowship. While the Lamb as sacrificial is central, He is also called the Bride who brings His Church into living fellowship with Him, and, finally, the Lion who rules from the divine throne with authority and power. No such constellation of significance can be combined by the purely logical intellect. The complex symbolism can be expanded by the use of concepts, but when this is done, it is finally necessary to return to the symbolism. For the depth and richness of the meaning-complex can be decisively grasped only when the mind attends upon the primary intuitive meaning of the elements that constitute the symbolism.

We have discussed four major symbols: light, water, blood, and the lamb. They are taken from our experience of the outer world. The Bible also draws its symbols from the world of our human experience. We shall consider in some depth two such symbols: the father and the bridegroom. Both ideas have their correlates. The father involves the father/child relationship; and the bridegroom, the bridegroom/bride relationship.

The Father.

107Rev. 19:16.

108Rev. 19:9.

109Rev. 22:1, 3.

The ancient Greeks meant by the term father the head of the house and teacher. The emphasis is placed on patriarchal control in the house and family. Telemochus avows: "But I will be the absolute lord over my household."[110] Homer calls Zeus "the father of gods and mortals."[111] Athene addresses Zeus as "Son of Kronos, our father, o lordliest of the mighty."[112] Plato calls Zeus "guardian-God of kinship and parentage."[113] This view is in line with that of Homer, for whom Zeus is the divine paradigm of the head of the house.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus writes: "War is both king of all and father of all, and it has revealed some as gods, others as men; some it has made slaves, others free."[114] His point is that war shifts and clarifies and orders all things, selecting but also restoring. "One should know that war is general (universal)and jurisdiction is strife, and everything comes about by way of strife and necessity.)[115]

Plato affirms the right of the father as the head of the house and teacher. He asks, and thereby infers the answer: "And in general would not the claim of parents to rule over offspring be a claim universally just?"[116] He also insists upon piety toward the father:

> **. . . and next, honours paid to living parents. For to these duty enjoins that the debtor should pay back the first and greatest of debts, the most primary of all dues, and that he should acknowledge that all that he owns and has belongs to those who begot and reared him . . . .[117]**

Plato gives to the father-idea a metaphysical status. He writes: "But of what seems to be the offspring of the good and most nearly made in its likeness I am willing to speak . . . ."[118] Of that which he speaks, Plato calls "the tale of the parent."[119] In that the Idea of the Good, which is the highest reality, effects an offspring, the Good is then regarded as father. It is the ultimate and supreme source of everything that exists, both physical and

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110Homer *Odyssey* 1:397, tr. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper & Row, c1965), p. 37.

111*Odyssey* 1:28, *Ibid*., p. 28.

112*Iliad* 8:31, tr. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c1951), p. 183.

113Plato *Laws* IX, 881d, tr. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), II:293.

114*Fragment 53*. In Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 28.

115Heraclitus *Fragment 80*, *Ibid*., p. 30.

116Plato *op. cit*., III:690a.

117*Ibid*., IV:717b.

118Plato *Republic* VI:506e, tr. Paul Shorey, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), II:95.

119*Ibid*.

intelligible. The Good streams into the world but yet remains beyond the world. Yet it is active and visible in the world.

In the Timaeus creation myth, Plato gives the father concept a cosmological form. Here is introduced a powerful idea into the ancient world, not only explaining the birth of the universe but adumbrating a religious father concept. It prepared the way for Jesus' witness of the Fatherhood of God, although it differed profoundly from this. Thus Plato writes:

> **And that which has come into existence must necessarily, we say, have come into existence by reason of some Cause. Now to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible.[120]**

The Father of all is known by only a few, i.e., those who are sufficiently educated in philosophic truth, and this for the reason that He is beyond Being, beyond existence and essence. He is shrouded in His remoteness. In identifying the Maker and Father with the Good, Plato concludes:

> **. . . in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason . . . .[121]**

The Hebrew word for father, ✂✐ (âb), is a primitive word connected to no stem. The meaning and use of the term is determined by the concept of the family. The Hebrew family is "the father's house" (✂✐🖫🖴🖂✂, b☹yth âb). The expression signifies the household community as subordinate to the male head of the family. The other members of the family belong to the father. Depending on the love toward and pride in the person, the sense of belonging to the father can extend back through several generations. Thus Abraham and David are regarded by succeeding generations as "father" of the people. Even as late as the time of Paul, the Apostle writes of "that faith of our father Abraham."[122]

Israel regarded the father relationship predominantly as one of authority. The tone is set by the commandment that the son should honor the father.[123]" The commandment is more than a legal injunction. It expresses an emotional value that underlies the law and registers its true intention. Throughout the Old Testament, the writers find in the dignity of the father the source of the genuine humanity that is born of God. There is a divine element in the father, since in God there is the fatherly element.

The dominance of the father guaranteed his primacy in all family decisions, especially in regard to property and inheritance. He also

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120Plato *Timaeus* 28c, tr. The Rev. R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 50.

121Plato *Republic VIIc, Ibid*., II:131.

122Rom. 4:12.

123Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

possessed a sacral quality. In Judges 17 a young man of the tribe of Dan assumed the role of a priest and was given the title of "father." This indicates the sacral dignity of the father, in that when one was a priest he also had the role of father. The father was also a kind of ideal and was thus due respect from others.

Israel is Jehovah's possession. Over him God has free and unrestricted sovereignty. Deut. 14:1, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," introduces legal regulations emerging as the result of the election by which they are made God's possession. Much later, Jeremiah takes up the same point in his great saying:

> O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.[124]

This passage expresses the idea of passive dependence on the divine will. Isaiah takes up the same thought:

> But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.[125]

The mixed metaphor, father and potter, refers, not to creation or providence, but the educator who fashions individuals as though they were a shapeless mass into a work of perfection.

For the Hebrew mind, the father was always a metaphor. It could not be taken literally of God, since any image that was but an heightened image of man was prohibited. Thus, when the idea of the father was referred to God, it was never recognized as adequate to describe the nature of God or the manner of His relationship to people. For this reason, there is only one occurrence of the expression "sons of God" (Deut. 14:1). This form of the filial relationship could not be established. Instead, it is Israel that is Jehovah's son. Certainly, Jehovah is his father who created him. However, the creation is not a physical act, but the shaping of a people into a nation by a series of gracious deeds. Thus it is said of the Israelites as a whole: "Ye are the children of Jehovah your God."[126] Only in the last days, Hosea says, "it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."[127]

The fatherhood of the deity is an idea found in contexts other than the Hebraic. Among the ancient Semites the fatherhood of the gods is physical fatherhood. Robertson Smith, for example, writes ". . . that belief in their descent from the blood of the gods . . . was a widespread feature in the old

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124Jer. 18:6.

125Isa. 64:8.

126Deut. 14:1.

127Hos. 1:10.

tribal religions of the Semites . . . ."[128] The Old Testament writers were familiar with this earlier and heathen tradition. Jeremiah describes idolaters as "Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth . . . ."[129] The Moabites are called the sons and daughters of Chemosh.[130] Malachi calls a heathen woman "the daughter of a strange god."[131]

In the earlier phase of Hebrew thought there are echos of the older mythic sense of divine fatherhood. In the Song of Moses Jehovah is called "the rock that begat thee."[132] And the Psalmist speaks of a king begotten of God: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."[133] In the strict context of its composition, the formula of begetting, which appears in legal usage both in and outside the Bible, must be interpreted as a formula of adoption. David and his seed are adopted as Jahweh's son on the day of the Davidic covenant, when David began his reign by right of divine sonship. Thus the passage does not connote the older, heathen mythos of physical begetting.[134] Further, as noted in the foregoing, Jeremiah rejects a literal rendering of the rock motif and says that it is pagan and unworthy of a man who knows Jehovah. Where the rock motif is employed, as in the Song of Moses, the import is not that of a blood relationship between the people of Jehovah and their father. "In their desire for a wealth of living colour the poets and prophets of Jahweh make use of their mythical heritage, but their only purpose is to depict the reality of fellowship with God as vividly as possible."[135]

Therefore, in the spiritual religion of the Hebrews, the idea of divine fatherhood is completely dissociated from the physical basis of natural fatherhood. No remnant of the ancient heathen mythos remains. Man is not begotten; rather he is created in the image of God. God-sonship is not a thing of nature, but a thing of grace.

Finally, there is in the Old Testament the beginnings of an extension of the fatherhood of God beyond the limits of nationalism towards universality. To refer again to the Song of Moses: notwithstanding the explicit nationalism, it yet connotes a broader, universal, scope. Deut. 32:6 asks: "O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath brought thee forth? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" The key terms are brought (qânâh), made (âsâh), and established (kwn). These verbs are

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128W. Robertson Smith, *op. cit*.

129Jer. 2:27.

130Num. 21:19.

131Mal. 2:11.

132Deut. 32:18.

133Ps. 2:7.

134It should be noted that this analysis does not negate or rule as invalid the New Testament Messianic interpretation of the Psalm. This will be further considered in the sequel.

135Gerhard Friedrich, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., c1967), V:969.

also found in statements about the creation of the world. They refer to the God who works in cosmic miracle and who works as an architect. They thus have universal scope. In that it is the father who thus works, the father is thus related to more than his national people. He is the father of all. The first note of the song, "Give ear, O ye heavens," but reinforces the universal scope of divine fatherhood. Exactly the same note is sounded in Isaiah's great refrain the introduces his account of his great vision: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."[136] Again, the appeal to the heavens and the earth, brings the fatherhood of God beyond the scope of the nation and extends it to the cosmos and all that it contains.

And Isaiah, who was a heavily embattled believer, raised in prayer the urgent question, "where is thy zeal and thy strength?" He then invokes God with the confession, "Look down from heaven, and behold the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory . . . Doubtless thou art our father . . . ." The fathers after the flesh, Abraham and Israel, are not redeemers who provide saving help. The Father who is able to save is God alone. In truth, the name Father belongs only to God alone.[137]

Beyond the national motif there is the personal concern. The Psalmist gives God the ancient title "fatherless of the fatherless."[138] The indication here is that the divine fatherhood means more than the analogy of human experience can suggest. Ps. 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the lord will take me up," also suggests a filial relation far exceeding that of earthly parents. It is the strongest expression of comfort. Here is the adoption to sonship, as in Ps. 2:7: "Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee."

The Old Testament epoch was one, we have seen, in which only the nation of Israel was the son of God. The people enjoyed sonship only indirectly, via the nation of which they were members. But, prophesied Hosea, in the last days, "it shall come to pass, that . . . it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."[139] In the turning of the ages, the last days did indeed come:

> God, who at sundry times and
> in divers manners spake in
> time past unto the fathers by the
> prophets,
> Hath in these last days
> spoken unto us by his Son, whom
> he hath appointed heir of all
> things, by whom also he made
> the worlds:
> Who being the brightness of
> his glory, and express image
> of his person, and upholding all

136Isa. 1:2.

137Isa. 63:15 f.

138Ps. 68:5.

139Hos. 1:10.

things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?[140]

There is now a change of venue. The earlier, nationalistic, adoption, when David and his seed were adopted as Jehovah's son, has been reissued in the terms of Messianic fulfilment. Now what has been from eternity is made plain in the terms of history. For in this, the final now, it is declared beyond all cavil: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." And it is in this transaction of ever-living fellowship that the full meaning, for us, of the fatherhood of God is finally disclosed. Now, through this fellowship, the possibility is opened for us to be given the privilege of becoming "the sons of the living God."

There is thus, in the New Testament, a new conception of the divine father. It is to this new conception of father that we now turn our attention.

The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus' view of the father is grounded in the Old Testament presupposition of patriarchy. The father is the one who exercises complete authority, whom the children are to obey and treat with piety. The father is also the one who provides the care that is essential for the family, to give advice and counsel. In especially the Synoptic Gospels, there are countless incidents and passages that indicate this.

The authority of the father is seen in the parable of the vineyard: ". . . and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard."[141] Here the will of the father is absolute and unconditional. The parable of the two sons (Luke 15:11-32) indicates Jesus's recognition of the father's control of his property. So long as the father lives, the sons have nothing of their own. The Sermon on the Mount reflects Jesus's endorsement of the care the father is to provide his family. The father, although inferior to the excellence of the heavenly Father, knows "how to give good gifts" unto his children. Here is the imagery of the father portraying to the superlative degree the solicitude of the heavenly Father that, combined with His commanding power, brings comfort to His children: ". . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."[142]

Notwithstanding the Jewish background of patriarchy and the illustrative imagery of the human father, both of which factors play their role in Jesus'

140Heb. 1:1-5.

141Matt. 21:28.

142Matt. 7:32.

teachings, there is something radically different from these, something radically new. Jesus's understanding of the father concept goes beyond all that has occurred before.

In the first place, there is the term Abba. This is the authentic term for God in Jesus' teaching. It is significant that Jesus employed the term in his prayer in Gesthemane, when, facing the prospect of death, he prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might be taken away. It is thus reserved for that most extreme experience in his life and mission.

The word, in the Greek Ἀββ❺ (Abba), is an Aramaic word (✒❖✒, âba), meaning father. In Jesus' prayer, it is combined with the Greek word for father, πατήρ (pat❻r). In the original the phrase reads: Ἀββ❺ ☌ Πατήρ. The definite article ☌ (the) serves to qualify both nouns. Why are the two nouns with the same meaning used?

The two uses of the noun father is not simply reiterative of a single meaning. The reading is not, merely, "father, father." The Greek term father (pat❻r) carries the thought of the absolute authority of the father, here the heavenly Father. The Aramaic term father (Abba) is the babbling of an infant, as is the Greek πάππα (pappa). This means that an everyday infant sound is applied without reservation to God. For Jesus it is the most appropriate term to express God's attitude of tenderness and care for His children. When the Aramaic term Abba is associated with the Greek term, the Father is not merely and only the absolute Lord. He is also the intimate Father. Reomoteness is tempered with proximity. God is not a distant ruler in transcendence but is One who is intimately close. This is the new dimension that Christianity brings to the Fatherhood of God.

In the prayer in Gesthemane, Abba is a cry of distress, a child's appeal to the love of the father. In Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6 (the two remaining New Testament usages) it is a child's cry of joy and happiness for the spirit of adoption given in the heart.

In the second place, the personal pronouns associated with the Greek term father are of significance. Jesus constantly refers to God as "my Father." It is true, however, that less frequently Jesus uses the absolute The Father. But usually it occurs in association with Jesus as "the Son" or "the Son of Man." In Greek and Roman thought sonship is by nature or estate. It is true, to be sure, that the New Testament teaches that God's goodness as Creator extends to all. But this is not fatherhood. In the teaching of the of the fouls of the air and the lilies of the field, which is directed against anxiety, the Father's care is integral to the fellowship in the "kingdom of God and his righteousness."[143]

The phrase "my Father" signifies that Jesus' sonship is uniquely His own and incapable of transfer to others. John 10:30, "I and my Father are one," unequivocally affirms the unique sonship of Jesus. The saying indicates Jesus' awareness of a deep intimacy with God that he regarded as different from others, as his disciples, for instance. Here is a standpoint that cannot be removed; it is the sine qua non of Christianity. The late Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx has written:

143Matt. 6:26-33.

> **Jesus' Abba experience is an immediate awareness of God as a power cherishing people and making them free. . . . That is why trying to delete the special 'relation to God' from the life of Jesus at once destroys his message and the whole point of his way of living; it amounts to denying the historical reality, 'Jesus of Nazareth', and turns him into an 'unhistorical,' mythical or symbolic being, a 'non-Jesus'. Then all that remains - in so far as a Jesus trimmed to measure still has power to fascinate - is nothing but the apocalyptical Utopia.[144]**

When the personal pronouns our and your are employed, they derive their import from their association with the sonship of Jesus. The "our Father" of the Lord's Prayer is not absolute, but relative to the direction of the earthly by the name, kingdom, and will of the Father, all of which are disclosed in the Son. The meaning of "your Father" is not the same as "my Father." "My Father" indicates the standpoint of the unity of Father and Son. "Your Father" is an altogether different standpoint: the standpoint of the unity of the disciples with the Father through the primordial unity of Father and Son.

> **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . .**
> **And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they be one even as we are one[145]**

The fatherhood of God is determined and evidenced by the relation of the Revealer to God. It is the Son whom the Father sent, who is uniquely related to the Father, who is the first to say "Father" in the full sense. The Prologue in John 1:1-14 gives the Father-Son relationship the accent of eternity. Only He who is beyond all human comparison and has always been most intimate with the Father can declare the Father.

> **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**
>
> **And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.[146]**

The Father is the author and giver of revelation; the Son is the Revealer. The Father is the one who authoritatively commissions the Son to be the instrument of His will; the Son has no other purpose but to carry out that will. The name Father is inseparable from the process of revelation. "I have manifested thy name"[147] sums up the whole work of Jesus. The process of

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144Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, tr. Humbert Hoskins (New York: The Seabury Press, c1979), p. 268.

145John 17:21-22.

146John 1:1, 14.

147John 17:6.

revelation is explicitly a declaration of the Father. Here there is something new in calling God "Father." A new content is given to the name father.

John further attests to the uniqueness of the phrase "my Father." "Our Father" does not occur in John. "Your Father" occurs but once. Early on the Resurrection morning, Mary recognized the risen Lord. But

> **"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.[148]**

To the unity of the disciples with the Father via the unity of the Father and the Son in the accent of eternity is added the finally definitive designation. "Your Father" now denotes the new status of the disciples accorded by the Resurrection. For us, now "children of the Resurrection," the final and definitive experience of the fatherhood of God is granted. The heavenly Father is the supreme Lord of those who live in the power and glory of the Son's resurrected life. They are able now to say, as did the Son, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."[149] The Father is also, with his transcendent majesty, the "Great Companion." Thus His people are able to sound the glad cry of rejoicing, Abba, exulting in the inner quickening by the Spirit, and secure in Him who loves, comforts, and instructs His children.

The Bridegroom and Bride.

From the time of Homer νυμφίος (numphios) means bridegroom, young husband; and νύμφη (nump❻)means bride, marriageable young woman.

From the time of Hosea Judaism was familiar with the metaphor of the marriage of Jehovah and Israel:

> **And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercy.[150]**

Isaiah wrote: ". . . as the bridegroom [🗀🖴🕭, châthân] rejoiceth over the bride [🕭🗊❸, kallâh], so shall thy God rejoice over thee."[151] But the Old Testament does not present the Messiah as a bridegroom.

There are two parables of Jesus in which Christ is presented as Bridegroom: the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) and the wedding guests (Mark 2:19 f, Matt. 9:15, Luke 5:34 f). The Bridegroom stands allegorically for the

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148John 20:17.

149Matt. 6:10.

150Hos. 2:19.

151Isa. 62:5. See also 61:10.

Messiah.

It was a custom among the Jews that, in celebrating nuptials, the bridegroom would go in the evening to bring his bride to his house, where a feast was prepared. He was accompanied by the bridesmaids, who carried lamps with them.

In the parable of the ten virgins, no reference is made to the bride. The reason for this is that the parable teaches the coming of the Son of man and the necessity of watchfulness. The Bridegroom is Christ, who will come to His own. There is no room for the figure of the bride. The heavenly Bridegroom cannot bring His bride from heaven.

Mark 2:19-20 is a more complete account of the parable of the wedding guests:

> **And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bride-groom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.**

In the Greek text the phrase "children of the bridegroom" is "sons of the bridegroom." It is a late Hebrew idiom meaning wedding guests.

The secondary clause of verse 19, "as long as they have the bridegroom with them . . . ," is significant. Jesus speaks of Himself as the bridegroom and means Himself as the Messiah. His disciples are with him as wedding guests. Just as it is impossible for the guests who accompany the bridegroom at a wedding to weep, so too the disciples cannot grieve. They have the joy of the coming age of salvation and even now are within the Kingdom of Grace.

Verse 20 forebodes a time of sorrow. The Bridegroom shall be taken away from them. Jesus here adumbrates his Messianic passion. Then the disciples will fast and mourn. If we are allowed to regard the time of mourning as the age of the Bridegroom's absence and of our waiting for His return for His bride, then the time will, indeed, come when His faithful ones will hear the glad cry of Matthew 25:6, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

John the Baptist hails Jesus as the Bridegroom. But John designates himself as but the friend of the Bridegroom:

> **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which stand-eth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bride-groom's voice: this my joy there-fore is fulfilled.**[152]

152John 3:29.

The friend of the bridegroom is a person called by the Greeks paranymph (παράνυμφος, paranumphos) and by the Jews shoshabin (🗀⌧✂♋❀♋). There were usually two such persons, one for the bride (the bride’s maid) and one for the bridegroom (the best man). With respect to the best man, his duty was to find a bride for his friend and arrange the marriage. Before her marriage, a young woman did not meet with her spouse elect, but was guarded at home with her parents. Therefore, the shoshabin was the intermediary between the two young people. At the time of the wedding, he certified the purity of the bride. He distributed gifts and presided at the wedding festivities. Finally he led the betrothed couple to the bridal chamber. When, standing outside, he heard the bridegroom welcoming his bride (“voice of the bridegroom”), the friend “rejoiceth greatly” (χαρ❾ χαίρει, charai chairei, “with joy rejoices”).

In this passage John designates, in effect, Jesus as the Bridegroom. He has wooed and won the bride for his Friend. Having thus heard the voice of the Bridegroom, who welcomes His bride, the Baptist now finds his own joy fulfilled. Now the bridal of Heaven and earth has begun. As the Scripture teaches, the joy of the Lord will be fully realized at the Resurrection and the Second Advent, when the rapture of fellowship with His bride is completed.[153]

The book of Revelation employs the figure of the bride in two ways. In Revelation 19:7-10 the bride is the people of God. In Revelation 21:2 the bride is the abode of God. Notwithstanding this, the two symbols do coalesce in meaning.

Revelation 19:7-10 reads:

> **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**
>
> **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**
>
> **And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.**

Revelation 21:2 reads:

> **And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

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153 “The voice of the bridegroom” was a symbol of joy. It is found in Jeremiah, e.g., 7:34: “Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.” See also 2 Cor. 11:2, where Paul develops the allegory of the paranymph as applied to himself.

The Bridegroom of Revelation 19 is the Lamb. As noted previously, the symbol of the lamb is employed because it is through His earthly passion and self-sacrifice that the Bridegroom has procured His bride. Without the crisis of the Cross there would be no triumphant joy of marriage. There is an old Oriental myth, according to which the wedding of the deity is postponed until he returns from victory over the darkness and cold of winter. Indeed, the Messiah's foes shall make war upon Him. But now, in the final days, the slain Lamb is become, through His Resurrection-victory over death, the conquering "Lord of lords, and King of kings."[154] The "marriage of the Lamb is come." The invitations have been issued. The wedding-feast is set. There is now, legitimate for symbolism, a mixture of images. The guests are gathered at the wedding-feast. They feast upon the spiritual delicacies, "the true sayings of God," and this because, in the days of His flesh, the Bridegroom had spoken the words of life, the promises of the Gospel.

. . . but he that
sent me is true; and I speak
. . . those things which I
have heard of him.

. . . the words that I speak unto you,
they are spirit, and they are life.[155]

But those who partake of the marriage supper are also the bride. The bride is arrayed in splendor: her garments of linen, clean and white, "the righteousness of saints;" her robes washed and made "white in the blood of the Lamb." Commenting on verse 9, Matthew Henry writes eloquently:

> These promises, opened, applied, sealed, and earnested by the Spirit of God, in holy eucharistical ordinances, are the marriage-feast; and the whole collective body of all those who partake of this feast is the bride, the Lamb's wife; they eat into one body, and drink into one Spirit, and are not mere spectators or guests, but coalesce into the espoused party, the mystical body of Christ.

Revelation 21:2 portrays the bride as the abode of God, "the holy city, new Jerusalem." We saw in the above that the heavenly Bridegroom is also the slain Lamb. In the glory of triumph there is always the reflection, the shadow, of the past. The same is true in regard to the designation of the bride as the City of God. In the Old Testament the Shekinah glory of God filled the old tabernacle. John writes in his Gospel that the Bridegroom, when upon earth, "tabernacled among us" (Ɔσκήνωσεν Ɔν ©μἶν, esk❻n✎sen en h❻min). There once appeared upon earth God's Shekinah glory in the Person of His Son. Now, in the final resolution of the drama of salvation, the true tabernacle, radiant in Shekinah glory, appears as the bride, the Lamb's wife. The union of Bridegroom and bride is realized. This bride, bedecked in the splendid garments of holiness, is "the holy city," the Church of God, now glorified and prepared for perfect communion with the Bridegroom, her redeemer and companion for ever and ever, "unto the ages of the ages."

The great promise has been fulfilled:

But now they desire a better

154Rev. 17:14.

155John 8:26; 6:63.

country, that is, an heavenly:
wherefore God is not ashamed
to be called their God: for he
hath prepared for them a city.

Him that overcometh will I
make a pillar in the temple of
my God, and he shall go no more
out: and I will write upon him
the name of my God, and the
name of the city of my God,
which is new Jerusalem,
which cometh down out of
heaven from my God: and I will
write upon him my new name.[156]

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Chapter 4
Existence and Significance: History and Discontinuity

Our discussion of pagan redemption has shown that the pagan themes bear a measure of resemblance to those of Christianity. The devotees of the various cults experienced a sense of renewal through participation in the rites prescribed by those cults. Into this milieu came a new theme of redemption, namely, Christianity. Its claim to be the true way of redemption finally triumphed over the older formations. Across the ages those who have shared in the Christian faith have found renewal and assurance. If, however, the assurance of salvation, which pagan redemption afforded, does not guarantee truth and validity, does it not therefore follow that Christian assurance is likewise but problematical?

Today many scholars answer this question by asserting that the ideas constituting the conceptual content of Christianity are themselves mythical. While they embody substantially those elements of an older mythos, they are tempered and refined to suit a more developed taste. But they are essentially mythical. Their significance consists in precisely that in which the older mythos consisted, namely they bring meaning in this life and a measure of confidence for the future. Their value is a pragmatic value.

What this means as regards Christianity, then, is that its conceptual formulations cannot be certified as true. Their problematic is essentially that of all myth.

In our day, what has reinforced this negative view of Christian truth is the belief that it is only science that has significance and truth. Its procedures of observation and testing are capable of validating the truth-claim of scientific propositions and theories. These are the only procedures that can yield verifiable truth. Since they are lacking as regards religion, and thus for Christianity, the claim as to the truth and validity of Christianity cannot be certified. From the standpoint of felt experience, Christianity does, indeed, it is asserted, have a meaning, but from the standpoint of the intellect its objective significance and claim is a problematic——a problematic to be held onto in the "fear and trembling" of faith.

156Heb. 11:10; Rev. 3:12.

The Christian symbols, then, it is claimed, have but an experiential import. They cannot signify anything beyond their function in experience. Only ideas and propositions that are grounded in sense experience, those of empirical science, have objective significance and truth. That, so many today argue, is the present predicament in which we find ourselves. Truth can be achieved in science, but not in religion. Religion is the passion of a faith without intellectual support.

Some measure of resolution, as regards this antimony, is achieved when it is realized that science itself is a form of symbolism. As a symbolic form, it differs from the form of religious symbolism. But it is still a form of symbolism. It does not, accordingly, achieve "literal" knowledge, if by "literal" is meant an understanding of reality that is unconditioned by the terms and procedures of scientific formulation. The "real world" of science is always the "world" as constructed withing the formation of symbolism. The "truth" of science is thus confined to the context of subjective form.

May it not be, then, that the truth of the Christian religion is likewise legitimatized and certified within the community of its own subjective form? If we are allowed to establish scientific truth in terms of its type of subjective form, why are we not allowed to certify Christian truth in terms of its own subjective form? In any event, an appeal to the presumed literal truth of science on false grounds is not a legitimate reason for denying the truth value of Christian symbols.

It is advisable to consider the question of truth and the procedure in terms of which truth is certified. It is assumed, of course, that genuine knowledge must be marked by the property of truth.

It is customary to distinguish between formal and empirical truth. Formal truth has to do with a set, or system, of abstract notations. The system may be a logical or a mathematical one. One set of elements comprise the underived assumptions, or postulates. There is the view that the truth of the postulates is self-evident. However, this view, which seeks to establish truth in terms of a subjective feeling of self-evidence, encounters serious difficulties. For example, there are many mathematical theorems that even specialists have difficulty in establishing and which, therefore, do not appear as self-evident.

Once the postulates of a formal system have been laid down, it is necessary to establish logical rules of deduction or inference, which, combined with the basic postulates, permit deductions from the postulates. The truth of the system consists in the consistency of the system, i. e., that no derived propositions are inconsistent with the postulates or with each other.

The Austrian mathematician and logician Kurt Gödel showed that it is impossible to prove the consistency of a logical system from within that system, i.e., by using only the terms and symbols of that system. It is possible, therefore, that, despite all care, contradictions may occur in a logical system.

The German mathematician Adolph Fraenkel described this state of affairs in a graphic metaphor:

The fence of axiomatics, to speak with Poincaré, preserves the legitimate

> sheep of an unexceptionable theory of sets from an incursion of the paradox-tainted wolves. As to the enduring quality of the fence no doubt is possible. But who can be certain that some wolves have not been left inadvertently inside the fence, and that, though today they still pass unnoticed, they will not one day burst in upon the flock and devastate the fenced-in field as they did at the beginning of the century? In other words, how shall we safeguard ourselves against the possibility that the axioms bear within themselves germs which, once set in motion by inferences, will produce still unknown contradictions.[157]

It now quite evident that formal knowledge cannot be absolutely certified as formally true. There is no decisive proof of consistency. It would be a grievous error if anyone were to assume the absoluteness of formal knowledge and, on that basis, attempt to denigrate religious knowledge because of any problematic that attaches to that form of symbolism. Such a contrast is unacceptable.

Propositions asserting matters of fact must, to be sure, be as free as possible from any self-contradiction or contradiction with already-accepted factual propositions. But beyond the consistency of the body of scientific knowledge, there is the added element of verification in terms of sense experience. A theory about the physical world must pass the test of repeated observation and verification. This process does not, and cannot, decisively yield final and absolute truth. Empirical knowledge is always tentative and problematical. The very circumstance that the test procedure knows no limit, that it can be repeated endlessly, that in the future a negative result may obtain, shows that this is the case. All that can be hoped for is that, as scientific knowledge develops, the tests thus far obtained will be, and continue to be, positive, and that the propositions constituting the body of knowledge will not contradict each other. To attain to this standard, revisions are always necessary and on-going, as regards particular propositions. And if and when the contradictions become so numerous, or the test procedures do not yield the desired results, the entire theory, or body of knowledge, may have to be discarded.

When we say that a scientific proposition or theory is certified as probably true in terms of sense experience, it is not meant that the proposition or theory is verified via an immediate and direct reference to some given sense item of experience. Instead, verification refers to the sensory items indirectly, via reference to those propositions and theories that have already been established in terms of sense experience. Reference is never to the mere givenness of perception, but is to the system of thought in which the data of experience are structured. While, to be sure, a given theory must be referred to a relevant test procedure in terms of sense, that reference is also, and necessarily, embedded in the systematic context of theoretical thought. The appeal is, ultimately, to the unity of experience. Verification is not a process of checking the proposition or theory against the inner nature of physical reality. That we do not know. Verification is wholly an intra-experiential process, confined to the subjective form of experience. To quote from Charles Sanders Peirce, who makes this point:

> . . . all the followers of science are fully persuaded that the processes of investigation, if only pushed far enough, will give one certain solution to every question to which they can be applied. . . . This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained

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157In Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, III:368.

> goal, is like the operation of destiny. . . . This great law is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality.[158]

We have observed in the above that formal knowledge and truth are marked by probability. The claim that the abstract notations, which are symbolic constructs, are literally true of reality cannot be legitimately established. The same considerations hold with respect to empirical knowledge and truth. Here also, probability, not certainty, is all that can be claimed. Further, the claim that empirical truth is the truth about reality in its inner nature, as it is in itself, likewise cannot be established. Truth is immanent in the body of scientific procedure and discourse.

All-too-often, it is said that empirical knowledge and truth are decisive and absolute and that they disclose the real. Against this, then, that the language of religion pales in significance and import, indeed, has but an heuristic or emotive value. It does not yield a valid form of knowledge. Against this argument, what can be said at this point in the discussion is that empirical knowledge is itself a form of discourse and can be assessed only in the terms of that discourse. It is a particular symbolic formation, and its cognitive significance lies wholly within that formation. And within that formation, it is judged to have cognitive import and truth value. May not the same thing be said of the discourse of religion? It, too, is a particular kind of symbolic formation. Should not its claim of cognitive import and truth value likewise be assessed, and certified, in terms of the uniqueness of its symbolic form? For it may be that analysis here will indicate that the form of religious symbolism bears, in its context, its own form of knowledge and truth. In any event, we have no grounds upon which to restrict knowledge and truth to but one symbolic form, namely, the symbolism of empirical science.

In the previous chapters on myth and science, it has become clear that mythic accounts of the inner experience of redemption and the outer experience of the world restrict their constructs to the givenness of perceptual content. That is, the constructs are anchored in existence. They therefore lack signification beyond the perceived givenness of existence. They cannot function symbolically, since it is the nature of the symbol to employ the perceived content of experience as indicators of the super-sensible. We have earlier noted the statement by Hoffding:

> In all symbolization, ideas taken from narrow although more intuitible relations are used as expressions for relations which, on account of their exaltedness and ideality, cannot be directly expressed[159]

On the basis of this contrast between myth and symbol, or between existence and significance, certain observations may justifiably be made concerning the difference between pagan and Christian accounts of redemption.

158Charles Sanders Peirce, “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (January, 1878), pp. 286-302. In Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 vols., (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960-66), 5:268.

159Harald Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 201.

There is a marked contrast between paganism and Christianity with regard to the reference to blood and the use of wine and bread. It is a contrast between existence and significance.

The rite of Dionysus involved the feast of raw flesh. The thought was that the flesh, dripping with blood, actually contained the divine life. It was eaten quickly, before the divine life should escape, to ensure that the devotee might assimilate that life and experience rebirth and immortality. The feast of raw flesh was also a feature of Orphism, and for essentially the same purpose as that found in the rite of Dionysus. The taurobolium, or sacrifice of a bull, which is found in the cult of the Great Mother, is of substantially the same nature as those just previously described. Here, however, the initiate stood in the pit under the sacrificed animal and received the blood on his person and even drank the flowing blood. By this means, it was claimed, the devotee was born again to a divine life. In all of these rites, the blood is the actual and existing blood that brings regeneration and salvation. There is a bonding to existence: thus the lack of any and all symbolism.

In our discussion of the symbol blood, we pointed out that the New Testament never asserts, or even infers, that salvation is obtained, in a literal sense, through the blood of Jesus. The significance of the blood is in relation to the death of Jesus. The interest is not in the His material blood, but in His shed blood as the life offered for the redemption of a lost humanity. It is a fact, to be sure, that Jesus shed His blood that long-ago day on Golgotha. But the significance of that reality lies not in the physicality of blood, but in its place in the occurrence of death and His offering Himself for the redemption of others. For the offering was "through the eternal Spirit." There is here release from bondage to existence and the assumption of spiritual significance.

The same bonding to existence is found in the rites involving liquid and solid food. In the Dionysian rite, it was believed that the quintessence of divine life was actually in the wine. When the devotee drank the wine and became physically intoxicated, he believed that he experienced a spiritual ecstasy. He felt a strange, new life within himself. He was filled and possessed by the god. During the epopteia, the highest grade of Eleusinian initiation, the initiate drank a barley drink, by means of which the devotee participated in the experience of the goddess Demeter and realized saving fellowship with her. Taking the sacred food, a cereal, from a chest, and eating it brought union with the Demeter, the goddess of grain. In consequence of this union, the divine substance was incorporated in the individual. "Already emotionally united with Demeter through participation in her passion, the initiates now became realistically one with her by the assimilation of food and drink."[160]

There is a marked contrast between pagan and Christian sacraments. Whereas pagan sacrament is bonded to the physical, Christian sacrament breaks loose from that alliance and achieves a true symbolism that touches upon spiritual reality.

Matt. 26:26-28 records the institution of The Lord's Supper:

160Willoughby, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

> And as they were eating,
> Jesus took bread, and blessed
> it, and brake it, and gave it to the
> disciples, and said, Take, eat;
> this is my body.
> And he took the cup, and
> gave thanks, and gave it to
> them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
> For this is my blood of the
> new testament, which is shed
> for many for the remission of
> sins.

The language in which Jesus spoke was probably Aramaic. This language, like the Hebrew, has no term to express mean, signify, denote. When the Hebrews used a figure, they wrote it is for it signifies. Writing his Gospel in the Koine Greek, Matthew followed the Aramaic and Hebraic usage and retained it is as it signifies. Thus the statements, this is my body and this is my blood, mean that the bread and wine signify, or represent, Jesus's body and blood. There is here, then, a breaking away from bondage to the existent and the development of a true symbolism.

The Christian sacrament is thus set in sharp contrast to the pagan sacrament. The Dionysian devotee drank the wine to excess, became intoxicated, and attributed to the wine the power of the divine life. In the Lord's Supper there is nothing of this: the wine points beyond itself, to Jesus' death for the redemption of humankind. The ancient Semites drank the blood. In the Hebrew rites, the blood was sprinkled upon the people. Now Jesus and His disciples drink, but they drink of the fruit of the vine. The wine is now the blood of a different, vegetable, kind. It is now the blood-bond of a new and higher order. It does, indeed, signify the near-coming of the shed blood and the death that is to bring remission of sins. But here the wine also indicates something else, namely, that the age of blood-shedding is soon to come to a close. No longer is Abel's sacrifice to prevail. The sacrifice that will prevail is now Cain's sacrifice of the garden, transformed into the spiritual and made acceptable. This death, the death of the Savior, brings the end of the shedding of blood. And this because in that out-pouring of blood, in that death, the covenant of saving fellowship has been finally and forever ratified. It need not, and cannot, be repeated. The writer of Hebrews says of Jesus:

> Nor yet that he should offer
> himself often, as the high priest
> entereth into the holy place
> every year with blood of others;
> For then must he often have
> suffered since the foundation of
> the world: but now once in the
> end of the world hath he ap-
> peared to put away sin by the
> sacrifice of himself.[161]

The contrast between Christian symbolism and pagan myth is also evident with respect to the meal. In the Eleusinian sacrament, the initiate ate the grain in order to achieve union with the goddess. The capacity for this result is within the grain itself. There is here the bondage to the existent that contradicts symbolism. But the situation is otherwise as regards the Christian

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161Heb. 9:25-26.

sacrament. Here true symbolism occurs. The bread is the symbol of the body of Jesus; it represents His body. It may be noted, parenthetically, that the symbolism is complex, i.e., there are many facets of the symbol. Adam Clarke notes this. Commenting on the fact that the bread was unleavened, he writes:

> **Now, if any respect should be paid to the primitive institution, in the celebration of this Divine ordinance, then, unleavened, unyeasted, bread should be used. In every sign, or type, the thing signifying or pointing out that which is beyond itself should have certain properties, or be accompanied with certain circumstances, as expressive as possible of the thing signified. Bread, simply considered in itself, may be an emblem apt enough of the body of our Lord Jesus, which was given for us; but the design of God was evidently that it should not only point out this, but also the disposition and the type; and this the apostle explains to be sincerity and truth, the reverse of malice and wickedness.[162]**

Unleavened bread is a symbol of purity of the heart, leaven being a symbol of corruption. Plutarch, for example, says:

> **Yeast is itself also the product of corruption, and produces corruption in the dough with which it is mixed; for the dough becomes flabby and inert, and altogether the process of leavening seems to be one of putrefaction . . . .[163]**

For this reason, the Israelites were required to eat only unleavened bread when the Passover was instituted. When Jesus celebrated the Passover and made it the occasion for the institution of the Lord's Supper, he observed the ancient prescription of unleavened bread. The bread, then, which symbolizes His body, is pure, signifying His purity and sinlessness. Further, Jesus broke the bread. The breaking of the bread furnishes a second nuance to the symbolism. Thus Luke adds this nuance to his account of the event: "This is my body which is given for you."[164] Paul describes the event in terms more explicitly consonant with Jesus' breaking the bread: "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you . . . ."[165]

The grain that is eaten by the pagan devotee is literally identified with the substance and life of the goddess. The unleavened and broken bread of the Lord's Supper can in no sense be regarded as the physical body of Jesus. When He broke the unleavened bread and uttered the words, "this is my body," what he had in His hands and broke surely was not His physical body. It is a symbol: a symbol of the purity of Him who is "without blemish and without spot,"[166] of Him "who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God," of the purity of those who enjoy, spiritually, "the communion of the body of Christ."[167]

162Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, 6 vols. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1857), V:250.

163*Quaestiones Romanae*, Tr. Professor Frank C. Babbitt, *Loeb Classical Library*, No. 305 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 109, p. 161. .

164Luke 22:19.

1651 Cor. 11:24.

1661 Pet. 1:19.

1671 Cor. 10:16.

Myth takes its existing material as actually endowed with spirituality. Religion, on the other hand, takes the material of its constructs as signifying the spiritual. The distinction is between existence and significance. It is a valid distinction. Yet there is that about the relationship between the two, existence and significance, with particular respect to Christianity, that requires qualification.

This subject may perhaps best be approached from the standpoint of myth. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter tells of Demeter's search for her daughter, Persephone, and the final, triumphant, recovery of the daughter-goddess from death in the underworld. The myth became the basis of the festival at Eleusis. In the passion drama, the climax of the festival, the initiates enacted the events of the myth. They accompanied the priestess, who represented the grieving Demeter, in the search for the lost child goddess. The mimesis closed with the reunion of the two goddesses. Sharing in that reunion, the initiates shared in the triumph over death.

The theme of resurrection and eternal life is similarly presented in the Egyptian cult of Osiris and Isis. Isis, the wife of Osiris, searches for her murdered husband. After a long wandering, she finds his corpse and performs certain rites, which revived him. Osiris is thus a dying and reviving deity, providing assurance that life continues beyond the ravage of death.

Now the theme is the theme of resurrection. Admittedly, the theme here is the theme of myth. Now, the resurrection-theme is also found in Christianity. The account tells of a divine son who dies and is resurrected. Is this also myth? There are those, as we have earlier noted, who call this a "Christian myth." According to this view, the material is employed precisely as those earlier, pagan, stories. It is a tale, a story, devised to afford assurance to a sorrowing and suffering humanity. In the present age, the context has changed, but the material is the same. It is a mythos that for many today provides substantially the same hope that older, pagan, myths provided. Its value is purely subjective. Like all myth, it cannot be given an objective import. Resurrection is a mythos; it is not a reality.

It is at this point that a more discriminating consideration of the question of existence and of the relation of existence to significance is required. It may very well be that, as regards exclusively the Christian claim, existence cannot be completely divorced from significance. The generalization that myth is wedded to existence while symbolism breaks that binding absolutely, may not be true for Christianity and its forms of symbolism.

Christianity is an historical religion. It centers in an historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, who was born circa 4 B.C. and crucified circa A.D. 27. That Jesus did live and was crucified is recorded, not only in scripture, but in secular writings. The Roman historian, Tacitus, for example, refers to this: "Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate . . . ."[168] The Jewish historian Josephus writes:

168Tacitus *Annals* tr. John Jackson, *Loeb Classical Library*, No. 322 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 15:44, p. 283.

> **Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day . . . .**[169]

The Synoptic Gospels record the birth of Jesus and the events surrounding His birth. And, as we have just observed, there are secular accounts attesting the fact that He did live. Here there is a vast difference between Jesus's historicity and, for example, the unhistorical "holy child" of Eleusinian drama. As we noted in Chapter 1, there probably was a feature of the telestorion that portrayed dramatically a sacred marriage and the birth of a holy child. The marriage was probably a ceremonial, a liturgical fiction. The marriage having been mimetically consummated, the hierophant announced the birth of the holy child. It represented the birth of a progenitor of new race of those who are now translated from the earthly sphere to the heavenly.[170] **But in all of this drama there lacked historical reality.**

Contrast this with the historical factor in the Christian account. There was, indeed, one born who was destined to be the "prince of life," the pioneer of a new race, an heavenly. "And she shall bring forth a son," it was announced, "and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."[171] **Of this Isaiah had earlier spoken:**

> **For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.**[172]

In no sense can a mythic "holy child" bring a new age, a new humanity, into being. And this because it lacks historical actuality. It is the existence-quotient that makes effective, for history and eternity, a new, a redeemed, humanity. This the Christian account provides. It is incorrect to relegate the account to the status of myth, to argue that it is of the same character as the mythic "holy child." For here, in Christianity, it is not a mimetic enactment of the birth of a new humanity; it is the actual birth of an historical figure, the man Jesus, who is to become the redeemer. That is the Christian claim and the Christian reality.

Demeter and Isis are mythical figures, lacking historical reality, and in no sense may they possess authority and power to revive the lost. Persephone and Osiris are likewise but mythical personages; they can never experience the reality of resurrection. In contrast to the myth, the Christian account of

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169Flavius Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in William Whiston, tr., *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), p. 535.

170See sup*ra, p. 7.*

171Matt. 1:21.

172Isa. 9:6.

resurrection functions on a different plane.

Now, there can be no question but that the man Jesus did actually die. Death is here an historical event. But what of his resurrection? If this is on the plane of mythos, does it not also lack the authority and power to bring salvation and assurance for the future beyond the curtain of death? Must not resurrection be marked by some reference to existence if it is to gain the element of significance that is essential to its authority and power? Thus, it is evident that the significance and truth of Christianity centers in the reality-value of the Resurrection.

It can, and must, be said, then, that Christianity possesses significance via reference to existence. While its symbols do, indeed, reflect the spiritual only as they break away from bondage to the materiality of existence, nevertheless their significance and validity center, ultimately, in an existential, historical reality. There appears at this point, then, a qualitative dialectic.

The Danish philosopher-theologian Sören Kierkegaard addresses this issue in the title page of his book Philosophical Fragments:

> **Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness; how can such a point of departure have any other than a merely historical interest; is it possible to base an eternal happiness upon historical knowledge?**[173]

In the closing pages of the work, he states the matter even more forcefully:

> **It is well known that Christianity is the only historical phenomenon which in spite of the historical, nay precisely by means of the historical, has intended itself to be for the single individual the point of departure for his eternal consciousness, has intended to interest him otherwise than merely historical, has intended to base his eternal happiness on something historical. No system of philosophy, addressing itself only to thought, no mythology, addressing itself solely to the imagination, no historical knowledge, addressing itself to the memory, has ever had this idea: of which it may be said with all possible ambiguity in this connection, that it did not arise in the heart of any man.**[174]

Kierkegaard's most "systematic" work, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, addresses the problem raised by the Fragments. The argument of the postscript is that Christian truth cannot be certified either by means of historical investigation or by means of philosophical speculation. Christian truth is not an objective truth. Its truth—that eternal happiness depends upon an event in time—is the paradox that is appropriated through the inwardness of faith. The Christological event is appropriated only by the passion of faith, a passion that is the anxiety of "fear and trembling."

In the chapter, "Truth as Subjectivity," Kierkegaard posits two alternatives as regards the question of truth:

173Sören Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* tr. David F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1936, 1962.

174*Ibid*., pp. 137-38.

> For an objective reflection the truth becomes an object, something objective, and thought must be pointed away from the subject. For a subjective reflection the truth becomes a matter of appropriation, of inwardness, of subjectivity, and thought must probe more and more deeply into the subject and his subjectivity.[175]

Thus the truth that eternal happiness is effected via the event in time, which to objective thought is unresolvable paradox, consists in the inward appropriation of that paradox by the believing subject. What is involved in this distinction is, perhaps, no better stated than in the following passage:

> When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused on the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.[176]

Immediately following this passage, Kierkegaard provides an example of his meaning. It concerns the question of the nature of the "God-relationship":

> Let us take as an example the knowledge of God. Objectively, reflection is directed to the problem of whether this object is the true God; subjectively, reflection is directed to the question whether the individual is related to a something in such a manner that his relationship is in truth a God-relationship. . . .
>
> The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation-process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is a subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness. The existing individual who chooses the subjective way apprehends instantly the entire dialectical difficulty involved in having to use some time, perhaps a long time, in finding God objectively; and he feels this dialectical difficulty in all its painfulness, because every moment is wasted in which he does not have God. That very instant he has God, not by virtue of any objective deliberation, but by virtue of the infinite passion of inwardness.[177]

Referring Kierkegaard's analysis to the problem of this work, he would agree that mythic representations, based solely upon imagination, cannot suffice to effect eternal happiness. For they have no reference to any event in time. That is, he is saying, the event in time, the Christological event, is the necessary condition of eternal happiness. This event becomes effective, however, only in the inward appropriation of faith. This means, in short, that the question of one's salvation remains, for thought, but problematical. The felt assurance that Christianity affords, like the assurance of the rites of pagan redemption, cannot yield any objective certification. But there is in

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175Sören Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. David F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 171.

176*Ibid*., p. 178.

177*Ibid*., pp. 178-79.

Kierkegaard a significant advance, for salvation does require an enactment in time. But, as we have seen, the availability of that enactment for redemption is forthcoming only in the inwardness of faith. It remains, finally, but an objective probability.

Kierkegaard (1813-55) lived and wrote during a time in the nineteenth century in which western thought was in bondage to two influences. The first was empirical science. Science, it was believed, secured literal truth and was the instrument of knowledge. The second was Hegelian philosophy. According to this form of idealist philosophy, it was possible to know truly the systematic nature of ultimate reality. Kierkegaard's animadversions rebutted both of those claims. He was correct in dethroning both empirical science and systematic philosophy. He showed that they cannot be the avenues to the God-relationship, that they cannot disclose the way of eternal happiness.

But since his time, there have been developments in the culture of thought of which he was not, and could not be, aware. It is now held by reflective scientists that science does not disclose the inner nature of reality. Rather, it is a paradigm of symbolism. As a general rule, the idealistic system of philosophy that identifies the Real with thought and its regulative forms is subject to serious criticism or even disavowed. In consequence of these changes in intellectual culture, Kierkegaard's rejection of science and philosophy as avenues to salvation, although regarded as extremely significant for his time and still of some considerable significance, loses something of its former cutting edge. Nevertheless, his concept of inward appropriation of truth as subjective continues to appeal to many who struggle to find meaning in Christianity.

To return to the question of the historical factor in Christianity. In contrast to the imaginations of myth, Christianity asserts that redemption, eternal happiness, is grounded in an event in time. That is our argument thus far.

Now, there is no question but that the man Jesus did live and was crucified by the Romans. Both scriptural and secular sources testify to this. While Jesus' death is an indispensable factor in the drama of redemption, redemption is finally secured and guaranteed by the Resurrection. The New Testament is clear as to this. Thus Paul writes: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."[178] Elsewhere Paul removes the problematic and writes categorically:

> Concerning his Son Jesus
> Christ our Lord, which was made
> of the Seed of David according
> to the flesh;
> And declared to be the Son of
> God with power, according to
> the spirit of holiness, by the
> resurrection from the dead:
> By whom we have received
> grace and apostleship, for obedi-
> ence to the faith among all
> nations, for his name.

1781 Cor. 15:17.

Thus the Resurrection is part of the history of Jesus, is part of the situation in time that procures, in Kierkegaard's language, eternal happiness. But now the question occurs as to just how, in what respect, Resurrection is continuous with existence. That Jesus did exist, we have said, is beyond cavil. His existence provides the element that imaginative resurrections of mythic figures do not have. At least, that is the Christian claim. But is Jesus's resurrection a real factor in His existence? Do we not have, instead, but another myth, namely, a "Christian myth"?

The Resurrection is real only on the condition that there is a quality of the existing individual, Jesus, that is capable of supporting it. That quality is a special relation to God. Further, it must be something that Jesus Himself sensed and one that others also detected.

We have earlier remarked that in His earthly life Jesus brought the full meaning of the divine fatherhood to view.[179] His "Abba experience" was the experience of His unique relation to the Father. It was His sense of oneness with the Father. His saying "I and my Father are one" affirms that special relation of deep intimacy with God.

How are we to view this fact of Jesus' sense of oneness with the Father? We could, of course, say that here we have someone who is afflicted with megalomania. But that is hardly credible. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile that theory with the whole of Jesus' life and activity. Schillebeeckx has stated the case for the veracity of Jesus' consciousness of sonship:

> **. . . we have been examining the fundamental and constitutive elements of Jesus' message and praxis. He proclaimed, 'for God', the approach of salvation for man, he appeared and acted as the eschatological prophet bringing God's 'glad tidings for the poor', news of salvation . . . . The source of this message and praxis, demolishing an oppressive notion of God, was his Abba experience, without which the picture of the historical Jesus is drastically marred, his message emasculated and his concrete praxis (though still meaningful and inspiring) is robbed of the meaning he himself gave to it.**
>
> **Over against all this one could say: this very Abba experience was the grand illusion of Jesus' life. Such a reaction is certainly possible on our side. But then one is bound to draw from that the inevitable conclusion, namely, that the hope of which Jesus spoke is likewise an illusion.**
>
> **. . . On purely historical grounds this cannot be verified, since such an Abba experience may be disqualified as an illusion. On the other hand for someone who acknowledges and in faith confesses this trustworthiness of Jesus as grounded in truth and reality, the trustworthiness acquires visible contours in the actual life of Jesus of Nazareth; his faith then perceives Jesus' trustworthiness in the material, the biographical data, which the historian can put before him regarding Jesus of Nazareth.[180]**

That is the crucial distinction between myth and Christianity. There are "visible contours in the actual life of Jesus." That is lacking in the mythic figures who promise redemption.

179*Sup*ra, pp.85-87.

180Schillebeeckx, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-70.

Others, too, witnessed something unique about Jesus of Nazareth. Of Him who had dwelt among them, John wrote in his Gospel: "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."[181] And the centurion, hearing Jesus' pathetic death-cry, was constrained, perhaps against all of his Roman prejudices, to say: "Truly this man was the Son of God."[182]

There is, then, a marked discontinuity of Jesus's history with that about Him which was meta-historical. This His Abba experience discloses. Yet the meta-historical cannot be absolutely disassociated from His history. Some such association is a necessary condition of the reality of the redemption that Christianity offers. This association is, perhaps, most crucial with respect to the Resurrection. That is, the Resurrection must in some sense be continuous with existence, must itself be part of Jesus's history, of the event that He constitutes, if the redemption He offers is to be truly significant and valid. If Resurrection is an illusion, along with the Abba consciousness, Christian redemption stands along side pagan redemption: a myth.

The Gospel narratives agree that no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. The biblical accounts of the Resurrection are of resurrection appearances. It might be thought that, therefore, the appearances are but private hallucinations. Against this supposition is the circumstance that these appearances, with some exception, were to groups of people rather than to individuals confined in isolation. In the mimetic rituals of pagan myths, there are no such experiences as those of the early Christians. There are but mimetic actions imitating the mythic material. These can in nowise bring personal salvation. Against this, stands uniquely distinctive and supreme Christian redemption, which finds in the resurrection appearances the raison for its claim of truth and validity.

Here, too, "visible contours" are acquired. They are acquired in a new dimension of history. The early belief in the Resurrection was such that it transformed the human reality of those long-ago individuals and, through them, the reality of human history. The only explanation that explains this is their assurance that He is risen. It was this belief in a new reality, an abiding Presence, that became the power in their venture of faith and deed. These are the incontrovertible facts, in consequence of which the resurrection experience can never be consigned to the dust-bin of illusion. The resurrection appearances were veridical perceptions--not self-induced hallucinations--and the resurrection effects were actual and real. Of this it is certain: Christianity did not originate and grow in nonsense. In these respects, at least, there is reality in the Resurrection. And in these respects, Christian redemption is on a uniquely higher level than was ever attained by pagan redemption.

We have employed the terms "history" and "meta-history." That Jesus was crucified and buried is a matter of history. But His death assumes a dimension that in nowise merely emerges out of its historicity. In this regard, Paul writes, not that "Christ died," but that "Christ died for our sins."[183] The

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181John 1:14.

182Mark 15:39.

1831 Cor. 15:3. Italics mine.

phrase, "for our sins," states the significance of that death. And this significance is meta-historical. It is discontinuous with history but yet bound up with history. There is here both continuity and discontinuity with existence. This is the paradox of which Kierkegaard writes, that our eternal happiness depends upon an event in time. Eternal happiness is conditioned by Resurrection, which stands both beyond and yet within history.

Now, symbolism itself contains the contrasting duality of existence and significance that, we have just argued, holds for Resurrection in its historical and meta-historical, or spiritual, respects. If we explore the structure of this duality, we may come to see more fully and adequately the grounds upon which the truth claim of Christian redemption rests.

Religious symbols, specifically those of Christianity, differ markedly from other symbols. They share, to be sure, in the generic characters of all symbolism. Höffding, we earlier pointed out, succinctly defines the generic nature of the symbol:

> In all symbolization, ideas taken from narrow although more intuitible relations are used as expressions for relations which, on account of their exaltedness and ideality, cannot be directly expressed[184]

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between religious symbols and other symbols. In the first place, religious symbols are drawn from regions of intuition that markedly differ from the regions form which other symbols are drawn. These regions, Höffding writes, are ". . . the great fundamental relations of nature and of human life—light and darkness, power and weakness, life and death, spirit and matter, good and evil . . . ."[185] Second, the more important feature of religious symbols consists in their unique reference. The reference is to the infinite. The religious symbol, therefore, shines with a distinctive luminous quality. It is extremely rich in color and extremely toned with emotion. These two features of religious symbolism are found par excellence in Christian symbolism.

We have also earlier referred to Otto's characterization of the experience of the infinite. He describes the consciousness of the infinite as a numinous state of mind, a state that includes certain elements. This has been discussed in the foregoing and need not be repeated here.[186]

What is important at this point in the argument is that the unique referent of the religious symbol, shining through, as it does, in the experience of the numinous, may, and is, given a measure of determination by the reason. That is, the numinous of experience is determined in idea as the Absolute, the Infinite. There is no doubt but that the numinous of experience has for its referend the "Wholly Other," the Infinite, or God. Yet from within the circle of numinous experience, no evidence is forthcoming that the referend of that experience is real. This matter may be stated from the standpoint of symbolism. The Christian symbols are bathed with numinous quality. We have

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184Harald Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 201.

185*Ibid*.

186See Supra., pp. 53-54.

come to see this in the preceding chapter. They yield insight into the God who is beyond conceptual determination. Is the insight a true insight? Does the God to whom the symbols refer really exist? Or, are the symbols, with their purported insight, unanchored, free-floating, without support in reality? Are they, after all, illusory, albeit with some intra-experiential import? Can these questions be answered in terms of the ideational equivalent of the numinous of experience? For, if they can be answered, they are answered only at the level of reflective thought.

In our modern era, we have somehow been led to the conclusion that the objects of scientific formulation exist, and exist beyond a reasonable doubt. In contrast, it is a prevailing view that the idea of God is problematic, that is, that it carries no evidential weight as to the real existence of its presumed referent. In the chapter on the symbolism of science, however, we have come to the conclusion that the presumed realities of scientific symbol-formation are never certifiable as to an existence beyond the reach of the symbolic formations. They exist within the construct of symbolization. We do not know the physical world in its inner nature. We do, indeed, presume that there is an inner nature to the physical world. But that nature, that world, is beyond our reach, beyond the reach even of our scientific symbols.

In 1913 the German philosopher Edmund Husserl published his most significant work, Ideen zu einer Phänomenologie und phäomenologischen Philosophie (Ideas of a pure Phenomenology and phenomenological Philosophy). The work was later translated in English by W. R. Boyce Gibson, under the title Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology.

An important thesis of the work is set forth under the rubric phenomenological reduction. Briefly stated, the term means that the objects given as data of experience are such that it is necessary to suspend the question of the actual existence of those phenomena. The reduction does not signify that they do not exist; it signifies that we do not know that they exist, or, that the givenness of the data is incapable of showing forth extra-mental existence. Husserl states this thesis in the following language:

> **Thus in its immanence it must admit no positing of such essences in the form of Being, no statements touching their validity or non-validity, or concerning the ideal possibility of objectivities that shall correspond to them nor may it establish any laws bearing on their essential nature.**[187]

Husserl extends the phenomenological reduction to the idea of God. That the idea of God is entertained in the mind is no evidence that God exists. Husserl's argument here is based on the assumption that the idea of God is of the same logical character as all other ideas, including ideas of physical objects. However, if it should turn out that the idea of God is unique and therefore different in logical character from other ideas, Husserl's contention would not hold.

Now, we are led to the subject of what is known as the ontological argument. It is the significant argument for the existence of God. A recent proponent of the argument makes this point:

> **The reasons men have given for believing in God have been formulated in**

187Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, tr. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1931), p. 178.

> what are called the 'proofs' for the existence of God, or, briefly, the theistic argument. Of these proofs the Platonic or ontological argument is in a sense the most significant, for it constitutes what, in a dialectical or logical age, men believed to be the 'logical witness for God.'[188]

The historically classic formulation of the ontological argument is found in Anselm of Canterbury's Proslogium. He "defines" God as "being than which nothing greater can be conceived." The conception of God in those terms, he claims, requires and shows forth the objective reality of God. He writes:

> And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God? (Psalms xiv. 1).
> . . . . . .
>
> Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. "And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.
> Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone. the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.[189]

Anselm's argument was immediately challenged. Gaunilo, a monk of Marmoutier, replied, in effect, that the idea of God as perfection no more entails His existence than does the idea of a perfect island entail its existence. He gave the example of a "lost island," which comprises the sum of all excellencies. This does not mean, he argues, that because the perfect island is an idea in the mind that, therefore, the island exists. Therefore, mutatis mutandis, the idea of God does not entail the existence of God.

Anslem replied, in effect, that if Guanilo can find the perfect island, he will give it to him:

> Now I promise confidently that if any man shall devise anything existing either in reality or in concept alone (except that than which a greater cannot be conceived) to which he can adapt the sequence of my reasoning, I will discover that thing, and will give him his lost island, not to be lost again.[190]

The point that Anselm makes here is that only the idea of God implies the necessary existence of the referent of the idea. All other concepts do not. "The sequence of my reasoning," he correctly says, cannot be adapted to them. Further, he is certain that, if Gaunilo can find the lost island, it will be readily given to him. Why is this? The answer is that the concept of a

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188W. M. Urban, *Humanity and Deity*, p. 165.

189St. Anselm, *Proslogium*, chap. ii, in *St. Anselm*, tr. Sidney Norton Deane (La Salle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 7-8.

190*Anselm's Apologetic*, in *Ibid*., p. 158.

perfect island is a dependent, conditioned, meaning. It depends on other conceptual elements: the concepts of water, land, and the relationship between the former two concepts. It is, therefore, a contradiction to attach perfection to the concept of island. That which depends on something other than itself cannot be perfect. There is no such self-consistent meaning, perfect island. It is not even a possible object of thought. Since it is conceptually impossible, it is therefore actually impossible. Its existence is really impossible. In nowise, then, can its existence be implied by its presumed, but illusory, conceptual status.

There is, however, a factor that vitiates Anselm's formulation of the ontological argument. He assumes that existence is part of the meaning of the idea of God. That is, existence, along with other attributes, is an intensional property of the idea of God. When we think God as perfection, we must assert His existence, as we must assert the other attributes that constitute His nature.

Indeed, it is true that in thinking God as perfection, we must think of Him as existing. But not for the reason that Anselm proposes. For existence is not part of the intensional meaning of the idea of God. In technical language, existence is not a predicate.

The German philosopher Kant make this point.

> **'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. . . . By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing—even if we completely determine it—we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that this thing is.**[191]

Kant is correct here. Existence is not a predicate and therefore cannot be included in the idea of God, so as to evince His existence. But this does not mean that the ontological argument, if properly construed, lacks formal validity and real significance.

There is a difference between an idea and a concept. As the term from which concept derives, concipere, take together, hold together, indicates, a concept is a collection of meanings. With respect to our knowledge of the space-time world, concepts are generalizations from particular instances.

Now it is clear that we do not have a concept of God. We do not hold in our minds the qualities of the Divine being. We do not know God as He is in Himself. And we certainly do not form a concept of God as a generalization from many instances of God.

But we do, without question, possess an idea of God. The idea connotes, not a plurality of meanings, but a unique singularity of meaning. And it contains no reference to a plurality of instances, but only to a single Individual, or Being. The idea of God is the idea of the transcendent Individual.

The ontological argument is really not an argument at all. It is not a deduction from premises. It is an insight. When that insight is properly

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191Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Humanities Press, 1950), pp. 505-05.

explicated reflectively, it becomes evident that in order to think God consistently it is necessary to think God as necessarily existing.

We have pointed out that the ontological argument is a Platonic argument. That is, indeed, the case. The merit of the Platonic argument is that it formulates the argument in exceedingly abstract terms, i.e, it takes the idea of God as a purely formal idea. Some attention must be given to the Platonic formulation, in order to bring the question of God's existence to a profitable conclusion.

Plato's analysis is found in the sixth and seventh books of the Republic. The argument is developed in the context of the theory of Ideas. The Ideas are the intellectual instruments employed in the organization of experience. In the Phaedo he listed the various Ideas: equality, beauty, good (moral), justice, and holiness.[192] In the Republic he considers them in the context of the analogy of the divided line. It is there that he formulates the ontological argument.

In one passage he writes:

> **. . . that which reason itself lays hold of by the power of dialectics, treating its assumptions not as absolute beginnings but literally as hypotheses, underpinnings, footings, and springboards so to speak, to enable it to rise to that which requires no assumption and is the starting point of all. . . .[193]**

The other passage is this:

> **Is not dialectics the only process of inquiry that advances in this manner, doing away with hypotheses, up to the first principle itself in order to find confirmation there?[194]**

The various individual ideas are the hypotheses. Their extra-mental status is problematic. But they are show a dependency upon the ultimate value principle and serve, accordingly, as "springboards so to speak" for the disclosure of "the first principle." The first principle is viewed in the manner of "doing away with hypotheses." It is "that which requires no assumption." Its reality, then, is certain, beyond all assumption.

But how do we know that our awareness of this first principle is an awareness of its reality? That is the crucial question. The question is answered in terms of the meaning, in the Greek, of the English phrase, "that which requires no assumption." For that phrase the Greek has a single word, with the definite article. The Greek expression is τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου, the genitive of τὸ ἀνυπόθετον (to anhypotheton, the unhypothesized). The noun is used but three times in the Greek language, and exclusively by Plato in the Republic. Its meaning is essentially negative, since it is a compound of the privative particle α (not) and the noun ἐπίθεσις (a placing under). It means "independence of conditions."

192Plato *Phaedo* 75d, tr. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 263.

193Plato *Republic* vi. 511b, pp. 113-15.

194*Ibid*., vii.533c, p. 203,

Since it means, in a formal respect, independence of conditions, the anhypotheton must be thought of as independent of the conditions of thought. To entertain it in the mind as but a mental construct, as dependent upon the conditions of thought, is a self-contradiction. To think it, then, is to think it as self-existent. That, precisely, is the germ of the so-called ontological argument. It is the reflective insight that, as entertained in the mind, the anhypotheton must be entertained as existing extra-mentally.

Plato does not explicitly identify the anhypotheton with the Good. However, his discussion of the Good, the ultimate reality, makes it clear that he regarded the two as identical. The anhypotheton, the Good, is the Father of all else, streaming into the world but yet remaining in its inviolable reality beyond all worlds.[195]

If we transpose the Platonic reasoning over into the Christian idea of God, the result is precisely the same. We do, without question, entertain the idea of God as "the unconditioned transcendent." While not directly given, it is nevertheless given as a co-implicate of the awareness of our finitude. This idea connotes the "formal principle of Deity." It yields minimal knowledge of God, the only form of literal knowledge of God that we possess.
To think God, then, it is necessary to think God as independent of the conditions of thought, as self-existent.

The distinction between concept and idea is an important and decisive one. Husserl has shown that all finite concepts can be bracketed with respect to the existence of their referents. He is correct here. But he is incorrect in supposing that the idea of Deity also requires, even permits, bracketing. For here we do not have the concept, but rather the idea. The idea of God is unique, formally signifying the unconditioned Absolute, and therefore cannot consistently undergo bracketing. In short, insofar, and as long as, we think God, we must think Him as real. Of this we are assured beyond all cavil. If we wish to remove from ourselves the idea of God—if that were indeed possible——, we face the consequence of depriving ourselves of the potential of our humanity. And this means that we have to deny our own selfhood and reality. And that is too great a price to pay! If we excise God from our intellectual experience, we renounce our humanity!

We are now in a position to bring this discussion to a close by reference to the question that has lurked within the work from the beginning. It is the question of the validity of the symbolism of grace. We have earlier seen that, despite the feeling of salvation from the vicissitudes of finitude, even victory over death, that the myth purported to offer, no certitude of redemption is available via myth. We have asked the question, does this insecurity also plague the Christian claim of redemption?

Certain tentative positions have been secured. There are certain significant differences between the mythic formations and the formations of Christian symbolism. One such mark is the mark of historicity. The redeemers who tread the path of myth are not historic personages, but conjectures of the imagination. No redemption from these can be achieved. But, with respect to

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195See my article "The Ontological Argument in Plato," *The Personalist*, 44:1 (Winter, 1963), pp. 24-34. See also Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, c1965), pp. 139-41, which is a discussion of the article.

Christianity, the case is different. The Redeemer did actually live and die. In the tissue of Christian faith, His resurrection is a datum in the consciousness of those early Christians who, in teaching and practice, transformed the culture of the world--their world and now, even, our world today. The only explanation that explains this is their assurance that He is risen. In some profound sense, the Resurrection is the resurrection within history. Without this, redemption is an illusion.

Yet, beyond the continuity of history, there is a second factor. It is the factor of significance purchased through discontinuity. Myth is fastened to existence, while symbolism, though first anchored in existence, transcends existence and, in that discontinuity, gives voice to higher levels of ideality. The Christian symbols carry this thrust further, showing forth the numinous, the Holy. We have come to see this, par excellence, in the symbol of the father. And the other symbols of grace, as the Lamb, the Bride and the bridegroom, likewise trench upon the numinous, giving voice to the glory of redemption. All this we have seen in the previous chapters. But we have not yet come to adequate terms with the very question that confronts myth: are we assured that the Christian symbols do, indeed, yield truth so as to signify that there is the reality and power of the referent, the Holy, to bring redemption?

Now, we have, to be sure, answered this question to some considerable extent. We have pointed out that the mythic constructs do not evince the numinous. They do not have that significance, and this because they are embedded in and confined to material existence. They do not take on the character of signification. The Christian symbols, in contrast, do assume spiritual significance, although they are drawn from the natural sphere. But they use the natural in the service of the transcendent and the spiritual.

We have also observed, as another factor in the area of the discontinuous, that, in terms of the Kierkegaardian analysis, there is discontinuity between existential event and eternal happiness. Christianity makes the remarkable claim that eternal happiness is dependent on an event in time, the Jesus event. In the passion of faith in this paradox, we reach a subjectivity in which we dare the God-relationship. But there is no evidence, outside this subjectivity, that we have in truth reached the God-relationship. We must thus suspend reason and affirm a faith that has no foundations. We cannot, as Peter says, give "a reason of the hope that is in you." [196]

But are we, as Christians, really left without any anchor? Are we but on a tempest sea, agitated with the waves of insecurity, tempest-tossed without a lighthouse to illume our sea-borne quest? May it not be, after all, that there is a measure of assurance?

Now, we have insisted all along that in symbolism, not only the symbolism of science but the symbolism of grace, we gain knowledge only through the medium of the symbol. What we know of the world, what we know of God--even with the aid of revelation--is confined to the formations of symbolism. We cannot get beyond those formations. Specifically, for the present purposes, we do not know God as He is in Himself. We approach Him in and through symbol.

1961 Pet. 3:15.

But there is a dimension here that is significant. For the Christian symbol signifies the numinous. There opens to our spiritual understanding the vista of the supernatural, in the landscape of which are the virtues of saving efficacy. Along beside this experience of the numinous, via the symbol, we do, without question, form the idea of the numinous. And, as we have argued, this idea, and this idea alone, yields the assurance, to the reason, that the reality to which it refers does indeed exist.

What consequence does this assurance from the side of reason have with respect to the deliverances of symbolism? It cannot yield a further knowledge beyond that afforded in the structures of symbolism. But what it can do, and does do, is to add a measure of weight to the claims of the symbol. To the extent that we know that the numinous is certified to our thought as self-existent, we may rest in an appreciable measure of assurance that the symbol functions veridically. From the other side, were we not to know that the God whom we entertain in thought exists, or that even His but possible existence is an impossibility, we could not rest in the felt radiance of the symbol. In sum, the Christian symbol, anchored in the life of reason as it is, achieves what no myth can purchase. That is the superiority of Christianity, of the Christian symbol.

Yet, when all is said and done, it is in the light of the symbol that we walk the pathway of faith. As in science and our knowledge of the physical world, so is it in the religious: we cannot leave or go beyond the glory of the symbol. It is "The light that never was, on sea or land."[197] It is the beacon-light streaming from the eternal world.

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